

## THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

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The Epigraphic Survey opened its sixty-eighth season on October 1, 1991 and closed its doors again on April 5, 1992, after six months of field work at Luxor Temple and at the Temple of Amun at Medinet Habu. The most memorable achievement of the year was the completion, after sixteen years of work, of the one hundred twenty-six drawings that document the reliefs of the Opet Festival, which adorn the lowest and best preserved register in the Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple. Brought back to Chicago in April, these drawings will be the subject of the first volume by the Epigraphic Survey in a new sub-series within the Oriental Institute Publications series, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple, Volume I: The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall*.

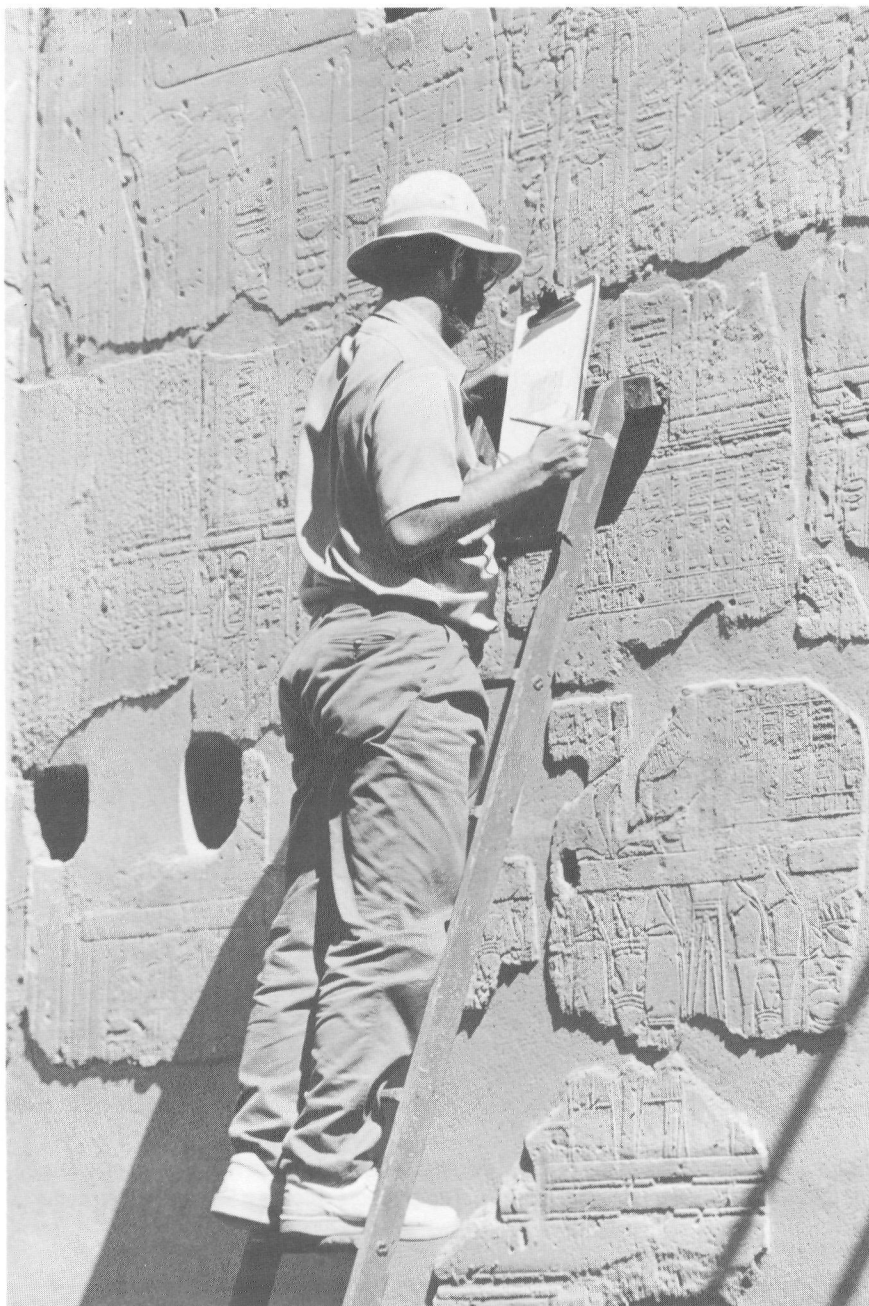
The “beautiful Festival of Opet,” as it is referred to in the inscriptions, was a great celebration of annual renewal, in which the divine triad resident at Karnak Temple—Amun, Mut, and Khonsu—were escorted southward in procession three kilometers to Luxor Temple, called in antiquity the “Southern Opet,” or southern sanctuary. Enshrined in Luxor for a specified number of days, the portable barks of the three gods came into proximity with another manifestation of Amun, a creative force resident at Opet, after which they were ushered back to their own sanctuaries at Karnak. Depictions of these rituals and processions are preserved—at least in part—on the long side walls of the Colonnade, the western wall portraying the southward journey from Karnak to Luxor, and the eastern wall depicting the return voyage.

It has long been recognized that the Opet reliefs are among the more elaborate portrayals of any ancient Egyptian festival, but the Survey’s documentation has captured numerous details that eluded earlier publications. Each of the long side walls of the Hall is essentially divided into five large scenes, but the peripheral elements flow easily from one to another, so that the divisions between scenes are somewhat ambiguous. This is an intentional compositional device to emphasize the narrative continuity of the festival, which unrolls before one’s eyes as the visitor strolls through the monument. In situ, the reliefs of the Colonnade are spread over eighty feet of horizontal wall space, a span that simply cannot be comprehended in a single glimpse. The completed drawings, however, brought back to Chicago in April, are enabling us to see the festival with new clarity.



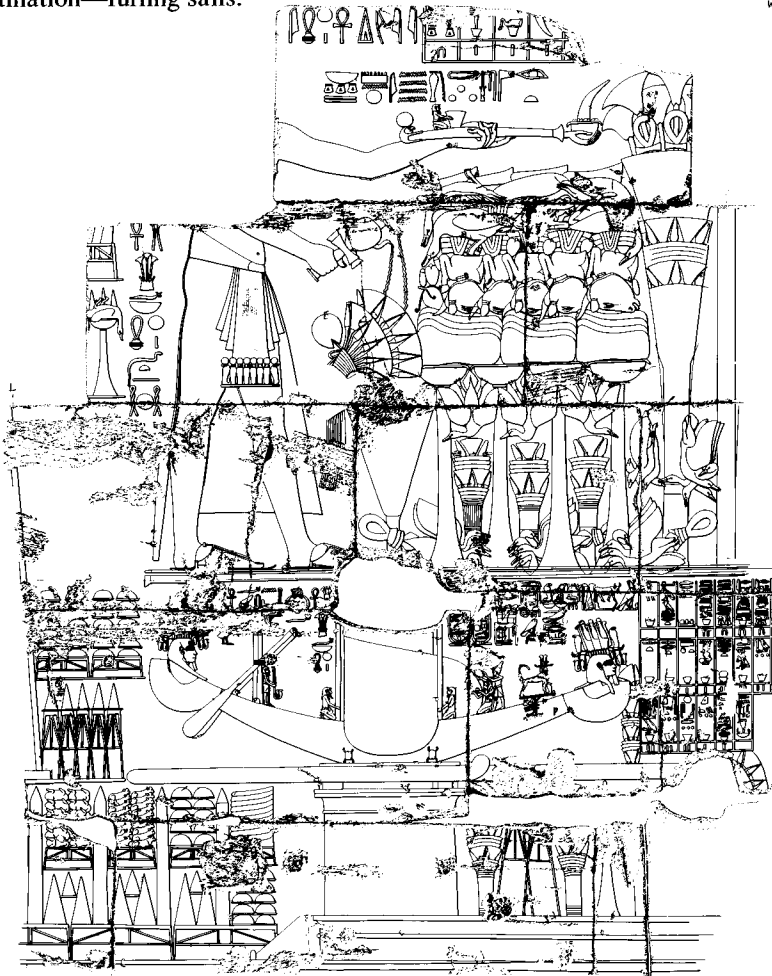
**Figure 1. In the shadows of the colossal columns of the Colonnade Hall and the minarets of the Mosque of Sidi Abu'l Haggag, artists and epigraphers discuss a final correction at the wall**

Formal offering scenes show the king offering libations and incense to the gods in the seclusion of their shrines and open and close the Opet narrative; the texts consist of formulaic inscriptions, menu lists, and ritual utterances by the gods in favor of the king. Carried in portable barks on the shoulders of priests, Amun, Mut, and Khonsu then depart the temple in stately fashion for



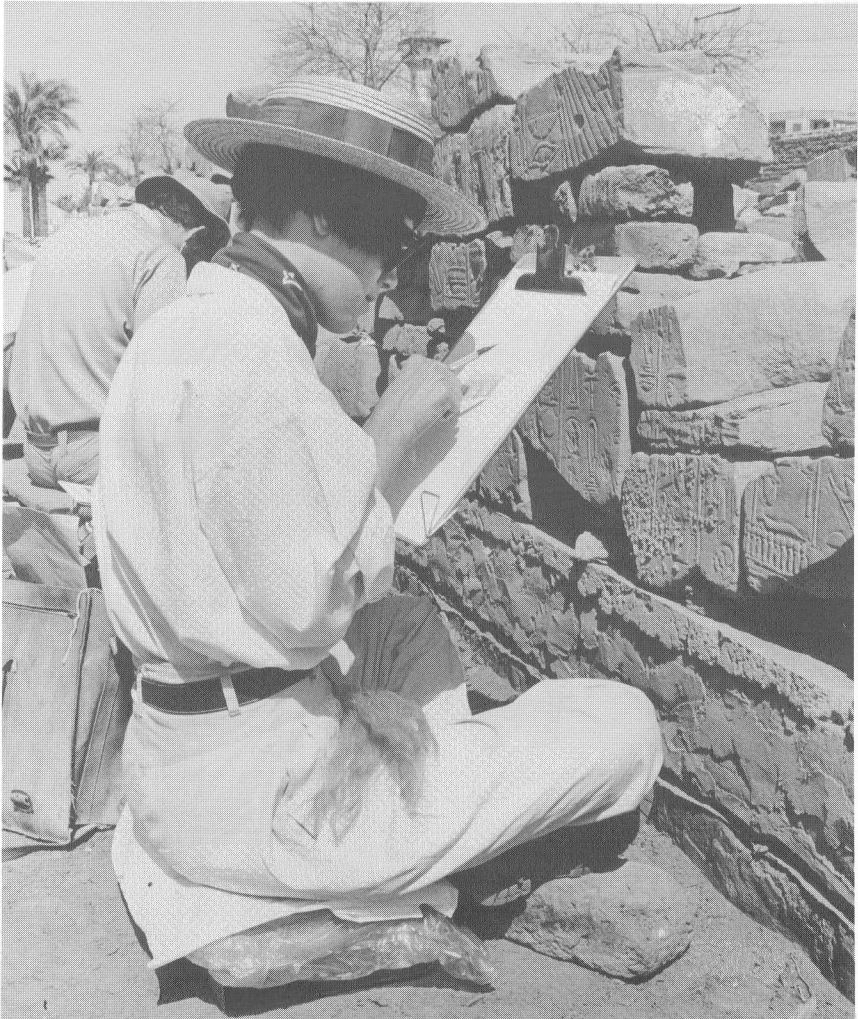
**Figure 2. Senior epigrapher Richard Jasnow collates the speeches of the divine standards positioned behind the Bark of Amun, depicted here in the final episode of the Festival of Opet narrative**

the richly adorned barges that await them on the riverbank to carry them upstream to Luxor. As they are towed southward to Luxor, however, a riot of activity erupts on the riverbanks: soldiers and citizens haul on the towropes and chant hymns of praise, others kneel in adoration or bend to kiss the earth, musicians and Nubian dancers perform for the throngs, shouts of acclamation fill the air, and prancing horses with their grooms attend the royal chariot. Proceeding at a more sedate pace, priests clap their hands to keep time and women shake sistra to pacify the gods. Aboard the river barges, oarsmen pull against the current to the encouragement of bosuns, and sailors clamber over the cabins and masts, adjusting towropes and—as the boats approach their destination—furling sails.

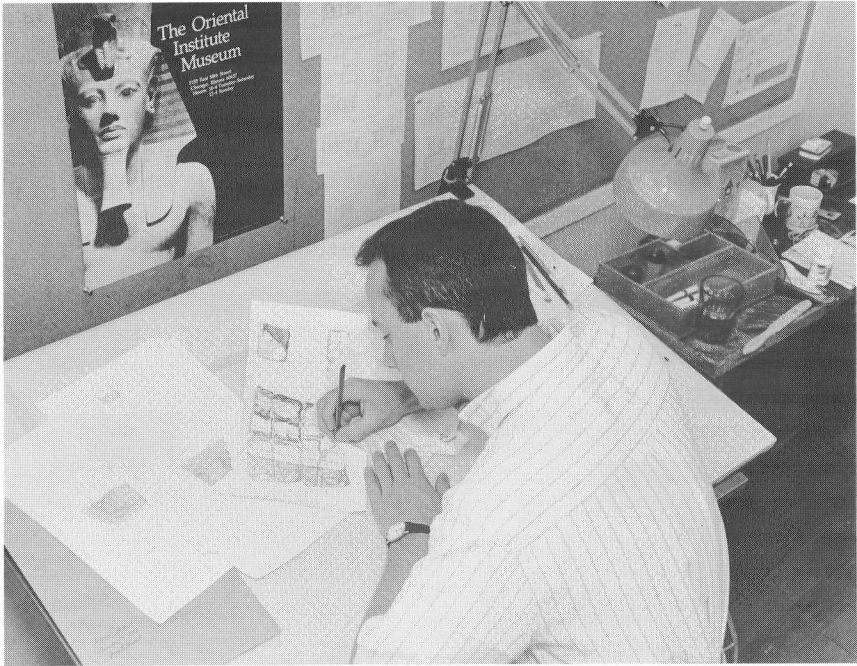


**Figure 3.** In a drawing completed this season by artist Carol Meyer, Tutankhamun presents a libation, incense, and several altar stands to the gods of Karnak; the royal bark rests below his feet on a lower register

The collations of the last drawings and the scheduling of the final record photography required careful planning throughout the season and a concerted push during the month of March, with many of the staff working long extra hours to meet the deadlines. Epigraphers Richard Jasnow, John Darnell, and Debbie Darnell worked steadily on the collation sheets (I joined them at the temple whenever possible), and fortunately an unusually cool winter kept the outdoor temperatures pleasant until the very end of the season. Artists Carol Meyer and Sue Osgood completed large areas of the side walls that portray the beginning and closing episodes of the Opet narrative.



**Figure 4.** Down in the dust behind Luxor Temple, epigrapher Debbie Darnell collates several block fragments that belong to the long-vanished scene of the bark sailing downstream to Karnak



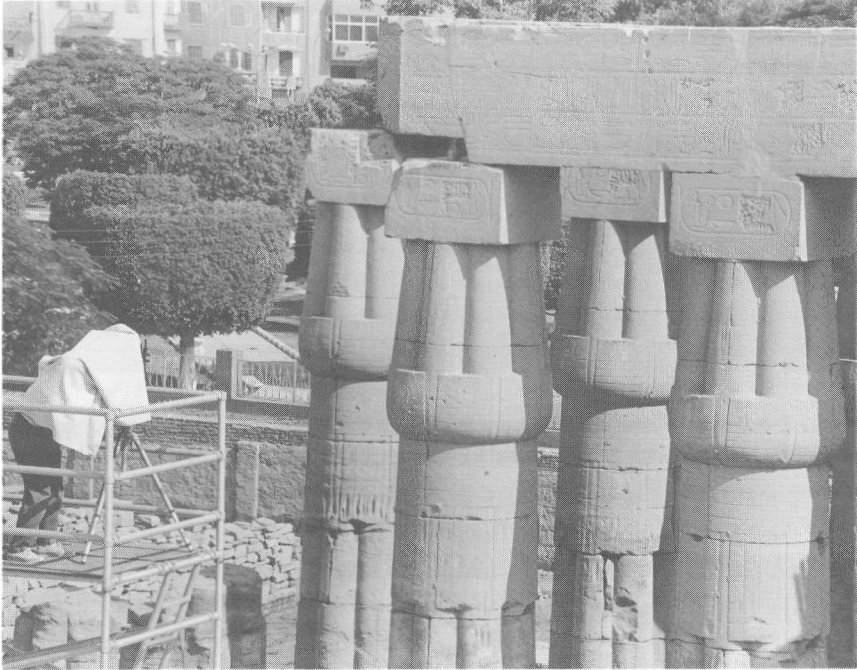
**Figure 5. Artist Jay Heidel corrects a group of block fragments in his studio, under the impassive but approving gaze of an old friend from the Oriental Institute**

A number of reconstructed groups of block fragments will also be published as part of the Opet Festival volume, and during the season Ray Johnson pasted up twelve large plates of these fragment groups. These were then distributed for inking and correcting, a task Ray completed together with Jay Heidel and Tina Di Cerbo. Tina also corrected several drawings that will be published in our second volume from Luxor Temple, and she was invaluable in organizing the finished work of the artists as it came off the drawing tables, assigning groups for final photography and packing portfolio boxes for shipment home to Chicago.

Although the Opet Festival was our main priority, the artists also spent many hours at the Temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, beginning the penciling of scenes that will in future seasons provide a good deal of epigraphic fodder for Egyptologists. Thanks to this concerted effort, by the end of the season forty-eight drawings had received the field director's approval for publication, and approximately twenty other drawings had been worked on by the artists and epigraphers. In preparation for the volume on the Opet Festival, a plate layout was finalized and reductions calculated for joining the drawings at the correct scale for each plate.



For the month of February, we were delighted to have Jean and Helen Jacquet join the Chicago House team after the completion of their own season at North Karnak. Using our somewhat antiquated but still usable surveying equipment, Jean provided us with detailed elevations of the interior walls and the facade of the Colonnade Hall, and his drawings will be used as the basis for the architectural key plans in the first two volumes on Luxor Temple. Helen assisted Jean by taking measurements in the temple and spent many hours in the library, poring over prints and slides from the Habachi archives in order to identify and categorize them for registration.



**Figure 6. Balanced on the aluminum scaffold, photographer Cecile Keefe takes documentary shots of the architraves of the sun court of Amenhotep III at Luxor Temple**

The Chicago House photographers undertook two major documentary projects this season. The first project was suddenly prompted by the proposed dismantling, under the supervision of the Antiquities Organization, of the eastern double colonnade of the sun court of Amenhotep III at Luxor Temple, which has long been surrounded by wooden scaffolding. Cecile Keefe and James Riley maneuvered our cumbersome 8" × 10" field camera up onto the colossal architraves of the columns, and, by a combination of sitting, squatting, and lying flat, obtained excellent close-up views of the interior architrave inscriptions, which will eventually be used for artists' drawings. The tall

aluminum scaffold was utilized for general shots of the colonnade and the exterior sides of the architraves. The second project was the planning photography for the peripteral bark sanctuary of the Temple of Amun at Medinet Habu. Tom Van Eynde and Cecile Keefe, ably assisted by James Riley and Ellie Smith, spent the month of November shooting with strobe lights and an enormous black tarpaulin draped over the temple to block extraneous sunlight, achieving remarkable success in some very cramped areas. These new negatives document the columns and architraves thoroughly for the first time, augmenting the original photography taken under the directorship of Harold Nelson in the 1930s. Cecile also shot several detail views in the Colonnade Hall, which will appear in the forthcoming volume on the Opet Festival.

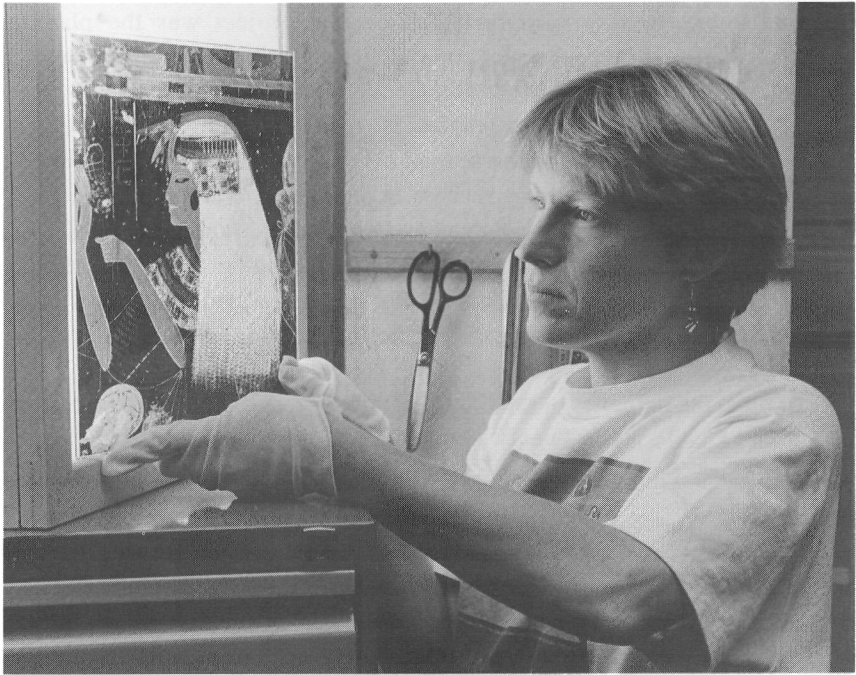
To meet the demands of the final epigraphic work on the Opet reliefs, Sue Lezon and Cecile made twenty new enlargements for the artists to pencil, bleached thirty-three drawings, and produced twenty-six sets of blueprints for new collation sheets. Four special sessions were scheduled in the final month for the 104 approved drawings that needed final photography, and in the course of the season the photographers made 1,644 prints for the work of the Survey and for study purposes by scholars. An additional thirty-four block fragments from the Colonnade Hall were photographed for registration. In all, 327 large-format negatives were registered, bringing the total in the Chicago archives to over 18,000, including the historic glass-plate negatives and the Labib Habachi special collection.

The photographic archives benefited from the help of many willing workers, foremost among them our irreplaceable archival assistant Ellie Smith, who completed the enormous task of computerizing all the archival entries through April 1991. She also compiled a set of guidelines for operating the Double Helix database. The desktop publication of a Chicago House archival registry is anticipated next summer.

Conservation work in the photographic archives, spearheaded by Sue Lezon and funded for the last three years by the Getty Grant Program, culminated with the duplication of another 445 large-format negatives in a precarious state of deterioration; only forty-four remain to be finished next season, in addition to others of smaller size. Several staff members and volunteers pitched in to sort, register, and identify images from the Habachi archives and the glass-plate negative collection; thanks for this assistance are due especially to John Darnell, Helen Jacquet, Henri Riad, Kathy Dorman, and Nan Ray.

Sue also began the first experiments with printing the old glass-plate negatives according to a process developed in the nineteenth century, exposing each glass plate individually to direct sunlight on "printing-out-paper."





**Figure 7. A lady from the Tomb of Userhat gazes serenely out at photographer Sue Lezon from one of the glass plate negatives in the special collection of the photographic archives. Since this image was taken, the face of the lady has fallen victim to vandalism. Thirty of these negatives were selected for publication by the Survey in *Lost Egypt*, a photographic portfolio series**

Depending on the strength of the sun and the density of the negative, exposure time varies between five minutes and two hours. The print is then toned in a gold chloride solution to determine the final color of the image, then fixed in two separate sodium thiosulfate baths. This process produces prints resembling those that one might have purchased while journeying through Egypt a century ago. Thirty of the Chicago House images have been selected for inclusion in a limited edition of photographic portfolios entitled *Lost Egypt*, to be published by the Oriental Institute and to be distributed in the winter and spring of 1993.

Debbie Darnell very ably assumed the administration of the library this season, and the number of books and offprints received totaled 340. Because of the epigraphic pressures of the season, however, the accessioning of many of these items was discontinued and will have to be completed next year. The management of the Chicago House library continues to be a major task by itself, involving correspondence with American and European booksellers from both Luxor and Chicago, and constant comparison of prices in Cairo and Chicago against those listed in book catalogues. A special thank-you is due to

many of our professional colleagues who substantially enriched our holdings by depositing their own works with us during the season.

Kathy Dorman once again assumed the duties of house manager, organizing the kitchen, household, and laundry schedules, preparing the daily menu, planning for receptions, and dealing with the countless unpredictable annoyances and idiosyncrasies that seem to be an inseparable part of running a household in the Near East.

As office manager, Paul Bartko opened the season by connecting our new Macintosh IIsi computers and laser printer into a modest network, making both our administrative life a good deal easier and presaging a full computer network in the next two years. He continued to manage financial accounts, payday, and office correspondence, along with other less definable functions, such as dispensing first aid to our workmen and hunting down local repairmen in times of insoluble mechanical or electrical problems. In the meantime, the Survey office at the Oriental Institute was efficiently run by Joe Manning, who mailed out our December *Bulletin* and responded promptly to our not-infrequent requests for assistance.

Carlotta Maher led the Survey's fundraising efforts in Luxor, Chicago, and all places in between, and for a month at Chicago House she was assisted by Nan Ray, who kindly volunteered her formidable services both as fund-raiser and organizer. Despite the very generous support the Survey has received over the years from so many different sources, fundraising continues to be a perennial preoccupation. Our in-country expenses are now paid out of a cultural endowment in Egyptian currency, of which the Epigraphic Survey is one of the beneficiaries, but this marvelous resource cannot subvent our commitments in U.S. dollars, which comprise the largest portion of our budget.

On the other hand, the Egyptian pound endowment has permitted the Survey to plan a sixteen-month renovation and expansion of Chicago House itself, scheduled for completion in October 1993. In order not to interfere with the field season, the construction is scheduled to take place in three distinct phases, primarily during the summer months. Basic services throughout the complex, such as electrical power, water circulation, and heating, will be upgraded, and all buildings will receive a facelift of new paint and floor tiling. Our aging kitchen will be supplied with new stoves, sinks, stainless steel counters, a heavy-duty dishwasher, a large water purifier, and proper ventilation. The library building will receive a new reading hall, which will double our presently available shelf space and provide room for another sixty years of book acquisitions. It will be equipped with vastly improved lighting, new readers' tables, and underground electrical circuits for reading lamps and personal computers. Another artist's studio will be built, and the library guest rooms will be converted into offices for the photographic archives and for

administrative purposes. To add more living space for staff, a new residence building will rise on the site of the old Healey House. The photographic studio will be overhauled as well, and the rear gate, which has been closed for many years, will be reopened to provide a second access to the property.

In November, four architectural firms in Cairo were invited to submit proposals for the renovation project at Chicago House, and after examining the different alternatives for expansion, the design contract was awarded to Bechtel Egypt in February. During the spring, detailed design plans were submitted, and at the end of June I traveled to Egypt with James Riley and Sue Lezon, who agreed to endure the frightful heat of a Luxor summer in order to supervise the first phase of the renovation. As this report is being written, the new residential building is almost complete and will be ready to receive the staff for the 1992-93 season.



**Figure 8.** At the wall in Luxor Temple, senior artist Ray Johnson describes the epigraphic method to a group of friends from Cairo, during the annual tour of the monuments of ancient Thebes sponsored by Chicago House

Chicago House continues to be a place where colleagues and friends from all over the world tend to gather. This season our library guest book was signed by just over one thousand visitors, and eighty-one library tours were given to tour groups and individuals who requested an introduction to our epigraphic method. We entertained twenty-three overnight guests in the course

of the season and hosted an unusually large and lively Halloween party that was attended by every expedition in the Theban area. Our annual Friends of Chicago House tour (postponed from the previous February due to the Gulf War) brought forty-eight visitors to Luxor by train over Thanksgiving weekend, highlighted this year by a day trip to the quarries and rock-cut shrines at Gebel el Silsila, the source of so much of the building stone for the temples of ancient Thebes. Three weeks before the Thanksgiving tour, our Friends of Chicago House members enjoyed a delightful introductory cocktail party given at the home of Tom and Ellen Granger in Maadi. Other special visitors to Chicago House included His Excellency Peter Secchia, the American ambassador to Italy, his wife, Joan, and their family during the Christmas holidays, and Warren Heemann, Vice-President for Development at the University of Chicago, and his wife, Ellen, who experienced one of the season's more spectacular electrical blackouts on their first night with us.

One true highlight of the year was the grand reception given in honor of the Survey at the Zamalek residence of the American ambassador, His Excellency Robert J. Pelletreau, Jr., and his wife, Pamela. During the evening, mounted prints from our new portfolio publication, *Lost Egypt*, were displayed for the many friends and colleagues who attended.

We were especially pleased to welcome two of our most steadfast sponsors at special receptions at Chicago House this year. In early December, we hosted directors of three of the divisions of the J. Paul Getty Trust to lunch and a library tour: John Walsh of the Getty Museum, Miguelangel Corzo of the Getty Conservation Institute, and Deborah Marrow of the Getty Grant Program, which has generously provided the funds for the conservation of our photographic archives. In January, a group of executives representing the Middle East branches of the Xerox Corporation arrived for an evening reception with the Chicago House staff and for a first-hand look at how the Xerox Foundation has directly contributed toward the preservation of Egypt's ancient records.

For two weeks in January, Healey House was given over to the staff of the Oriental Institute's Bir Umm Fawakhir expedition, directed by Carol Meyer (see separate report). Their presence among us was a sheer delight at a time in mid-season when spirits are traditionally low.

It is with personal regret that I report that, after seven years of exemplary work with the Epigraphic Survey, Carol has resigned her position as artist in order to pursue her own considerable professional talents as an archaeologist. We will miss not only her keen eye and her unsurpassed technical skill with the pen and scalpel, but her many contributions toward making Chicago House a more congenial place to live. She departs with our fondest wishes for success.

On January 29, Yusuf, one of our oldest Egyptian staff members, passed away, marking another transition. Yusuf was first employed by the Survey as a boatman in charge of running the expedition's river launch. He was later trained as a photographer's assistant by field director Charles Nims and acquired extraordinary independent skill in the darkroom and in the field. Many past and present staff members will remember Yusuf as one of the most unforgettable personalities of Chicago House, and the photographic studio will be a very different place without him.



**Figure 9. The crew of *Star Trek* pays a surprise visit to Chicago House on occasion of the Field Director's birthday. Standing, left to right: Peter Dorman, Helen Jacquet, Richard Jasnow, Jean Jacquet, Ray Johnson, Sue Osgood, Paul Bartko, Ellie Smith, Jay Heidel; seated or kneeling: Carol Meyer, Henri Riad, Jamie Riley, John Darnell, Kathy Dorman; foreground: Margaret and Emily Dorman. A Christmas tree (visible behind) was also beamed aboard**

The staff this season consisted of myself as field director; Richard Jasnow and John and Deborah Darnell, epigraphers; W. Raymond Johnson, Carol Meyer, Christina Di Cerbo, James Heidel, and Susan Osgood, artists; Susan Lezon, Cecile Keefe, and Thomas Van Eynde, photographers; Jean and Helen Jacquet, field architects; Kathy Dorman and Paul Bartko, house and office administrators; Jill Carlotta Maher, assistant to the director; Elinor Smith, photographic archives assistant; and Saleh Suleiman Shehat, our extraordinary chief engineer, whose services to the Survey cannot be adequately acknowledged here. We were very fortunate, too, that our dear friend Dr. Henri Riad was in residence for most of the season, to assist us in the areas of

public relations and local contacts; he also continued to administer the Labib Habachi archives on behalf of the Survey.

We are especially grateful to the members of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization who contributed directly to the success of the season: Dr. Muhammad Bakr, Chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization; Dr. Mutawa Balboush, Supervisor of Antiquities for Upper Egypt; Dr. Muhammad el-Saghir, Director of Antiquities for Southern Upper Egypt; Sayid el-Hegazy, Chief Inspector of Karnak and Luxor and Co-Director of the Centre Franco-Égyptien at Karnak; Abd el-Hamid Marouf, Inspector of Karnak; Dr. Muhammad Nasr, Chief Inspector of Qurna; and Dr. Madeleine el-Mallah, Director of the Luxor Museum.

In addition to those mentioned for specific contributions, I gratefully express thanks to many other colleagues and friends: the United States Ambassador to Egypt, His Excellency Robert J. Pelletreau, Jr., and Mrs. Pamela Pelletreau; Wes Egan, Kenton Keith, Frank Ward, and Ken Robinson of the United States Embassy in Cairo; Ashraf and Henny Ghonima; Tom and Ellen Granger; David Maher; Mark Rudkin; Lucia Woods Lindley and Daniel Lindley, Jr.; Jack Josephson; Walter Tower; Gerry Vincent; Louis Byron, Jr.; Terry Walz, Ibrahim Sadek, Amira Khattab, and Albert Abdel Ahad of the American Research Center in Egypt; Fathi Salib of American Express in Luxor; and Margaret Sears, Evada Waller, and Florence Bonnick of the Oriental Institute. I also wish to acknowledge the fundamental assistance and support of three institutions that have been instrumental in the success of the season: the Amoco Foundation, Inc., the J. Paul Getty Trust, and the Xerox Foundation.

As always, we will be very pleased to welcome members of the Oriental Institute and other friends to Chicago House from October 1 to April 1. Please write to us in advance to let us know the dates of your visit and call us as soon as you arrive in Luxor to confirm a time that is mutually convenient. Our address in Egypt: Chicago House, Corniche el-Nil, Luxor, Arab Republic of Egypt. Please note that, by fiat of the inscrutable powers that inhabit the local telephone office, our telephone number has changed once again: 372525 (direct dial from the United States: 011-20-95-372525). We now have a second phone (and fax) number as well: 011-20-95-581620.

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