
The Epigraphic Survey

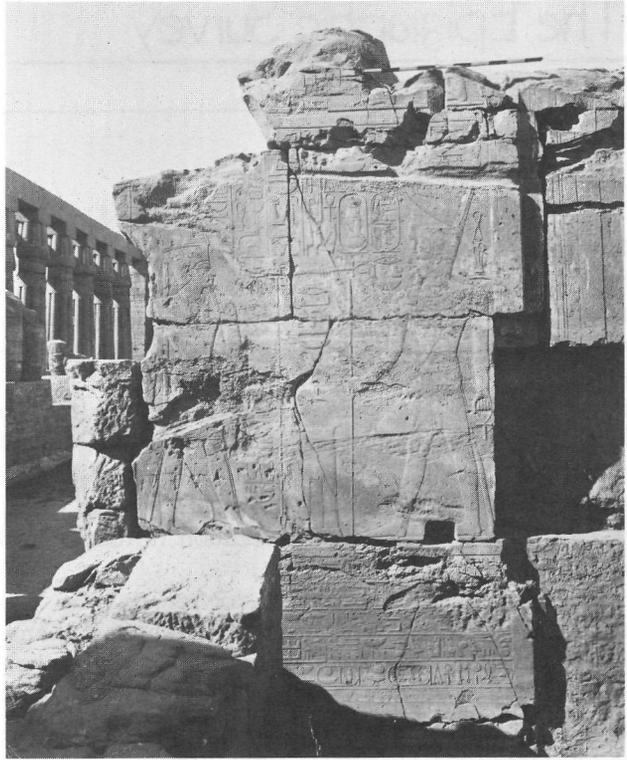
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The fifty-third season of the Epigraphic Survey began on October 15, 1976, and ended on April 15, 1977, working from its headquarters at Chicago House, Luxor, Egypt. During the season, the fieldwork for the recording of the battle reliefs of Seti I on the exterior north wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun-Re at Karnak was completed; and much progress was made on the recording of the Colonnade of Tutankhamun in the Temple of Luxor. This latter project occupied most of the season's work and seems especially appropriate in view of the current interest in Tutankhamun in the United States. The fieldwork was once again funded in part by the Smithsonian Institution (through the American Research Center in Egypt).

The great colonnade of Luxor remains the largest, best preserved monument of Tutankhamun, although his name has been systematically erased from the entire structure to be replaced by that of one of his successors, Horemhab. The fourteen-columned hall once formed an impressive entry to the temple rebuilt by Amenhotep III, but it is now overshadowed by the great court of Ramesses II which masks the original facade of the colonnade. Its best known feature is a series of reliefs depicting the Feast of Opet, a yearly festival in which the god Amun-Re of Karnak visited the Temple of Luxor. The vast riverine procession going to Luxor, some 52 meters in length, occupies the west wall of the colonnade, while the return voyage to Karnak fills the eastern wall. Above the procession on the walls and on the columns are a large number of ritual scenes, including some carved in the reign of Amenhotep III.

The work in the colonnade presents some difficulty as much of the relief is in a bad state of preservation. The presence of salts and deterioration of the stone has obscured much of the scenes, but careful work has recovered many hitherto unnoticed details. The scenes on the columns have presented special problems, due to their height (over 16 meters) and the large scale of each scene (approximately 25 square meters). The preliminary tracing of each scene is now done, and the drawings are in progress. In connection with the reliefs of the colonnade, we have located and traced nearly 150 fragments from the destroyed upper walls of the building.

*Amenhotep
III before
Amun, from
the south
end of the
colonnade*



These pieces seem to have been used as building material in the houses of the later town which grew up around Luxor Temple, and will serve in the reconstruction of the original scheme of decoration. It is intended that the bulk of the drawings for the colonnade will be completed by the end of next season, and the manuscript should be finished by the summer of 1979.

Progress is being made on the various publications of the work of the survey. Both *Kheruef*, the publication of the well known tomb of the courtier of Amenhotep III, and *Khonsu I*, the first volume on that temple at Karnak begun by Ramesses III, are now in press and should be available shortly. The manuscript for *Khonsu II* is nearing completion and should be ready for publication by the end of summer, 1977. In Egypt, the survey is preparing a guidebook to Medinet Habu which hopefully will be available for the next tourist season. Finally, the manuscript on the reliefs of Seti I is now being written.

This season marked the twentieth anniversary on the staff of

Chicago House of our senior artist, Reginald Coleman. His skill and experience have long served as a standard to which we look. This season our other artists have been John Romer, Frank Howard, and Richard Turner, who also served as photographer. Our Egyptologists have included William Murnane, Frank Yurco, and Mark Smith. Mr. Yurco, who joined Chicago House in 1974, and Mr. Smith, who joined us in 1976, are both returning to Chicago to complete their studies. In the library we were assisted by May Trad, and the smooth running of the expedition depended as usual on the skill of our *reis* Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed and our local staff. To them all go our thanks for a job well done.

One last staff change must be noted. Kent Weeks, his wife Susan, and their children returned to America, where he has taken up a position at the University of California at Berkeley. Both Mr. Weeks as Field Director and his wife as housekeeper will be missed by the expedition. They will keep in touch with Chicago House, however, as Mr. Weeks intends to return to Egypt to complete the archeological map which he described in last year's Annual Report.

During this past season, Chicago House served as host to over 150 members of the Oriental Institute who visited either independently or on various Institute-sponsored tours. We look forward to additional such visits in the coming season, and remind all members and friends to feel free to drop in when they are in Luxor.