

# THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

*Peter F. Dorman*

***O***n March 31, 1991, after six months in the field, the Epigraphic Survey completed its sixty-seventh season, during which time the focus of work was the Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple. The season was memorable in several ways, not only for the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf and its concomitant disruptions, but for the formal commencement of our next project of documentation: the small temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, located in the Survey's original concession of 1924.

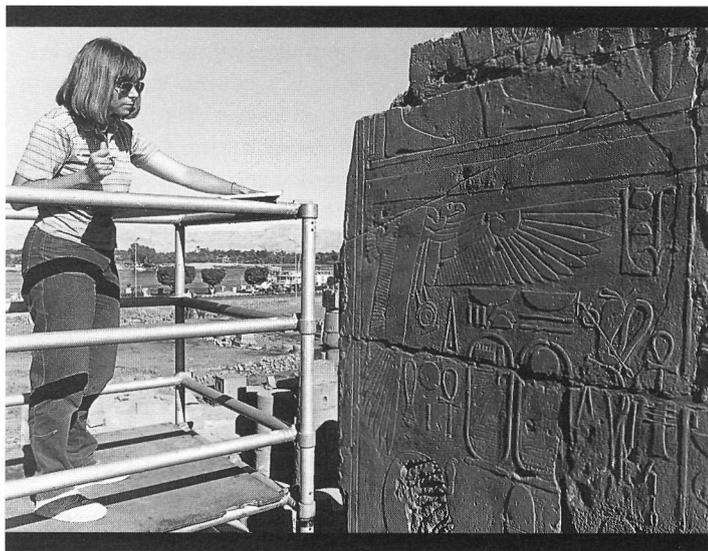
Our arrival in Egypt at the end of September, 1990, only six weeks after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, was attended by an air of uncertainty regarding the resolution of the Gulf crisis and our ability to remain in Luxor for the full length of the six-month season. The reduction in tourism was immediately recognizable, and the number of foreign visitors continued to plummet during the last months of 1990. Nonetheless, the work of the Survey progressed steadily at Luxor Temple under near-normal conditions until early January, when the United Nations deadline for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait drew ever closer. Virtually overnight, foreigners vanished from the streets of Luxor. Normally awash in the crowds of sunburned tourists pouring through the monuments of ancient Thebes, we instead found ourselves alone in a timeless setting: Egypt as it could be experienced fifty years ago. Our library visitors numbered only 308 (down from 1,066 last year), of whom two-thirds were scholars, friends, and relatives; only 10 library tours were given, as opposed to 77 last year. The great advantage to the epigraphic work was the privilege of working in almost complete isolation in Luxor Temple. The penciling of enlargements, the work of collation, and the frequent joint conferences could take place at the wall with no distractions whatsoever, and this season must be counted among the most productive that we have enjoyed.

Of course we experienced periods of tension as well. Americans learned of the onset of war on the evening of January 16, several hours before Chicago House woke to the same news on BBC the morning of the 17th. Throughout the

next six weeks of hostilities, without having access to live broadcasts from Baghdad and Tel Aviv, we felt that friends and relatives at home were far more abreast of current developments than we, despite our relative proximity to the Gulf. With the continuing assistance of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization and the advice of the American Embassy, our epigraphic work proceeded steadily, although we suffered some disappointments. The first was our regretted cancellation of the annual Friends of Chicago House tour, scheduled for the weekend of Valentine's Day; and the second was the curtailment of our plans for photography, when two of our staff members had to cancel their January plans to fly to Egypt. Despite these setbacks, the Survey maintained its usual routine and made adjustments where necessary.

As in past years, the reliefs of the Opet festival, carved on the long side walls of the Colonnade Hall, were our primary target. While artists tended to work in specific areas of the Hall, to achieve consistency in adjacent drawings the Survey epigraphers (Richard Jasnow, John and Debbie Darnell, and I) ranged more freely over all portions of the monument during the task of collation, so that each could become more accustomed to the full range of epigraphic challenges, including exposure to carved and sunken relief, Ramesside and Ptolemaic styles of carving and pigmentation, the iconography of divine barks, compositional parallels for bark processions and crowd scenes, and a variety of textual material.

Carol Meyer and Susan Osgood concentrated on the yet-undocumented scenes of the Opet procession located on the west wall: the portable barks of the Theban triad (Amun, Mut, and Khonsu) at rest in Karnak Temple; the ceremonial

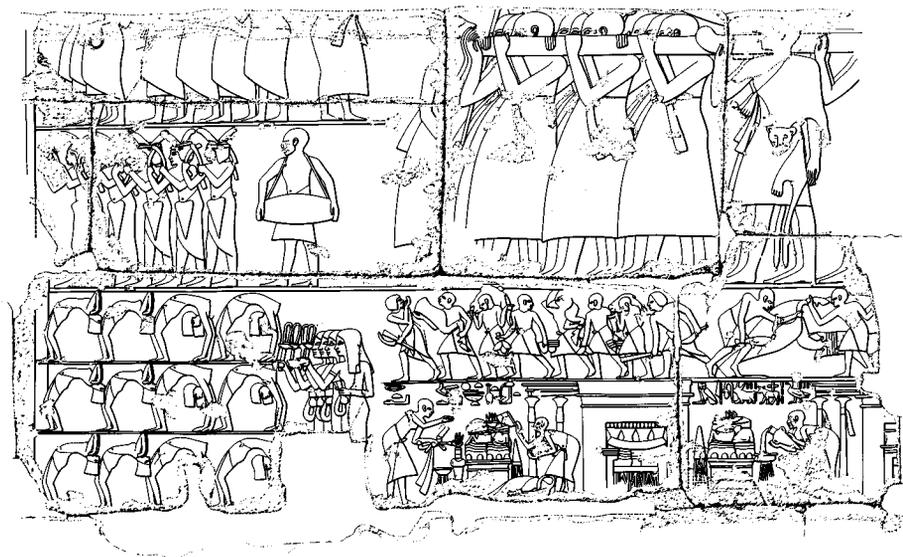


*High in the air on the aluminum scaffold, artist Tina Di Cerbo pencils an offering scene on the interior north wall of the Colonnade Hall. In the lower right corner of the photograph, the cartouches of Tutankhamun have been shaved down and recut with the name of Horemhab.*

emergence of the barks from Karnak, carried on the shoulders of priests; and their triumphant arrival on the quay at Luxor. All the drawings for the last two scenes, executed at a scale of 1:6, were approved for publication, and the completion of the west wall is assured next year.

The reliefs that represent the homeward journey of the divine barks from Luxor back to Karnak are located on the east wall of the Colonnade. Portions of the waterborne procession, in which the portable barks are shown sailing downstream on riverine barges, are in the process of recollection, to ensure adherence to artists' conventions and to add information that can be gleaned from early photographs of the Hall, in particular those of Georges Daressy, taken after the Colonnade was first excavated in 1892, and Friedrich Koch, taken in 1913. This task of the final correction of old drawings is being undertaken by Tina Di Cerbo and Jay Heidel. The final two scenes of the west wall, depicting the entry of the divine barks at the monumental pylon of Karnak Temple and Tutankhamun presenting offerings to the Theban triad in their sanctuaries, are being drawn by Carol, Sue, and Ray Johnson at the reduced scale of 1:6. While a great deal of collation work was accomplished on the east wall, final approval of the results must await next season.

Recollections of the reliefs of the facade and the second register scenes of the Colonnade Hall were begun this year, as well as work on the north doorjamb thicknesses decorated by Seti II, with Tina assigned as artist. One happy result was the retrieval of the backside of a figure of Mut-Bastet, badly obscured by the masonry of the later doorway of Philip Arrhidaeus. Corrections were also made



*In one of the drawings completed this season, priests carrying a divine bark approach the temple of Luxor, as female acrobats perform backflips in celebration and butchers bring the choicest pieces of flesh to the offering tables. Dashed lines indicate information gleaned from early photographs of the Colonnade Hall.*

by Ray and Tina for three more of the offering scenes on the colossal columns of the Colonnade Hall, and a fourth was half-finished as well.

The registration of block fragments from the missing portions of the Colonnade continued as well. Three hundred forty-six new fragments were identified and registered, of which over one hundred sixty were photographed by Danny Lanka early in the season. Due to our unexpected shortage of photographers, Ray took extensive reference photography on 35mm film of the more important fragments, including many that are stored in the western antiquities magazine of Luxor Temple. The ever-increasing number of stones in our registry prompted the Survey to build two new mastabas behind the temple, both equipped with damp courses to keep the fragments isolated from high ground water, although we came to realize that even these measures were not sufficient for their preservation (see below). These stones continue to yield information on the decorative scheme of the vanished portions of the Colonnade, particularly the uppermost registers that contain a series of large offering scenes. This season, Ray pasted together the first joined fragment groups for drawing and collation, all of which belong to the Opet festival, and these groups were subsequently pencilled by Ray, Jay, and Tina. When approved for publication, the drawings will eventually

be “floated” into their original positions over the appropriate sections of the standing walls of the temple, thus reconstructing on paper the context of Tutankhamun’s Opet festival twelve centuries after its systematic destruction by local inhabitants hungry for building stone.

In a process that occurs relatively infrequently, the Survey formally initiated the epigraphic method on a new project: the small temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, located within the funerary complex of Ramesses III, the



*Four block fragments come together in the Luxor blockyard: a speech by the goddess Mut to the young king Tutankhamun (predictably, the cartouche has been usurped by Horemhab).*

first concession of Chicago House. A few scenes from the temple of Amun were drawn by Survey artists in the 1930s and the early 1980s, and as preliminary materials these are supplemented by careful hand copies compiled during the last decade by the epigraphic staff. Much of the existing photography for the temple is inadequate for drawing purposes, however, and in the first weeks of the season Danny began the task of completing the planning photography at the temple, the crucial first step in the epigraphic process. Due to the intrusion of the Gulf war, planning photography was suspended before it was fairly begun, and this task will remain a priority for next season. During the winter in Chicago, however, Danny was able to complete all of the 1:10 planning photographs for

the painted chapels, in preparation for artists' work next season, and he also printed negatives of certain historic albumen prints from the Chicago House archives.

After heavily-debated consultations among artists and epigraphers, drawing scales were established for portions of the temple of Amun, in particular the chapels of the Tuthmoside structure, where the finely painted details pose the great challenges to artists who will be using the Survey's usual black-and-white conventions to indicate all pigmentation. Fortunately, the forthcoming color publication of the chapels by Nimrod Press (mentioned in last year's report) will alleviate the limitations of our ink drawings. During the last month of the field season, Carol, Sue, and Jay were able to begin penciling several of the chapel reliefs for inking over the summer; these will be ready for epigraphers' collation next year.

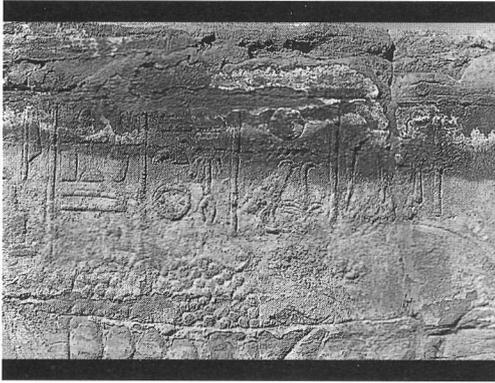


*Artist Carol Meyer examines a row of divine standards placed behind the pedestal of the bark of Amun, part of the opening scene of the Opet festival narrative.*

The photographic section of the Survey was the section most affected by the Gulf crisis. Unluckily, with the loss of two photographers during the second half of the season, Sue Lezon was forced to curtail her supervision of the conservation of the photo archives, which is being funded by a special grant from the J. Paul Getty Trust, and turn her attention entirely to the urgent needs of the expedition. Sixteen artists' drawings were bleached and twenty-one others blue-printed during the season; numerous drawing enlargements were produced for the artists; and thirty-five approved drawings were given final photography and carried back to the Oriental Institute in April. Ray took 35mm reference photog-

raphy of the walls of the sun court of Amenhotep III at Luxor Temple, as a documentary measure in that area, where the Antiquities Organization will be undertaking conservation work next year.

Despite a lack of professional photographers and certain materials that could not be shipped to Luxor, a great deal was accomplished in the photo archives, thanks to the willing assistance of several volunteers. Sue continued the cleaning and printing of negatives in the Habachi archives and in the special glass plate collection, and the images were later identified by Dr. Henri Riad and John Darnell. We were especially delighted to have our friends Jean and Helen



*Two days after the torrential rains of New Year's Eve, salts begin to crystalize along the tops of walls at Luxor temple.*

Jacquet for two weeks as "working guests" in the archives, classifying prints and several thousand slides from the Habachi collection according to site location. Similarly, our colleague Eberhard Dziobek spent several days identifying Habachi slides of Theban tombs and discussing drawing conventions with the artists. Ellie Smith, assisted for three weeks by Charlie Secchia, and Di Grodzins provided invaluable assistance in completing the housing of the photo archives, numbering negatives,

and inventorying the lantern slides and supplies. Ellie made a superb start on the computerization of the photo archive data base (an integral part of the Getty grant), which reached 5,071 entries before the end of the year, and we were also very fortunate to have Sarah Bevington as a visitor for three weeks; she began computer entries on a separate registry of our 35mm film.

Carol supervised the continuing conservation of our valuable map collection, and Tina and Jay measured all loose maps and plans among the Habachi papers, so that archival sleeves could be ordered to accommodate them.

The weather provided us with the most unwelcome shock of the year. Unusual torrential rains on New Year's Eve and on March 21 soaked the Luxor area for several hours, leaving behind standing pools of water, washed-out roads in desert areas, and flooded homes in town. Chicago House suffered very little damage from the downpour, but within hours of these two storms, vast expanses of salt crystals began to form at the tops of exposed temple walls. For future reference, Sue Lezon and I documented the damage in Luxor Temple on film and videotape. The damage to the Luxor blockyard, where the stone fragments are stored on mastabas, was especially frightening. Protected from groundwater but not from the freakish assault from above, the blocks began oozing black waste water and some started to dissolve into powder under the impact of raindrops. Conservation of the fragments—and the construction of some sort of shelter over the mastabas—will be a major priority for next season.

Richard and Debbie ran the library operations this season, with the frequent assistance of John and Tina for special projects. Two hundred and nineteen new accessions were made this year, and total holdings reached 15,978. To accommodate an ever-increasing influx of scholarly publications—especially in the areas of journals, series, museum catalogues, and archaeology—new shelving was added throughout the library and the books were shifted on a grand scale to take advantage of the extra space. The classification of journals, periodicals, and monographs was reconsidered, and these volumes were reorganized and relabeled. Once again, our colleague, May Trad, kindly came to Chicago House at the end of the season to organize the volumes that required binding and prepare them for shipment to Cairo.

For much of the season, the affairs of the kitchen and household were in Kathy Dorman's hands, including the elaborate preparations for the FOCH tour that was canceled at the last minute. Despite the season's subdued air, Kathy continued to arrange receptions for visiting colleagues and supervised the training of new Egyptian staff in the household. Peter Piccione, managing the house in her absence, coordinated the considerable financial, personnel and supply activities for the Survey with efficiency and skill, and designed and initiated the new data base for the photo archive.

Jill Carlotta Maher once again led our development efforts, a number of which were canceled this winter in Egypt due to the effects of war. The highlight was certainly the gala reception thrown in honor of Chicago House in February by Ambassador and Mrs. Wisner at their Zamalek residence, to which many of the Survey's friends came. In Chicago, the Survey's office was very ably managed by Drew Baumann, who processed donations in our absence and handled our sometimes frantic requests for supplies.

Memorable guests at the house this year, in addition to a delightful visit from the Wisners and their family, included Mr. Donald Rice, Secretary of the Air Force, and his wife, Susan, and the American ambassador to Italy, His Excellency Peter Secchia, and his wife Joan. At the invitation of the U.S. Embassy, Carlotta, Kathy, and I traveled to Cairo to attend a reception for President and Mrs. Bush during their Thanksgiving tour of the Middle East, after which I attended a luncheon given by President Hosni Mubarak in honor of the presidential visit.

The staff this season consisted of the author 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 and Daniel Lanka, photographers; Kathy Dorman and Peter Piccione, house and office administrators; Jill Carlotta Maher, assistant to the director; Diana Grodzins and Elinor Smith, library and photo archive assistants; and Saleh Suleiman Shehat, chief engineer, whose services were invaluable, as always. For much of the season Dr. Henri Riad assisted us in the areas of public relations and local contacts in town and continued to administer the Labib Habachi Archives on behalf of Chicago House. Dr. Henri was instrumental in the relandscaping of the front lawn and in supervising the contract gardeners brought in from the Jolie-Ville Hotel. The physical facilities were kept running by the efforts of our twenty-seven Egyptian employees, some of whom have worked at Chicago

House since the 1940s. We are especially grateful to the members of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization who contributed directly to the success of the season: the late Dr. Sayed Tawfik, Chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, and his successor, Dr. Mohammed Bakr; Dr. Ali Hassan, Supervisor of Antiquities for Upper Egypt; Dr. Mohammed 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. Mohammed Nasr, Chief Inspector of Qurna; and Dr. Madeleine el-Mallah.

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 Frank G. Wisner, and Mrs. Christine Wisner; Wes Egan, Kenton Keith, Frank Ward, and Ken Robinson of the United States Embassy in Cairo; Marc and Charlene Volland; Ashraf and Henny Ghoneima; David Maher; Ann and Ron Wolfe; Abdul Aziz el-Aguizy; Mark Rudkin; Lucia Woods Lindley and Daniel Lindley, Jr.; Jack Josephson; Walter Tower; Gerry Vincent; Richard Weinberger of Trans World Airlines; Candace Raphoon of British Airways; Terry Walz, Iliya and Elsa Harik, Amira Khattab, and Albert Abdel Ahad of the American Research Center in Egypt; Fathi Salib; and Margaret Sears, Evada Waller, and Florence Bonnick of The Oriental Institute. I also wish to acknowledge the fundamental assistance and support of three corporations who have been instrumental in the success of the season: the Amoco Foundation, Inc., The J. Paul Getty Trust, and The Xerox Foundation.

Especially after the dearth of visitors this last season, we will be delighted to welcome members of The Oriental Institute and other friends to Chicago House from October 1 to April 1 (please note that the dates of our season have shifted slightly). 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; the telephone is 382525 (direct dial from the United States: 011-20-95-382525).