



CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN

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THE 1996-1997 SEASON AT CHICAGO HOUSE

By Peter Dorman, Field Director (7/1/89-2/28/97)

The documentation of the Eighteenth Dynasty temple of Amun at Medinet Habu was the primary focus of the seventy-third field season, which opened on October 2, 1996 and closed six months later, on April 1, 1997. Nonetheless, a number of other priorities provided us with a remarkable variety of activities and discoveries during the year, especially in the area of conservation, that have led to unexpected new avenues for research.

As always, the collation of drawings and consultations with the artists formed the major tasks for the epigraphers this year, who concentrated largely on the interior painted chapels at the temple of Amun, decorated jointly by Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III. In the course of six months at Medinet Habu, epigraphers John and Debbie Darnell, Drew Baumann, and myself worked on forty-seven drawings in various stages of completion, and of these twenty-five were given final director's approval for publication. Artists Tina Di Cerbo, Sue Osgood, Margaret De Jong, and Linda Cohn-Kobylecky undertook the penciling and inking on twenty-two additional enlargements, all of these located in the exterior portions of the Eighteenth Dynasty temple, which will form the basis for a future volume: the sanctuary for the portable bark of Amun and the columns and ambulatory that surround it. The ambitious goal of this season was to complete the epigraphic field work for the chapels and facade that will comprise the subject matter for the first volume on the temple of Amun; thanks to extraordinary efforts made by the epigraphers and artists—and despite the unexpected demands arising from the conservation work at Medinet Habu—we came within five collations of meeting the goal. The brevity of this summary on our epigraphic work belies the many weeks and months devoted to the documentary effort, nor does it do justice to the many small questions resolved in regard to the sequence of recarving and repainting evident in the painted chapels; nonetheless, a number of other activities require more explicit description.

The five-year Luxor Temple Fragment Conservation Project, initiated last year under the guidance of conservator John Stewart and funded through a grant awarded by the Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) of the American Research Center, was resumed at the beginning of December. John returned to Chicago House to make a brief condition survey of the inscribed block fragments behind Luxor Temple and to review conservation procedures with Hiroko Kariya, who then undertook the tasks of consolidation, desalinization, and documentation for the next three months on-site. The treatments of the stone fragments included successive applications of a consolidant. Several methods of application were attempted, the most common being the painstaking procedure of drip-feeding from a glass pipette, occasionally enhanced by prewetting the surface with ethanol to

facilitate absorption. The chemicals must be used under restricted ranges of temperature and humidity, and Hiroko was able to control these atmospheric limits to a certain degree under makeshift shelters erected in the blockyard. It is hoped that next season a more durable laboratory can be set up to provide more stable temperature and humidity controls. Hiroko also tested different kinds of poultices to remove salts from the fragments, and analyzed the salts as well. At the end of the season, a protective covering of steel and canvas was built over one mastaba where the more fragile fragments are now stored, to keep rain from hitting deteriorating surfaces.

A second program of conservation and documentation was begun during the past season, at the small temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, again thanks to a generous award from the EAP. This ambitious project includes funds to support the epigraphic tasks of the Survey, but the emphasis remains on the multiple problems of site protection: the structural stability of the temple, the cleaning of wall reliefs, the consolidation of the roof, the improvement of water drainage, and the enhancement of visitor access. The major concern has been the evident settling of the side walls of the Ptolemaic columned hall, the focus of work during the past two seasons, where trenches had been previously opened up by Egyptian conservators in an effort to minimize capillary action of ground water on the temple walls. In October we were pleased to have Dr. Conor Power, a structural engineer from Boston, on hand for advice on how best to stabilize the walls and protect their foundations, which consist of reused blocks, most of which originally belonged to a monument of the Kushite period. After consideration of his valuable recommendations, together with the observations made by John Stewart and Hiroko Kariya on the condition of the subterranean stones, it was decided to photograph and plan the foundation courses to the extent possible without disrupting the physical structure of the walls and to rebury them in situ to minimize the corrosive effects of salt damage on excavated stones recently exposed to open air. Trenches along the side walls of the Ptolemaic hall were reopened so as to reveal as many of the subterranean blocks as possible, and photographer Yarko Kobylecky was then faced with the sudden task of documenting 170 Kushite and Ptolemaic relief blocks out of approximately 400 stones exposed in the foundations, all of them located inside narrow trenches with very little room to maneuver. As the foundations came to light, Tina Di Cerbo undertook the drawing of elevations of the walls, carefully renumbering the blocks and using the plans as a key for the ongoing photography.

The reopening of the trenches was supervised by stone cutter Dany Roy, placed in charge of the structural work at the small temple, who also faced the challenge of moving

a granite monolith located along the northern wall of the Ptolemaic hall. This engraved stone, originally from the tomb of Pedamenope (Theban tomb 33), had been reused in antiquity as the lintel of the northern doorway of the hall, and after the initial clearance of the temple in modern times it had been left upright on the ground. Using wooden rollers, ropes, planks, a series of jacks, and excellent advice from our colleagues at the Centre Franco-Égyptien at Karnak, Dany and a crew of four workmen from Chicago House were able to shift the massive lintel away from the foundations to a position next to the northern gateway of Taharqa, where it rests on heavy wooden beams until a new emplacement for it can be made. From excavation photographs of the Oriental Institute taken in the 1920s, however, it was evident that the stone had not been moved during the excavation of the temple by Uvo Hölscher, so that the trench clearance below this point became a focus of interest. Preliminary examination of this area, supervised by Debbie and John Darnell, revealed a section of decayed mud brick and sandstone in the upper strata, while toward the bottom of the trench this mixed material gave way to a series of bricks laid along a ramp-like slope leading down toward the lowest foundation courses.

During the reclearance of the interior trench of the northern wall, the workmen made an unexpected discovery, to our great astonishment: the statuette of a priestly official, lying in pure sand below the threshold of the northern doorway and just within the Ptolemaic hall itself. To judge from earlier excavation records, Hölscher's clearance of the hall had, in general, descended to a depth of well over a meter; but the area of the northern doorway had apparently been avoided, perhaps because it was needed as a point of egress for the dumping of excavated debris. Whatever the reason, it is clear that the statuette had been deposited in the original sand bedding for the foundations of the Ptolemaic hall, presumably after it had been damaged and deemed no longer worth keeping as a votive object. Now headless and having lost its base, the statuette is nonetheless a magnificent piece of minor sculpture, probably carved during the 4th century B.C. The inscription of the back pillar identifies its owner as Tjanefer, whose duties involved the cults of Amun at the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu and at the Ramesseum, the cult of the deified architect, Amenhotep son of Hapu, and services at the temple of Hathor-Maat at Deir el Medina. Tjanefer is portrayed with a long priestly robe, tied high over the waist, with an undertunic and a document case tucked under his left arm.

A different challenge faced us at the southeast corner of the hall, where several subterranean walls had been discovered by Hölscher and identified by him as a Kushite tomb. Their interior surfaces were covered with columns of texts and vignettes that had been systematically attacked with chisels, doubtless at the time they were covered over by the Ptolemaic construction, and once again we asked Yarko to obtain complete photodocumentation. With pictures in hand, John and Drew spent many hours in the deep trenches, trying to establish what remains of the original text and searching for parallels at the Chicago House library. Their tentative conclusion is that the composition seems to be an underworld text based on the treatise known as "Amduat," or the Book of What Is in the Netherworld.

Preparatory to refilling the trenches, Hiroko investigated the condition of the exposed foundation stones, noting areas of severe deterioration, testing for salts, and treating twenty-nine blocks in immediate danger of losing their surface decoration. Following procedures recommended by the conservators, Dany then undertook the reburial of the foundation courses, using soil originally removed from the trenches that had been sifted to remove larger particles. The finer soil was intended as a cushion for the fragile surfaces of the blocks and to maintain the same relative content of soluble salts in the foundations and the earth. In successive layers approximately 30 cm deep, this fine soil was compacted between the surfaces of the foundation stones and a horizontal plank held in place by sand bags; the remainder of the trench was filled with clean sand. On the surface a layer of pebbles was spread to reduce climatic changes at ground level and to discourage animal and human disturbance of the trenches. As a final measure, five monitors were placed at strategic points around the perimeter of the hall to act as indicators of future subsidence in the walls or the doorjamb.

The conservation efforts at Luxor and Medinet Habu could not have been successfully carried out without the gracious permission of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, as well as the invaluable advice and keen interest of the staff members of the EAP in Cairo, in particular the Director, Dr. Robert "Chip" Vincent, and Technical Advisors Dr. Bill Remsen and Dr. Jarek Dobrolowski, whose visits to Luxor gave us the opportunity to exchange differing points of view and to consider various procedural options. We are most grateful for their enthusiastic support.

One memorable highlight of the year was the reattachment of the face of the goddess Mut to the colossal pair statue of Amun and his consort that stands inside the northern entrance of the Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple. Identified in 1995 by Ray Johnson as part of the Luxor dyad, the face had been shipped to Luxor in the summer of 1996 by Dr. Mohammed Saleh, Director of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, through the kind permission of Dr. Abd el-Halim Nur ed-Din, then Secretary General of the SCA. With the arrival of conservator Ellen Pearlstein of the Brooklyn Museum in the month of January 1997, Ray began final logistical planning with Dr. Mohammed el-Saghir, Supervisor of Pharaonic Antiquities in Luxor, for the challenging task of reattachment. Working on wooden scaffolding erected around the dyad and in full view of the hundreds of visitors pouring through Luxor Temple, Ellen inspected and cleaned the statue and drilled preliminary holes for the attachment dowel with the assistance of Hiroko; Dany Roy lent his practical knowledge to solve the problem of hoisting the four-hundred-pound (180 kg) head into exact position. In one remarkable twelve-hour operation, the head of Mut was removed from storage for the last time and raised onto the scaffold; a dowel hole was bored into the rear surface of her face, the break surfaces were cleaned and sealed, a steel dowel was inserted, and the head reattached with a layer of epoxy. The final joining was achieved at 7:30 PM, illuminated by studio lights set up by Yarko, when only a few tourists were on hand to applaud the event. While the head was still strapped in position in the succeeding days, Ellen completed the cleaning of Mut's face, revealing a good deal of original paint around the eyes, and mortar fills were then applied to stabi-

lize the statue and to partially reconstruct the areas of loss. This unusual restoration of a statue still standing in its ancient location was made possible by generous contributions from Mrs. Marjorie Aronow and Mr. Jack Josephson, to whom we are deeply indebted for making the reconstruction possible.

In addition to his task of documenting the newly revealed relief blocks at Medinet Habu, Yarko was kept busy in the studio at Chicago House, making new enlargements and keeping up with the demands of bleaching and blueprinting drawings for the artists and epigraphers. He also completed a series of detail views required for our second volume on Luxor Temple as well as new photography for the Amun and Mut dyad, which will be included in this publication. On hand to assist Yarko with his tasks this year was Ellie Smith, the Survey's archival assistant, who spent February and March at Chicago House; her boundless energy and enthusiasm were most welcome toward the end of the season, when she acted as Yarko's faithful assistant in the field and registered over four hundred large-format negatives and seventy-five rolls of 35mm film, bringing our precious photo archives data base up to date.

As in every recent season, Debbie Darnell was responsible for the administration of the Chicago House library, one of the finest research collections for the study of Egyptology anywhere in the world. Over two hundred books were accessioned in 1996-97, bringing our total holdings to 17,381 items. With the assistance of John and Drew, Debbie organized the inventory of books that had been delivered during the previous summer, as well as a separate shipment of library volumes that had been bound in Cairo under the supervision of our friend and colleague, May Trad. Debbie continued to cultivate contacts with booksellers in Europe and Cairo, investigated the purchase of survey maps from the Luxor cadastral office, and prepared payment authorizations and new orders. For several weeks our dedicated library volunteer, Nan Ray, rejoined the staff in Luxor and was an invaluable help in assisting her with accessioning, stamping, and labeling new books; Nan also updated final entries on the library series data bases created during the last several seasons.

Our administrator, Ahmed Harfoush, managed the multifarious tasks of running the office and household functions of the Survey during this season, putting in many long hours at the end of the season installing a completely new financial management system and entering the season's financial records. Ahmed did yeoman service in helping to plan and run the annual Friends of Chicago House tour, which proved to be a great success again this November, featuring Thanksgiving dinner served poolside at the Winter Palace Hotel and an unforgettable day trip to the temple of Hathor at Dendera.

One noticeable gap in that festive weekend was the absence of Carlotta Maher, still recovering from a broken hip suffered in Chicago the month before; her charm and effervescence were very much missed. But Carlotta did arrive in Luxor to spend six weeks with us in January and February and continued her invaluable fundraising activities, welcoming guests to the house for tea, continuing her library lectures to fascinated tour groups, and dashing off countless notes to well wishers all over the world. We were delighted to have her back at Chicago House even for a limited engage-

ment. Partly in recognition of her unflagging efforts on behalf of the Survey since 1985, Carlotta was awarded the first Breasted Medallion at a gala dinner in May, an event attended by over 350 people including, thanks to Di Grodzins and Marjorie Aronow, a large number of past and present Chicago House staff.

Back at the Oriental Institute, Hratch Papazian handled the "home" operations for our development efforts, recording incoming contributions and keeping us in touch with the latest donor news. The most important financial development for the Survey during the season was the establishment of the joint committee (with ARCE) and the trusteeship for the new USAID endowment that now provides additional income for Chicago House on a perpetual basis. We owe a special debt to Tom Heagy for his kindness in serving as the Survey representative on this committee. We are also grateful to Anita and Solon Stone for their generous gift of a Hewlett Packard Laserjet printer for our office in Chicago.

Our colleagues from North Karnak, Drs. Jean and Helen Jaquet, were in residence at Chicago House for the month of March and provided timely advice on the pottery finds emerging from the trench clearance at Medinet Habu. Helen also continued to make great progress on her manuscript on the rooftop graffiti from the Temple of Khonsu at Medinet Habu, to be published as an Epigraphic Survey volume in the established Khonsu series.

In February Ambassador and Mrs. Edward S. Walker, Jr., graciously hosted a large reception at their residence on the grounds of the American Embassy in honor of Chicago House, an annual occasion that has given us an opportunity to remain in contact with our Cairo friends in the business, diplomatic, and professional communities. We remain indebted to the Walkers for their keen interest and sponsorship of the Survey's work on the monuments of ancient Thebes.

Because of increased tourism to Egypt this last year, our guest book was filled with the names of 891 visitors during the season. Thirty-six library lectures were presented to organized groups that had scheduled their visits in advance, and a great many more (sometimes three a day) were given to small groups and individual drop-ins. In the course of the season we welcomed sixty-three dinner guests and twenty overnight guests, most of them professional colleagues, who were able to utilize our research facilities to the fullest, spending a total of 121 guest nights under our roof.

During the spring months at the Oriental Institute, the editing of the final manuscript was completed for the second volume to appear on Luxor Temple: *The Facade, Portals, Upper Registers, Columns, Marginalia, and Statuary of the Colonnade Hall*, now augmented by the new photography completed on the reassembled colossal dyad of Amun and Mut and by Ray's study on the statuary. John completed work on the translation and commentary, compiled the glossary, and assembled a working mockup of the plate section; Drew assisted in double checking the glossary and Debbie completed notes on the column cartouches. We anticipate sending this publication to the printers in the fall of 1997.

This was also a season of turnover for Chicago House. On March 1, 1997, I handed over directorial duties to my successor at the Epigraphic Survey, Ray Johnson. As a dedicated Survey artist for eighteen seasons, Ray has both the professional competence and institutional familiarity to

provide direction and vision for the years ahead. Ray also served as Assistant Director during 1995-97, most capably filling in for me during my mid-season absence from Luxor. So it is with confidence in the future and a sense of great indebtedness toward those staff members who have served at Chicago House since 1989 that I depart.

This past season the professional staff consisted of the author as field director (until March 1); John Darnell, Deborah Darnell, and Andrew Baumann, epigraphers; Ray Johnson, Christina Di Cerbo, Susan Osgood, Margaret De Jong, and Linda Cohn-Kobylecky, artists; Yarko Kobylecky, photographer; Hiroko Kariya, Dany Roy, Ellen Pearlstein, and John Stewart, conservators; Ahmed Harfoush, house and office administrator; Jill Carlotta Maher, assistant to the director; and Elinor Smith, photo archives assistant. Saleh Suleiman Shehat, chief engineer, was invaluable in keeping all aspects of the expedition up and running, and Dr. Henri Riad, our resident Egyptologist, continued to assist us in contacts with the local police and security offices, as well as in administering the Labib Habachi Archives.

We are most grateful to the numerous members of the Supreme Council for Antiquities who contributed directly to the success of the season. In addition, I gratefully express thanks to the many friends of Chicago House. Two institutions in particular have provided substantial assistance and support to the Epigraphic Survey this past season, and to them we offer special appreciation and recognition: the Amoco Foundation, Inc., and the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust.

As always, members of the Oriental Institute and other friends of Chicago House are most welcome to drop by for a tour of our facilities. The house will be open this coming year from October 15th to April 15th. We encourage all visitors to write to us in advance if possible, to let us know the dates of their visits, so that we can confirm a time for a library tour that is mutually convenient. Our address in Egypt: Chicago House, Corniche el-Nil, Luxor, Arab Republic of Egypt. Net surfers can find our Oriental Institute home page at <http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/EPI/Epigraphic.html>.

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