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Apr 2001

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES - ASIA
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

OI NEWSLETTER - FIRST MONDAY - April 2001

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UNITS

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

The scanning of the 1,100+ photographs from the Breasted 1905-7 Expedition to Egypt and Sudan was completed on March 24, thanks to the long hours put in by Lab Assistant Katherine Strange (prior to spring break) and by Nicholas Lezak and Sriram Kanteti (College undergraduate students who worked overtime during spring break). All that remains is the creation of the 2,200+ HTML files to house these photographic images on the website, which are going to be automatically generated by a program written by volunteer Peg Cipolla. Peg will start this process as soon as John Larson has dealt with inconsistencies in caption spelling, person and place names, etc. We hope to have the entire project up on the website by mid to late April - so check next month's newsletter.

Discussions regarding the moving of the OI website to an NSIT server continued in March, and we learned that NSIT now has the computer that would function as a database backend for our website up and running.

With the help of Katherine Strange we are going to make several changes to the "look and feel" of the existing OI website during April, in anticipation of the move to the NSIT server AND to elicit comments from the OI faculty and staff regarding our future website's "look and feel".

Based on my request for suggested new computer equipment in the Computer Lab, a laser printer in the Lab and a film recorder (for making 35mm slides from computer images) presently lead the list. I'm still accepting suggestions!!!

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DEVELOPMENT / Tim Cashion

Please note the following lectures:

Wed, Apr 18, 5:30-7:00 PM. Martha Roth, "Making Millennia Matter." Martha will speak about the CAD to members, alumni, and the general public at the Gleacher Center. Admission is free, no registration is required.

Wed, Apr 25, 8:00 PM. Jason Thompson of American University of Cairo will speak on Egyptologist Edward Lane. This lecture will be held in Breasted Hall. Admission is free, no registration is required.

The Annual Dinner will be held June 3, 2001 (a Sunday). It will be held on campus, in the OI and the Reunion tents across the street. As in previous years, we will ask our Visiting Committee members to underwrite tickets for faculty and senior staff and their guests. The dinner will benefit the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, and Martha Roth will deliver remarks in Breasted Hall. The NEH will match the net proceeds of the dinner.

This year's Members Book Sale resulted in just under \$15,000 of sales for the Publications Office.

As of April 1, 2001, Basic and Associate memberships totaled \$92,827.66, down 7% from last year.

In 2000-2001, the Tour Program mounted two public tours (Egypt with Robert Ritner in February, and Turkey/Cyprus coming in May with Richard Chambers) and made private tour arrangements for Arthur and Lee Herbst (he is the Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, she is a docent), John and Jeanne Rowe (John is the Co-CEO of Exelon, ComEd's parent company), Tom Heagy and Norm Bobins of the LaSalle Bank, and Penny Pritzker and her family.

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MUSEUM / Karen Wilson

The Oriental Institute's Naw Rouz celebration on Wednesday evening, March 28, attracted more than 300 visitors for festivities co-sponsored by the Development and Museum Education Offices in collaboration with the Iranian Cultural Society, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and the Persian Cultural Society, a University of Chicago student organization. The celebration included a superb buffet of traditional foods and a beautiful Haft Seen table surrounded by dozens of bouquets of sweetly-scented spring flowers, all provided by the Iranian Cultural Society.

After the buffet, a special program in Breasted Hall included a lecture on Naw Rouz traditions by John Woods, Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies; a reading of Persian poetry by Heshmat Moayyad, Professor of Classical and Modern Persian Literature; and the world premiere screening of "Children of the Sun," a film on the history of central Iran by film maker Mansooreh Saboori. This event united both ancient times and contemporary traditions as it brought together Chicago's Iranian community, University faculty and staff and their families, and Oriental Institute members and friends from Hyde Park and throughout the city.

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

A test file (pfd) of the Demotic Dictionary for the words beginning with the letter F was posted to the Institute's website. After the introductory pages are

formatted and posted, these dictionary pages will be announced as available via the Internet. Soon afterward, the words beginning with five additional letters will be added, with as many as five more letters to be added before the end of the year. Unlike the online Demotic grammar (SAOC 45) that was posted with the same format as the printed version, the dictionary is being posted in half pages, so the pagination of the online version will be different from that of the printed version. Work continues on the CDD as time permits.

OIP 117 (Persepolis Seals) -- We still await author corrections for two appendices and instructions for plates that show comparisons of selected iconographic features. In the meantime, work continues on parts of the manuscript that will not be affected by corrections to those appendices; unfortunately, the entire manuscript cannot be put into its final form until all parts have been received and processed.

OIP 118 (Scarabs etc. from Medinet Habu) -- At last check, 180 of the 350 scarabs (etc.) have been placed in the plate section (as many three photographs and three line drawings illustrate a single scarab) and ninety-five of the catalog entries have been formatted.

OIP 119 (Theban Rock Inscriptions) -- Most of the author corrections have been received; we are still awaiting four transcriptions, two photographs, and two line drawings.

OIP 120 (Chogha Bonut) and OIP 121 (Ur III Texts from Amar-Suena) -- Work continues on these manuscripts as time permits.

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

Roofing above the Elizabeth Morse Genius Reading Room of the Research Archives will commence tomorrow, Tuesday April 3. We will be closed until the middle of the afternoon (or until they get done) each day work is in progress. We will open each afternoon as soon as we receive the all clear from the roofing crew. This may be as early as 2 PM, but it may also be a couple of hours later, depending on the weather and the progress of the work. On days when we open in mid-afternoon we will remain open until 8PM. The front doors to the building will remain open on the same schedule. The weekend schedule will remain unchanged. Rainy days will have the normal (9-5) schedule.

On Tuesday March 27th I visited the factory in St. Louis where the lighting fixtures are being built. I examined the scheme for illuminating the Elizabeth Morse Genius Reading Room with the new fixtures and I am mostly satisfied. Pending the satisfactory result of a couple of tests, we expect to approve the plan this week. The fixtures will be delivered at the end of June and installed shortly thereafter. A brochure from St. Louis Antique Lighting Company is posed on the bulletin board outside the doors to the Research Archives.

We continue to work through the cataloguing backlog, having added about fifteen-hundred items to the on-line catalogue in the past month as well as a couple of hundred entries in Abzu.

The January-February Acquisitions list will appear presently and will be available via the RABooks email-list and on the web:
<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/RABooks.html>

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PROJECTS
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EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / Ray Johnson

[n.b. Two photographic attachments illustrating this Epigraphic Survey article will appear at the end of the April Newsletter

The file names are:

P1010170.JPG Dany, upright statue

P1010003.JPG

If the images are not visible at the end of the newsletter, you will find them in your mail attachments folder under these names]

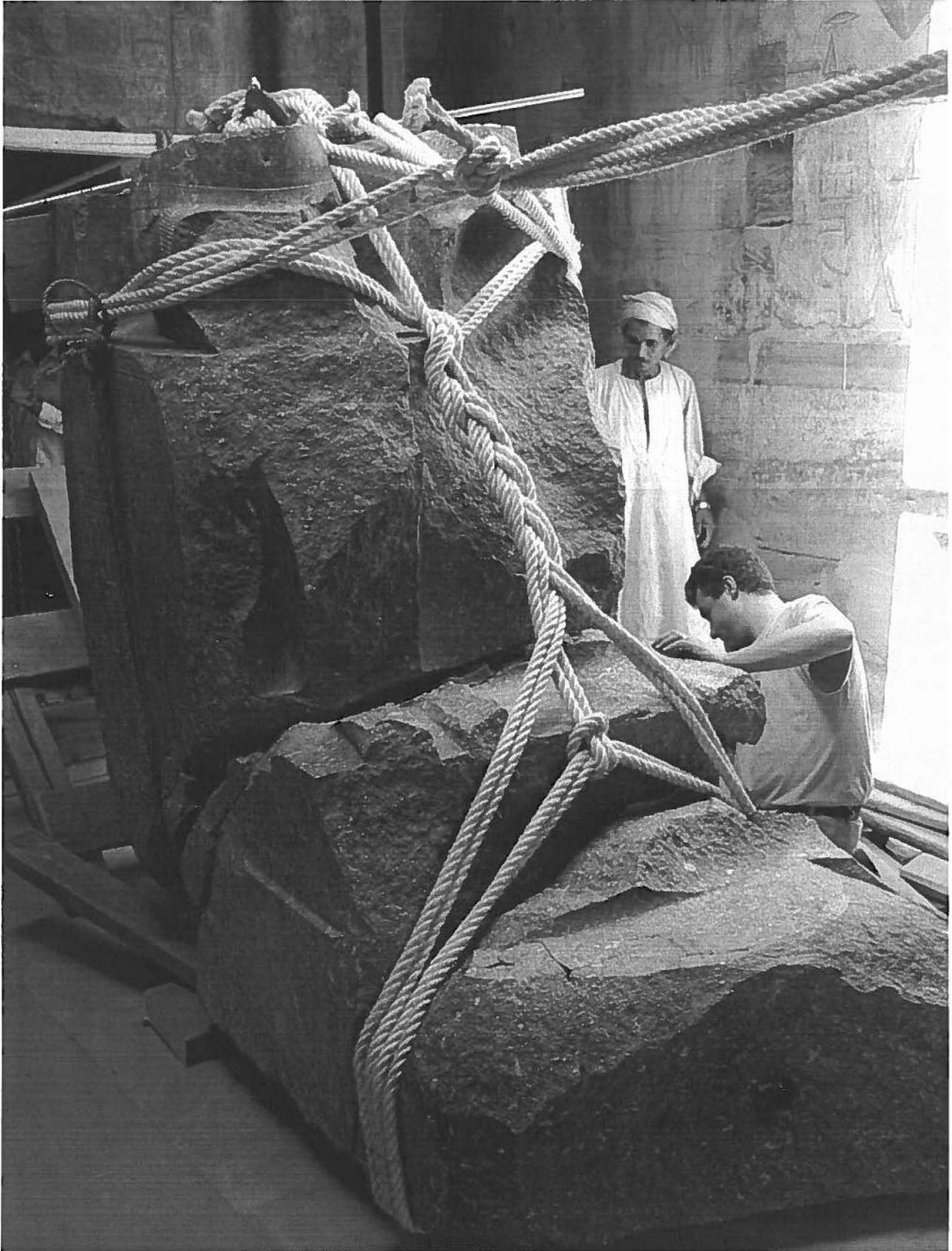
We are now beginning the last two weeks of the 2000/2001 Chicago House field season, usually among the busiest weeks of the season as the epigraphy, conservation, and restoration work wraps up and is squared away, so this report will by necessity be short (with apologies). I will write a more detailed report next month.

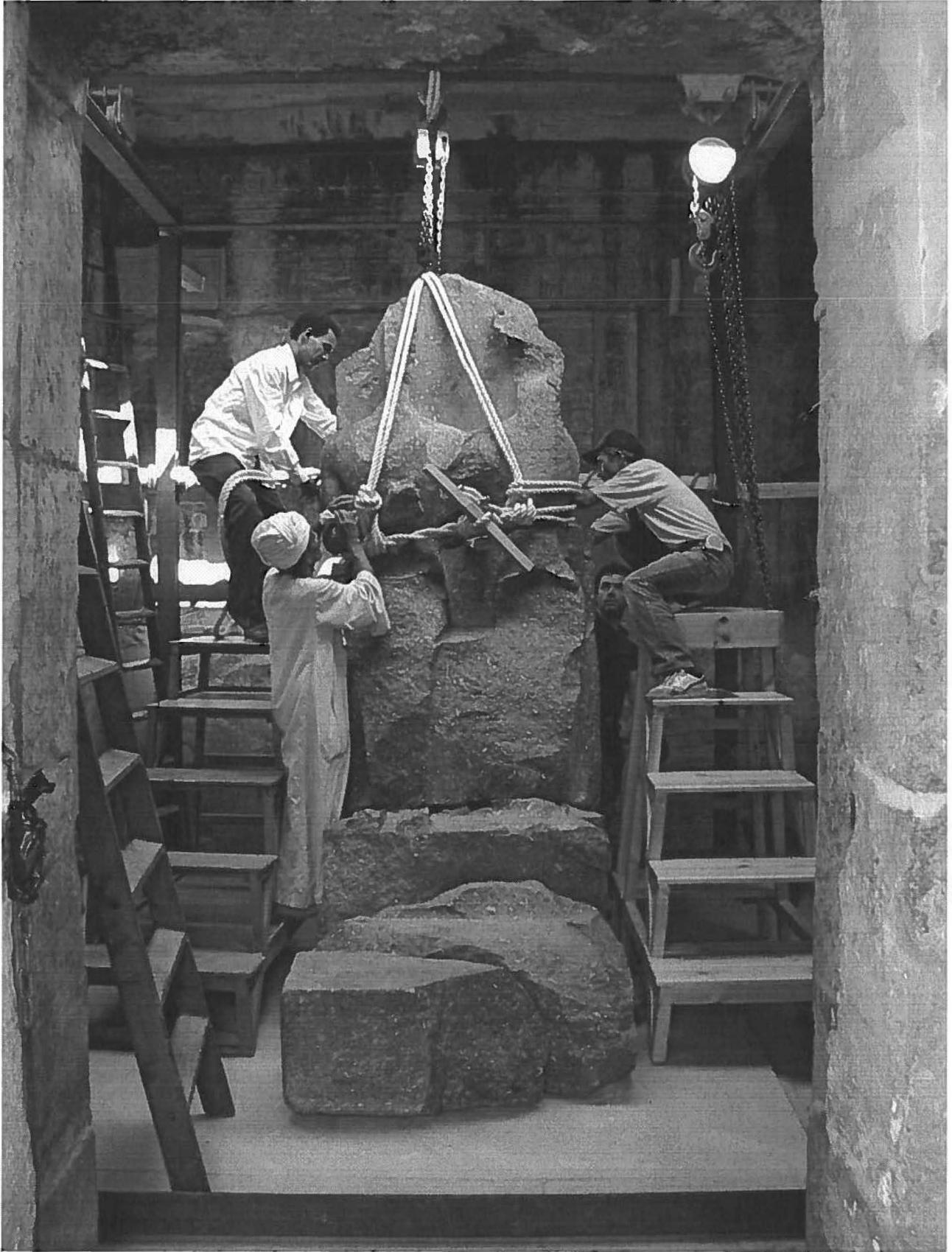
The groundwater issues round table scheduled for March 18, hosted by Chicago House and the US Ambassador Kurtzer, was cancelled by the Ambassador when the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Dr. Gaballa was called away elsewhere and could not attend. There will be another meeting in mid-May, for which I will return to Egypt, hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, the Agricultural Policy Reform Program, and the SCA. The meeting will address issues of de-watering around the Luxor antiquities sites on both sides of the river, with briefings by various agencies implementing these measures and their embassies, Egyptian and foreign, as well as the foreign archaeological missions working in those areas. Chicago House will present the findings of structural engineer Conor Power regarding the structural problems of Luxor Temple which must be taken into consideration during the de-watering process. I am hoping that Conor himself will be able to present his findings.

Last Saturday, March 24, the upper section of the colossal granodiorite statue of Thutmose III and Amun was rejoined to its body in the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu by stonecutter Dany Roy, conservator Lotfi Hassan, and our workmen Ali, Saber, Hassan, and Sayid. This completes the reassembly and restoration of the largest pieces of the group (the lower section was rejoined and went up on March 20) in its original architectural setting, the first sanctuary chamber, and it is quite a presence! I had hoped that we would at least get the base together this season and the rest next October, so we are actually considerably ahead of schedule. Next season we will re-attach the smaller fragments from all over the statue, for which there is no time now.

We are experiencing an unusually warm spring; yesterday the temperature hit 103 degrees F, in the shade! Yow! Most of the Chicago House staff will be departing Luxor on April 15. I will be here until the 17th, and will then be in Cairo for a few days delivering reports for the season to the SCA, and submitting our proposal for next season's work, as well as security forms. My time during the next two weeks will be largely spent writing them, so I must close now and get back to it.

Best wishes from us all; see you after the 20th! I'm looking forward to some cool weather...





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INDIVIDUALS
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ROBERT RITNER

On April 4, Robert Ritner will deliver the annual ANSHE lecture at Johns Hopkins University on the topic "The Nature of Ancient Egyptian Magic."

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MARK LEHNER

I heard from several recipients that the final section of the Giza report was missing from the March newsletter. Here are the last two items, in case you were left on the edge of your chair, or could not sleep for wondering about the conclusion.

4. The Wall Askew and the Western Gate of Main Street

The 1991 trench in which we found the cut for the foundation trench of the Wall of the Crow is about centered in an open area between the Eastern and Western Compounds. This open area is about 16 meters wide at the north near the Wall of the Crow, and about 14 meters wide 15 meters at the southern limit of area WCS. The trapezoidal shape is because of the Wall Askew which runs close beside the eastern wall of the Western Compound, but not parallel to it. The north-south walls of the Eastern and Western Compounds are almost perpendicular to the great Wall of the Crow, which is angled about 5.5 degrees north of true east. The compound walls are about 3.5 degrees east of true south. Our gallery walls and the whole system of walls across our site is turned slight counterclockwise to the cardinal directions. But the Wall Askew is turned even more than all the other architecture, running south at an angle 97 degrees/87 degrees with respect to the Wall of the Crow, or about 13 degrees east of due south.

When I wrote my last dispatch I thought the linear mound of toppled fieldstones here was one great wall (the West side of my hypothetical north-south "Broadway"). When Fiona Baker cleared this mounded deposit, it turned out to be two walls -- the eastern wall of the Western Compound, and the Wall Askew, which is 2 meters thick. The two walls are only 50 centimeters apart at the west end of the Western Compound, and about 1.05 meters apart at the south limit of the WCS excavation. The difference reflects the amount that the Wall Askew is askew to the Western Compound.

Now, as Fiona was clearing this arrangement, Mohsen Kamal supervised Reis Shehat and the workers as they stripped the lowest sandy overburden following Main Street westward from our farthest clearing west as of May 2000. They cleared the sunken track of Main Street - sunken between the north and south fieldstone walls that define the street - - another 15 meters west. There the street stops between two stony humps. These humps turned out to be the north and south sides of the true western gate of Main Street, about 4 meters wide. This gate is 53.50 meters west of the entrance of Main Street into Gallery Sets II and III. The far western gate is an opening in the continuation of the 2-meter thick fieldstone Wall Askew that Fiona cleared 88 meters to the north where it attaches to the Wall of the Crow. From the western gate of Main Street, the Wall Askew runs at least another 47 meters farther south.

It appears likely that the thick Wall Askew, with its odd angle, is the major western boundary of our 4th Dynasty settlement. However, the Western Compound lies farther west, outside the Wall Askew, between it and the yawning doorway in the Wall of the Crow. South of the Western Compound, and also west of the Wall Askew, a massive building appears to lie buried at the High Place.

5. The High Place

Mohammed Musilhi's clearing of the overburden reached the modern Coptic Cemetery at the Northwest corner of our site. We left a line of sand piles as a barrier between our cleared area and the horse and camel riders who cross north and south on the remaining track of overburden from the gate or doorway in the Wall of the Crow. Just in front of the Coptic Cemetery, the ancient ruined surface is higher than any other part of the site -- as high as 18.63 meters above sea level compared with about 16.50 as a general level of the top of the mud mass in the area of the galleries to the east.

This high place begins on a line about 55 meters west of the east end of the Wall of the Crow or about 55 meters west of the west side of the Gallery Sets I-II-III. The high place extends about 75 meters south of the Wall of the Crow, or about 55 meters south of area WCS. The Western Compound in WCS may be attached to whatever building lies buried in the high place.

In two widely separated places on the edges of the High Place we have found nicely cut slabs of fine white limestone embedded in the ancient surface. These slabs have one face cut at an angle like the casing stones on pyramids and mastabas. (The chisel marks do not seem like those commonly found on Old Kingdom tomb casings, however.) One slab lies in the ruined surface near the border of our cleared area, WCS, along the north side of the High Place. The other lies 35 meters away off the west side of the High Place. Was some building here encased with sloping walls of fine white limestone? All over the top of the high place there are chips and fragments of fine red granite from Aswan. As soon as we are able to begin work after this week of Bhairam vacation we will clean the last sand covering the High Place. Hopefully we will soon see what kind of building lies below.

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EMILY TEETER

Emily Teeter returned from leading an Oriental Institute-sponsored tour to Egypt for Mr. Tom Heagy and his friends. The program featured active excavations including Hierakonpolis and north Abydos.

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