

EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

W. Raymond Johnson

On April 15, 2005, the Oriental Institute's Epigraphic Survey completed its eighty-first, six-month field season in Luxor, Egypt. What follows is the report on our activities at Medinet Habu Temple and Luxor Temple from October 15, 2004 through April 15, 2005.

Medinet Habu Small Amun Temple: Epigraphic Documentation

With the completion of the epigraphic recording in the six inner chambers and sanctuary façade for the forthcoming publication *Medinet Habu IX, The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part 1: The Inner Sanctuaries* (sixty-four facsimile drawings total), epigraphers J. Brett McClain, Harold Hays, and Jen Kimpton and artists Margaret De Jong and Susan Osgood devoted almost the entire season to work in the ambulatory and bark shrine and on the Eighteenth Dynasty temple façade. A review of the documentation of the inscribed wall, architrave, and pillar surfaces of that area made us realize that there is far too much material for a single volume, which was the original plan. The decision to divide the remaining portions of the core temple into two volumes determined the focus of this season, with an emphasis on completing the drawings for *Medinet Habu X, The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part 2: The Bark Sanctuary Ambulatory* as soon as possible, although work on *Medinet Habu XI, The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part 3: The Bark Sanctuary* continued at the same time.



Figure 1. Epigraphic Survey professional staff 2004/2005

Breakdown of the facsimile drawings in various stages of the Chicago House process worked on this season is as follows:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Penciling completed: | Eighteen drawing enlargements |
| Inking completed: | Ten drawing enlargements |
| Collation Completed: | Twenty-six drawings |
| Transfer Check Completed: | Eight drawings |
| Director Check Completed: | Ten drawings |
| Total drawings worked on during the season: | Seventy-two |

Tina Di Cerbo assisted by Richard Jasnow continued the documentation, mapping, translation, and interpretation of the graffiti throughout the Medinet Habu complex, primarily in the mortuary temple of Ramesses III and the small Amun temple. Tina also continued working on a series of digital key plans recording the exact locations of all the graffiti in the precinct.

Conservation, Excavation, and Documentation

Medinet Habu conservators Lotfi Hassan, Adel Aziz, and Nahed Samir worked on site from October 18, 2005 until April 12, 2005. During this time they finished the cleaning of the painted reliefs of the sanctuary façade of the Eighteenth Dynasty temple and replaced old restoration infill where the stone surface is missing. This area was covered with a thin film of dirt and in some upper sections over the doorways with a greasy black residue from medieval burning. Cleaning methods included poulticing with Sepiolite to extract salts and moisture, and chemical cleaning with Butylamine to remove the greasy stains and encrustations. Old cement infilling was removed manually and replaced with hydraulic lime and sandstone powder mortar infill.

This season the conservators started a major consolidation program of the sanctuary's exterior ground level block courses which have been showing increasing signs of decay (loss of stone surface and fracturing) due to corrosive ground water salts. They consolidated deteriorating exterior wall blocks on the southwestern side of the sanctuary (to the corner of the platform) and on the northern interior Ptolemaic wall adjacent to the Kushite Pylon to the east. Debris against the southwestern wall area was removed 1 m out and 1 m down for several meters along the wall to better expose the decayed areas for treatment. (This part of the small Amun temple was excavated and reburied in the 1930s by the University of Chicago under the direction of Uvo Hölscher, and is published in *The Excavation of Medinet Habu Volume 2: The Temples of the Eighteenth Dynasty* (Oriental Institute Publications 41, Chicago, 1939). This season the walls were cleaned, and block sections which had become detached because of the decay were removed and consolidated with acrylic emulsion (primal AC33) diluted 1:1 in H₂O and were afterward re-affixed to the consolidated wall.

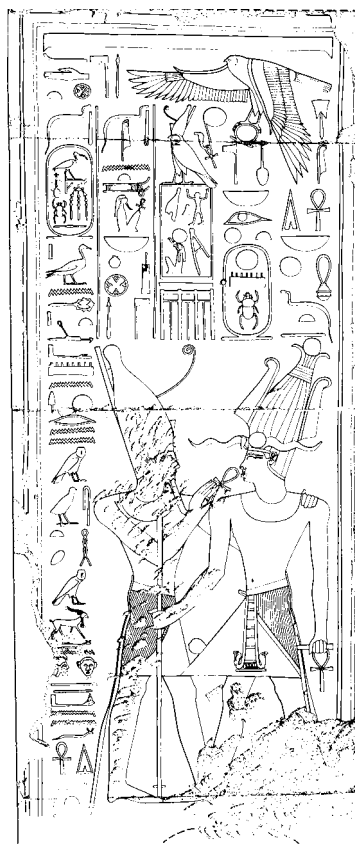


Figure 2. Atum holding life to the nose of Thutmoses III; Medinet Habu small Amun temple ambulatory (MHB 109). Facsimile drawing by Susan Osgood. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky

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Figure 3. Epigraphic copying at the small Amun temple, Medinet Habu; artist Margaret De Jong and epigrapher J. Brett McClain. Photo by Ray Johnson

Surface consolidation treatment included injection with acrylic emulsion and infilling with hydraulic lime and sandstone powder. The two areas of treatment were roped off to protect them from further damage, and the consolidation will continue next season.

The Naos Room

In the back Naos Room artist Margaret De Jong, senior epigrapher Brett McClain, and I finished the collation of the red-painted inscription of Ptolemy IX on the red-granite naos, after which stone cutter Dany Roy erected heavy steel scaffolding, winched the five-ton naos across the room to the opposite (east) side, and secured it in place. This naos was not an original part of the Eighteenth Dynasty sanctuary, but had been inserted in the chamber by taking down the back wall since it was larger than the doorways. Once the naos was moved, photographer Yarko Kobylecky took large-format condition photographs of the back west wall of the sanctuary which had not been fully exposed for more than

2,000 years. Archaeologist Lisa Giddy assisted by Egyptologist Tina Di Cerbo carefully excavated and recorded the subsided foundations of the naos in preparation for a new foundation and restoration of the stone floor in that area. They found eight carefully laid courses of small, sometimes reused, sandstone slabs (two of them Coptic) and baked brick going down almost a meter.

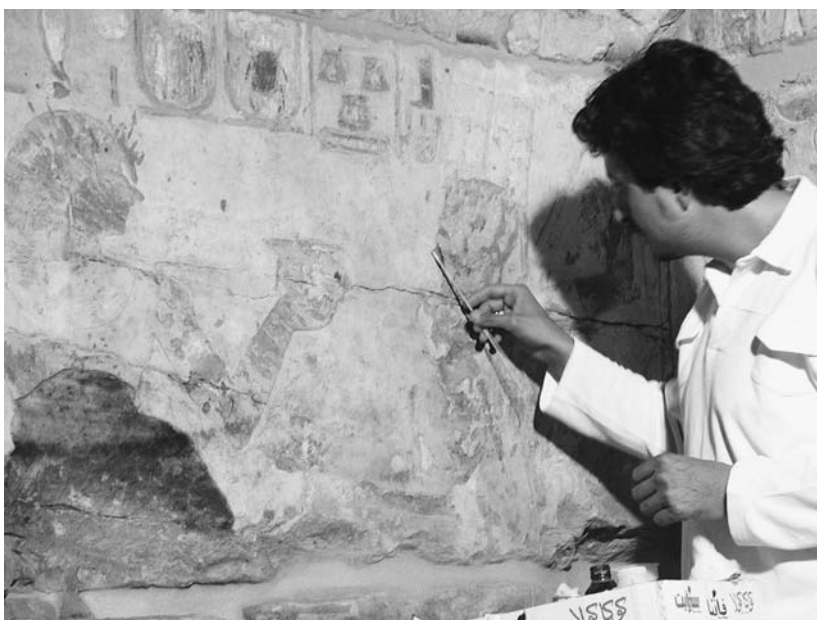


Figure 4. Conservator Lotfi Hassan cleaning painted reliefs in the Naos Room, small Amun temple, Medinet Habu. Photo by Ray Johnson

When the bottom of the emplacement was reached, a missing piece of the granite naos itself was revealed, that is, part of the naos floor. That, in addition to the reused Coptic material, identified the foundation emplacement as modern and not Ptolemaic, undoubtedly part of Georges Daressy's restoration of the naos in the nineteenth century. The original Ptolemaic emplacement was apparently dug out in the medieval period by

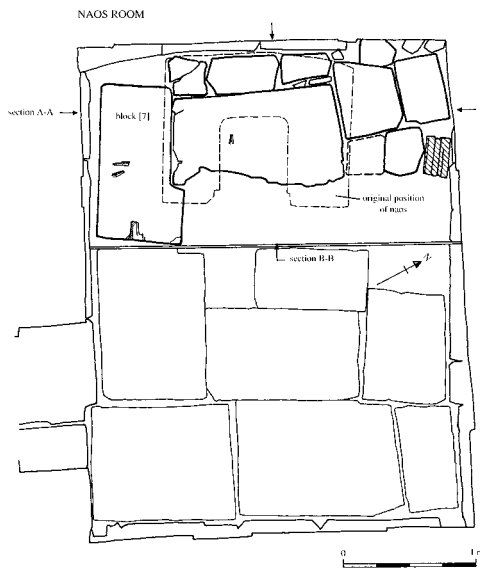


Figure 5. Naos Room excavations; plan of Naos Room naos foundation emplacement. Drawing by Lisa Giddy

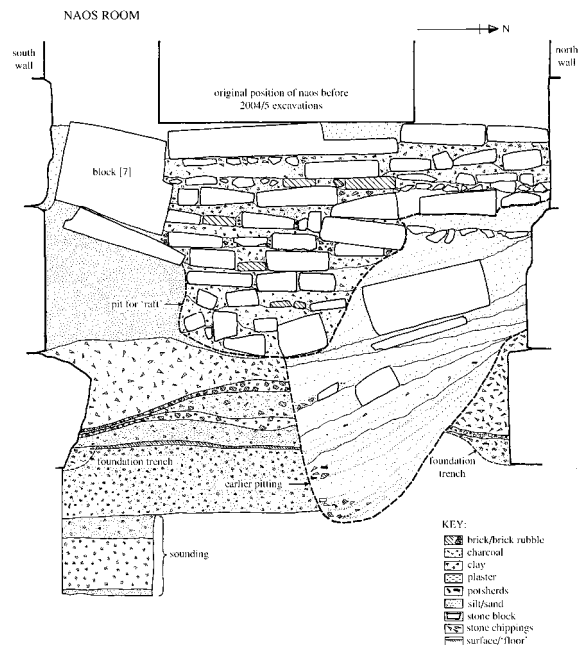


Figure 6. Naos Room excavations; Section AA. Drawing by Lisa Giddy

treasure hunters, who tipped the naos over and broke it up in the process. Daressy's workmen filled in the robber hole, neglecting to see a piece of the naos in it, laid a new foundation, and reassembled the naos (missing the floor piece) over it. Mystery solved!

When the excavation and recording were complete, the area was filled in with sand and gravel. The conservators supervised by Lotfi cleaned, desalinated, and infilled the back wall, and consolidated sections of the lower decaying surface with ethyl silicate (Wacker OH 100) applied with a brush. When that work was finished, Yarko, assisted by Ellie Smith did final photography (in large-format color and black-and-white negatives) of the two scenes on the back wall and the western scenes on both adjacent side walls for the final publication. The moving and restoration of the naos created a wonderful opportunity for complete documentation of this part of the sanctuary for the publication, which would not have been possible otherwise. When the naos is moved back next year these scenes will once again be hidden and impossible to photograph.

In March I supervised analysis of the 365 loose fragments belonging to the 3 m high granodiorite dyad of Thutmose III and Amun, the seven largest pieces of which we had reassembled in the front central chamber several seasons ago. This pair statue will also be published in the first volume of the small Amun temple series. Most of the sixty-two additional small joins to the statue, the majority of which were from this season, were made by everyone but me, including the conservation staff and *ra'is* of the Medinet Habu temple workmen, Badawy Mohamed Abdel Rahman, who actually found the upper part of the king's double crown in the Medinet Habu blockyard!

The conservation, restoration, and part of the epigraphic work for the Medinet Habu small Amun temple were funded by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) and the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), for which we are extremely grateful.

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Figure 7. Recording of excavated footing of the naos in the Naos Room, small Amun temple, Medinet Habu by Lisa Giddy and Tina Di Cerbo. Photo by Ray Johnson

Luxor Temple: Luxor Fragment Project

The Luxor Temple conservation project supported by a Robert W. Wilson Challenge for Conserving Our Heritage grant and the World Monuments Fund was supervised by stone conservator Hiroko Kariya from November 4 to December 18, 2004, and from January 31 to April 15, 2005. The project continued to focus on conservation treatment, preventive care, and data management. During the second half of the season, the project involved two additional tasks: stabilization of the temple wall and emergency treatment of excavated materials from

trenches in the southeastern area exposed during the new groundwater lowering initiative.

All of the inscribed sandstone fragments treated in previous seasons were condition surveyed and recorded by Hiroko, and she carried out three phases of treatment during this season on 161 fragments total. All the fragments were treated with Wacker BS OH 100 (ethyl silicate), and were examined and recorded before and after the treatment. Hiroko coordinated two phases of treatment of the large blocks of Amenhotep III in the southeastern blockyard; five during the first phase and ten during the second. These blocks were too large to move to the treatment area and were treated on their mastaba platforms *in situ*.

Hiroko also consolidated and moved forty-two fragments reused in medieval foundations recently excavated by the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) in the southern part of the Luxor

Temple precinct. The fragmentary wall reliefs, originally from the Colonnade Hall façade, west side, preserve parts of a colossal carved figure of Amun. This work was in cooperation with the SCA archaeological team doing advance work for the Luxor Temple groundwater lowering project supported by Sweden, USAID, and the SCA, in particular Mansour Radwan and Ted Brock. The Epigraphic Survey will contribute to the effort by storing and incorporating into its blockyard conservation and documentation program all reused stone architectural material encountered in the



Figure 8. Hiroko Kariya condition-surveying deteriorating decorated sandstone wall fragments being consolidated. Southern blockyard treatment area, Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson

trenching for the drains and wells around the Luxor Temple precinct.

Luxor Temple Colonnade Hall Eastern Wall Stabilization Project

When the Colonnade Hall was excavated in the late nineteenth century by Georges Daressy, he found that most of the original side walls of the hall were missing, quarried away in the Middle Ages for building material, down to the lowest wall courses which preserve the famous Opet procession reliefs. One exception is a small section of the southern end of the eastern wall, which sticks up about 7 m above the preserved wall area. This projection consists of the exterior courses of the eastern wall, while the inner block fill and inner wall courses are missing. While the interior walls of the hall are vertical, the exterior wall of the Colonnade Hall is battered, and while perfectly balanced, this exterior section appears to lean in at a precarious angle.

Because of the serious weakening of the stone walls of the Luxor Temple complex due to high groundwater, the Epigraphic Survey, supported by the World Monuments Fund (a Robert Wilson Challenge for Conserving Our Heritage matching grant), proposed to stabilize this eastern wall spur by constructing a brick buttress against its inner face. Since a group of forty-eight decorated wall fragments join the wall at that spot, completing a scene featuring the divine barge of the god Khonsu in the Opet water procession, it was decided to integrate that group into the stabilization program and build it into the brick matrix at the base of the buttress. Thus the project accomplishes two major goals: the entire wall is stabilized, and the restored fragment group (which will assist in supporting the wall) will complete the first register of the Opet Register reliefs in that spot.

This project was inaugurated in January under the supervision of stone cutter Dany Roy. Construction of the brick buttress began in February and was completed during the second week of March, seven courses high, a little over 6 m in height. Total volume of brick buttress: 20 cubic m; Building material: 7,600 bricks (380 bricks/cubic m) and 5,000 kg of mortar (250 kg/cubic m). An aluminum framed sign with diagrams of the stabilization work, drawings of the fragments to be restored, and text description was set up in front of the scaffolding to explain the project to the public.

In discussions with the SCA, and to make the buttress/wall support less intrusive, it was decided to cover the brick buttress with fresh-quarried sandstone veneer slabs cut to resemble the ancient blocks of the original wall. A covered stone cutting station was set up outside the enclosure wall east of the Colonnade Hall for cutting down the stone slabs before transferring them



Figure 9. Brick buttress built against projecting eastern wall section of the Colonnade Hall, Luxor Temple, view from the north; Dany Roy. Photo by Ray Johnson

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Figure 10. Projecting eastern wall section of the Colonnade Hall, Luxor Temple, view from the east. Photo by Ray Johnson

Barge fragment group, which will complete the first register in that section. The plan calls for sandstone veneer covering and masking the brick buttress corresponding to the next four courses up, (from bottom to top) course numbers 4–7.

The veneer row on course level 4 was finished (six slabs, 4.5 m long total; 1.25 cubic m of sandstone, weight of 2,500 kg) as well as the veneer row on course level 5 (above 4) was finished (six slabs, 4.23 m long total; 0.95 cubic m of sandstone, weight of 1,900 kg). The upper two veneer rows six and seven will be put into place and finished next season 2005/2006, and the forty-eight fragments of the Khonsu Barge group will be restored and infilled below (courses 1, 2, and 3) with a hydraulic lime and sandstone powder mortar. Before we left Luxor this season, on April 10 and 11, Hiroko and I placed ten dry sandstone fragments from the Khonsu Barge group on the wall, which will give the public a preview of what is to come in the fall. Permission was received by the SCA to leave our scaffolding in place against the wall, which



Figure 11. Laying sandstone veneer over brick buttress, Colonnade Hall, Luxor Temple, looking toward the north; Dany Roy, Ali Mahmoud, and Saber Ahmed Taya. Photo by Ray Johnson

will protect the wall until it is finished and also make it clear that the stabilization and restoration work is not complete yet.

The lower part of the brick buttress corresponding to the first three original stone courses on the wall will be covered next season with the reassembled and restored Khonsu

will protect the wall until it is finished and also make it clear that the stabilization and restoration work is not complete yet.

Luxor Temple Photography

Between October 15 and April 15, Chicago House photographer Yarko Kobylecky assisted by Ellie Smith did 35 mm photography of decaying sphinxes (303 negatives) and deteriorating Colonnade Hall column bases and wall sections (104 negatives); large-format photography of Ptolemaic blocks (eleven negatives); large-format photography of the decaying Amenhotep III socle

inscription around the back of the temple sanctuary (fifty-four negatives); photographed fragment groups reused in the medieval foundations in the SCA excavations of the southeastern area which Hiroko moved and consolidated in 35 mm; and finished 35 mm reference photography of talatat of Akhenaten reused by Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, Ramesses II, Ramesses III, and Sety II (647 blocks total).

Luxor Temple Structural Condition Study

This season Structural Engineer Conor Power returned at the end of January to continue his WMF-supported monitoring of the Luxor Temple structure, particularly the pylons and court of Ramesses II, the Colonnade Hall of Tutankhamun and Amenhotep III, and the solar court and temple proper of Amenhotep III. He checked the monitoring devices we had set up at the eastern pylon of Ramesses II (plumb bobs on the southern side, and crack monitors up above) for any signs of instability and reported that there was no sign of any movement. Good news.

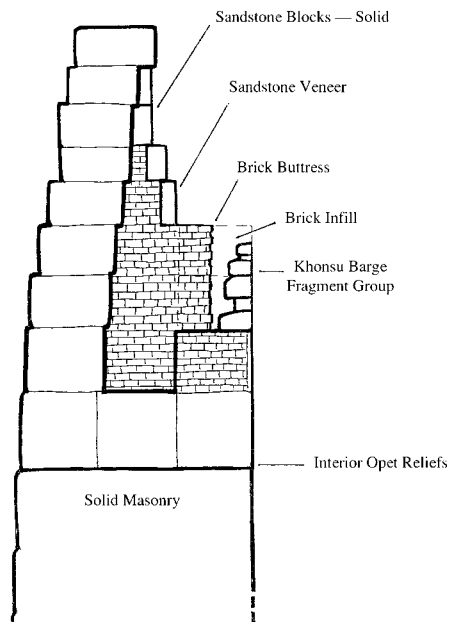
Chicago House

This season we were very pleased to welcome librarian Marie Bryan to the Chicago House professional staff. Marie took over the running and maintenance of the Chicago House library, which allowed epigrapher Jen Kimpton, who courageously and capably managed the library for the last two years, to work as epigrapher full time. Marie continued to utilize our FileMaker Pro library database, which Jen created specifically for accessioning and cataloging Chicago House library books and periodicals, and which will be very useful for the creation of a computerized card catalog. This season ninety-two monographs, seventy-seven journals, and thirty-three series



Figure 12. Brick buttress with sandstone veneer built against projecting eastern wall section of the Colonnade Hall, Luxor Temple, view from the north. Hassan Yousef Aly, Dany Roy, Saber Ahmed Taya, and Ali Mahmoud. Photo by Ray Johnson

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Cross-Section of Eastern Wall

Figure 13. *Cross-section of eastern wall stabilization/buttreasing. Schematic diagram by Ray Johnson*

were accessioned, totaling 202. Thirty-two of these new books were gifts. Marie took over the ordering of new books in consultation with the Egyptologists and conservators, as well as the conservation and preservation of the library holdings (over 18,000 books), and is looking into granting agencies that will support future expanded work of this kind. Marie also supervised our library patrons this season, learning the ropes very quickly, and was influential in establishing some important improvements. She and Yarko designed an extremely successful copy stand for patrons who wish to take digital photos of books. She, Tina, and our carpenter Shayib also designed and built an extension to the card catalog which makes it much easier to use.

Photo Archivist Sue Lezon continued to coordinate the scanning of the Chicago House Photo Archives holdings of large and small format negatives. Her primary concerns this season centered on evaluating negatives before approving them for scanning. All images scanned to CD were assessed for image integrity upon their return from the Franco-Egyptian Center where they are scanned. Once approved, the CDs will be returned to the United States for optimization and inclusion into our ever-growing Photo Archive Database. This season Sue approved

images on twenty-two CDs for a total of approximately 750 images. As the bulk of our large format negatives have now been scanned, she was able to look for gaps in the image database. Many nitrate negatives have disintegrated or were destroyed prior to the development of scanning technology and have left gaps in the database. In many cases, however, we have beautiful prints (sometimes close to seventy-five years old!) from the original negatives. In these cases we can scan the prints in order to be able to include those images in the database.

In addition, all 35 mm and large format images shot at Medinet Habu during the 2003/2004 season and the first two months of the 2004/2005 seasons were categorized by Sue and Photo Archives Registrar Ellie Smith (i.e., pre- and post-conservation), numbered by Ellie, and filed in our photo archive binders. These binders are reserved for contemporary photos of the small chapel and are organized by year and by Nelson numbers. Negative numbers assigned to these images and entered in our database allow for easy cross-referencing, locating, and viewing of photographs — specifically those that document successive phases of the cleaning and conservation of the small chapel. Our thorough photographic documentation of this process has produced a comprehensive body of images, many of which will be published in the final report publication.

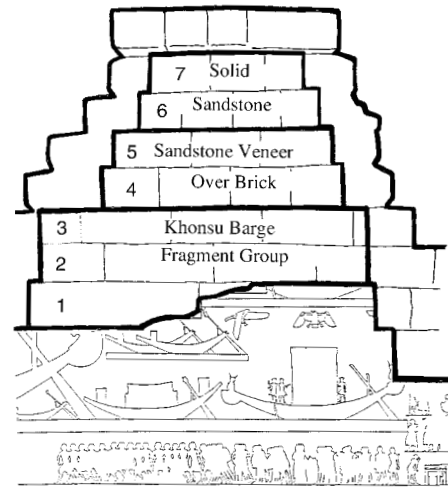
Finance manager Safi Ouri assisted by new accountant (and old friend) Samir El-Guindy continued to keep us within our (tight) budget this season. I am very pleased to report that largely thanks to Safi's diligence and hard work over the last year, Chicago House will be receiving a three-year grant from USAID that will cover much of our operating expenses in Luxor and allow us to build up our staff somewhat. We owe special thanks to the former US Ambassador to Egypt, David Welch, the current director of USAID Egypt Ken Ellis, USAID Egypt, and the University of Chicago Grants Administration, as well as to Safi, who made it all happen.

Helen and Jean Jacquet rejoined us in late November, and continued to work on publications and consult with us on our field projects. They are the best mentors one could ever have, and their expertise and insight are tapped often during our season. Carlotta Maher rejoined us in March to oversee our ongoing development work and to help us host the Oriental Institute tour led by Robert Ritner and Monica Witczak, a joyous time. Last, but not least, heartfelt thanks go to Tina Di Cerbo for coming early each season to open and clean the house, and for staying several weeks after the season to close the house for the summer. This is an enormous job, and Tina makes it go smoothly and flawlessly.

The professional staff this season, besides the field director, consisted of J. Brett McClain, Harold Hays, and Jen Kimpton as epigraphers; Christina Di Cerbo, Margaret De Jong, and Susan Osgood as artists; Yarko Kobylecky as staff photographer; Susan Lezon as photo archivist and photographer; Elinor Smith as photo archives registrar and photography assistant; Carlotta Maher as assistant to the director; Safinaz Ouri as finance manager; Samir El-Guindy as accountant; Marie Bryan as librarian; Dany Roy as stone cutter; Lotfi Hassan, Adel Aziz Andraws, and Nahed Samir as conservators at Medinet Habu; and Hiroko Kariya as field conservator at Luxor Temple. Lisa Giddy supervised the archaeological work at Medinet Habu. Conor Power worked as structural engineer; Helen Jacquet-Gordon and Jean Jacquet continued to work and consult with us in the library and photo archives; and Girgis Samwell worked with us as chief engineer.

To the Supreme Council of Antiquities we once again owe a great debt of thanks for our fruitful collaboration this season: especially to Dr. Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the SCA; Dr. Magdy El-Ghandour, General Director of Foreign Missions; Dr. Sabry Abdel Aziz, General Director of Antiquities for Upper and Lower Egypt; Dr. Mohamed Abdel Fattah Abdel Ghani, Director General of Upper Egypt; Dr. Holeil Ghaly, General Director of Luxor and Southern Upper Egypt; Dr. Ali Asfar, General Director for the West Bank of Luxor; Dr. Mohamed Assem, Director of Karnak / Luxor Temples; Mr. Ibrahim Suleiman, Director of Karnak Temple; Mr. Taha, Director of Luxor Temple; and Mme. Sanaa, Director of the Luxor Museum. Sincerest thanks must go to our inspectors over the course of our six-month field season; at Medinet Habu: Mr. Omar Yousef Mahmoud, Mr. Yahia Abdel Aleem Kassem, and Mr. Gamal Salem Ahmad Aly; and at Luxor Temple: Mr. Ahmed Dawi Hassan, Ms. Sanaa Yousef El Taher, and Ms. Asmaa Mahmoud Fesal.

It is always a pleasure to thank and acknowledge the many friends of the Oriental Institute whose loyal support allows us to continue our vital documentation and conservation work in Luxor. Special thanks must go to the American Ambassador to Egypt, the Honorable David Welch and Gretchen Welch; the former Ambassador to Egypt, the Honorable Daniel Charles Kurtzer, and Sheila Kurtzer; Elizabeth Thornhill, Cultural Affairs Officer of the US Embassy; Ken Ellis of the United States Agency for International Development; Exa Snow; Ahmed Ezz, EZZ Group, Cairo; David and Carlotta Maher; David and Nan Ray; Mark Rudkin; Dr. Barbara Mertz; Daniel Lindley and Lucia Woods Lindley; Dr. Marjorie M. Fisher; Tony and Lawrie Dean; Warren and Lois Siegel; Eric and Andrea Colombel; Piers Litherland; Dr. Fred Giles;



Interior Opet Reliefs

Figure 14. Elevation of eastern wall stabilization plan with courses numbered from bottom to top, 1-7. Schematic diagram by Ray Johnson

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Marjorie B. Kiewit; Nancy LaSalle; Tom and Linda Heagy; Andrew Nourse and Patty Hardy; Donald Oster; Ms. M. Kate Pitcairn; Dr. William Kelly Simpson; Kelly and Di Grodzins; Dr. Ben Harer; Dr. Roxie Walker; Louis Byron Jr.; Drs. Francis and Lorna Strauss; Dr. Gerry Scott, Kathleen Scott, Mary Sadek, Amir Abdel Hamid, and Amira Khattab of the American Research Center in Egypt; Dr. Chip Vincent, Dr. Jarek Dobrolowski, and Janie Azziz of the Egyptian Antiquities Project; Dr. Michael Jones of the Egyptian Antiquities Conservation Project; and all of our friends and colleagues at the Oriental Institute mother ship. I must also express special gratitude to British Petroleum, the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, LaSalle National Bank, Mobil Oil, and the World Monuments Fund for their invaluable support. Sincerest thanks to all.
