The Oriental Institute

Individual Research

Peter F. Dorman

This year Peter F. Dorman, together with colleague Betsy Bryan of Johns Hopkins, co-hosted the Theban Workshop in Chicago on October 14, 2006, on the general theme “Perspectives on Ptolemaic Thebes.” Seven speakers chose topics that addressed the history, economics, social structure, priesthood, religion, and art history of ancient Thebes during the suzerainty of the Ptolemaic dynasty. In connection with this annual symposium, Dorman and Bryan also edited the first volume of the series “Occasional Proceedings of the Theban Workshop,” consisting of the papers presented in 2003 at the British Museum in London, *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes* (SAOC 61), which the Oriental Institute published in Spring 2007. Dorman wrote a chapter on “Epigraphy and Recording,” destined for a volume entitled *Egyptology: An Introduction*, to be published by Cambridge University Press. He also prepared a book review for the *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* on *Das thebanische Grab Nr. TT 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit* (by co-authors A. Grimm and H. Schlögl) and another review for the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* on the long-awaited publication of the temple of the deified form of Nebmaatre, built by Amenhotep III in Nubia, *Soleb III, Soleb IV, Soleb V* (by M. Schiff Giorgini, edited by N. Beaux).

At the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, held in Toledo in April 2007, Dorman gave a presentation entitled “The Funerary Papyri of Hatnofer: Last of a Cursive Breed?” In addition to describing the ongoing conservation of the Hatnofer papyri in the Cairo Museum, the paper examined the physical context of the earliest attestations of Books of the Dead as found on coffins, funerary masks, and linen shrouds and suggested that the direct precursors of the “classical” funerary papyri of the Eighteenth Dynasty (in the form of cursive hieroglyphs accompanied by vignettes) were the shrouds of the early New Kingdom, on which the transition from plain hieratic had been achieved. Textual idiosyncrasies in the Hatnofer papyri likewise seem to indicate that the practice of including inscribed shrouds in burials fell into decline with the first appearance of papyrus-roll books of the dead.

The concurrent Tutankhamun and Hatshepsut exhibits in the United States gave Dorman the opportunity to lecture to various audiences in Dallas, Chicago, and Fort Worth. As part of the training program for Oriental Institute docents, he also lectured on the history of Egypt down to the beginning of the New Kingdom.

Geoff Emberling

*Geoff Emberling*’s research this year focused on Sudan, with a field season from January to March in the Fourth Cataract region of the Nile. The team excavated a cemetery and a gold extraction site of the later Kerma period (ca. 2000–1500 B.C.) that raise questions about the internal organization of the Kerma state and the importance of the Fourth Cataract as a source of gold in many periods (see separate Nubian Expedition report). He gave a lecture on the project to the Department of Classical, Near Eastern, and Religious Studies of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver entitled “Political Economy in the Kingdom of Kush: Archaeological Salvage in the Fourth Cataract, Northern Sudan.” He hopes to return to Sudan in the winter of 2008 for a final season of salvage work in the Fourth Cataract.

He continued his work toward final publication of his Tell Brak excavations (1998–2004) by working on a nearly weekly basis with his co-director Helen McDonald on the stratigraphy of Area TC, the mid-third-millennium public building that appears to be a Temple Oval. He gave
a talk on the building entitled “The Brak Oval: A Sumerian Temple in Semite Lands?” in the Interdisciplinary Archaeology Workshop at the University of Chicago.

He also continued his occasional lectures on history and culture in Iraq to military units preparing to deploy to Iraq with lectures in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Based on this work he gave a paper, “Archaeologists and the Military in Iraq: Collaboration, Compromise, or Contribution?” in a session entitled “Imperial Inspections: Archaeologists, War, and Violence” at the Society for American Archaeology conference in Austin. The relationship between archaeologists and the military in the Middle East has been problematic in many ways, not least of which is the catastrophic fact that the U.S. military did not protect the National Museum in Baghdad despite repeated warnings by McGuire Gibson and other archaeologists before the invasion. Emberling’s experience with the military suggests that we need more contact, at higher levels, to prevent such destruction of cultural property in the future.

Emberling co-taught an undergraduate core class, “The Assyrian Empire” with Seth Richardson and with the help of teaching assistants (and graduate students) Virginia Rimmer and Bike Yazicioğlu. The course got good reviews, but they do not know if this was because of the exciting intellectual collaboration between archaeologist and historian, or because of the fun he and Seth had discussing and teaching the subject.

Finally, Emberling was invited to lecture in the Ancient Near Eastern Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on “Models for Museums: The Collection of the Oriental Institute Museum,” which was an opportunity to present the Oriental Institute as a knowledge-based museum (rather than an object-based one), and to suggest that this is a model that has many advantages for the future. He is not sure how well this message was received in the Metropolitan Museum.