

EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

W. Raymond Johnson

On 15 April 1999 the Epigraphic Survey successfully completed its seventy-fifth six-month field season. The documentation and conservation efforts of the Survey during this anniversary year were concentrated in the precincts of Medinet Habu and Luxor Temple. In the Eighteenth Dynasty Amun Temple at Medinet Habu the inking and collating of drawings continued in the painted chapels of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III, and conservation was resumed on the rooftop over the sanctuaries.

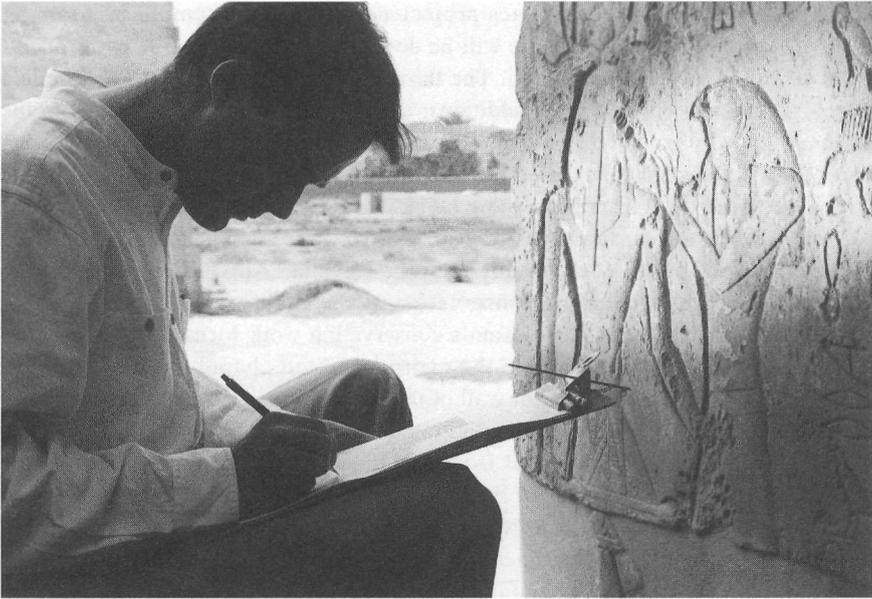


Figure 1. Epigrapher J. Brett McClain collating pillar in bark sanctuary of Eighteenth Dynasty Amun Temple, Medinet Habu. Photograph by Sue Lezon

The inscribed southern well of Ramesses III was completely photographed, and testing was done to determine the extent of the salt damage to the decorated wall surfaces. Across the river at Luxor Temple reference photography and statue cleaning continued in the Colonnade Hall, and conservation was resumed on the block fragments in the southeast blockyard. The Survey's latest volume, and a monument in itself, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple, Volume 2: The Facade, Portals, Upper Register Scenes, Columns, Marginalia, and Statuary in the Colonnade Hall* (OIP 116), was published in the fall.

Eighteenth Dynasty Temple at Medinet Habu

From 15 October 1998 to 15 April 1999 the Epigraphic Survey staff of artists and epigraphers continued penciling, inking, and correcting facsimile drawings of the painted reliefs in the small temple of Amun, on the pillars that surround the bark sanctuary, and on the bark sanctuary itself. Four new staff members were trained on-site: two epigraphers, graduate students Hratch Papazian and J. Brett McClain (fig. 1); and two artists, Bernice Williams (wife of Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle) (fig. 2) and Carol Abraczinskas. I am pleased to report that all four are returning for the 1999/2000 season. Eleven drawings were penciled at the wall by artists Sue Osgood, Margaret De Jong, Bernice, and Carol, mostly in preparation for work over the summer. Twenty-nine drawings were checked at the wall by epigraphers Ted Castle, Debbie Darnell, Hratch, Brett, and the art staff during the course of the season, and seven drawings await the final Director's Check. The drawings of the painted chapels of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, the earliest portion of the temple, and their facade have now been successfully completed (fig. 3) and await one final paint collation after the reliefs have been completely cleaned. They will be pub-

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lished in the first of three volumes projected for the small temple of Amun at Medinet Habu. The second volume will be devoted to the Thutmoside bark sanctuary area and miscellaneous graffiti. The third volume will document the temple's Twenty-fifth Dynasty, "Kushite" additions; a final volume will be dedicated to the Ptolemaic and Roman additions. This season Staff Photographer Yarko Kobylecky, assisted by Ellie Smith, completed the photography of the west interior wall of the bark sanctuary and the inscribed ceiling blocks for the second volume.

The 1998/99 season saw the third year of a five-year grant generously approved by the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the Egyptian Antiquities Project of the American Research Center for conservation of the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple complex at Medinet Habu. This season's conservation work focused on the rooftop of the Thutmoside temple, inside the central painted chapel and the northern "King's Chapel," the south exterior wall of the bark sanctuary, the northern ambulatory of the bark sanctuary, and the north Ptolemaic wing.

Stonecutter Dany Roy worked from 15 January to 15 April and resumed the roof restoration begun last season. He continued to clean all of the cracks between the stone roof blocks carefully with a compressor and vacuum cleaner and sealed the roof blocks over the bark sanctuary with a mortar compound tempered with crushed brick, a technique utilized in restoration work at Karnak and approved by the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the Egyptian Antiquities Project. On the north side of the sanctuary area, Dany restored and replaced thirteen roof block slabs originally dating from the time of Ptolemy VIII, removed during restoration work earlier this century and not replaced. He also identified three original stone slabs in the debris on the roof and put them back in their original positions. The new roof blocks were obtained from the same quarry as the original blocks, Gebel Silsileh, and were custom-cut (fig. 4) and shaped by Dany based on a photograph of the roof taken in the 1930s and published in U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu, Volume 2: The Temples of the Eighteenth Dynasty* (OIP 41), page 8, figure 7. Sincerest thanks are extended to François Larché, Director of the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak for expediting the acquisition of the sandstone. The replacement of the roof blocks restores an ancient drainage channel that directs water off the roof through a Ptolemaic period rainspout, thereby ensuring the protection of the decorated rooms below from future rainstorms. Dany also recut and replaced six Ptolemaic roof blocks over the facade of the sanctuary entrance and three more above the bark sanctuary south wall, thereby eliminating two additional areas of water leakage. In all he relaid twenty-five stone blocks, cutting and shaping twenty-two new stones from scratch.

Egyptologist/artist Christina Di Cerbo continued to measure and draw all of the bark sanctuary roof blocks and plotted all of the details on a master plan of the entire Eighteenth Dynasty Temple roof. She extended her plan this season to include the Kushite pylons (fig. 5) and Ptolemaic additions to the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple and plotted all of the traces of now missing architectural elements from those structures where they joined the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple roof. Photographer Yarko Kobylecky continued his reference photography of the roof areas before, during, and after cleaning and infilling.

This season saw the inauguration of a new phase of the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple conservation program. Painting and stone conservator Lotfi Hassan (fig. 7), whose previous work experience includes cleaning the tomb of Ramesses II's queen Nefertari with the Getty Conservation Institute, began the careful cleaning of the painted reliefs in the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple sanctuary from 15 October 1998 to 15 January 1999, and completed about 90% of the north interior wall of the central room. This is an area where incursions of rainwater in the mid-1990s had activated the migration of salts trapped in the walls, staining the reliefs. Lotfi was able to remove all of the surface salt, along with a fair amount of soot and dirt. The phases of the conservation process were:

1. Cleaning, manual and chemical
2. Desalination
3. Consolidation of the color layers and stone degradation surface
4. Repointing of the missing parts and micro and macro cracks
5. Final protection of the wall paintings' surface with acrylic resin

Lotfi expanded his operation late in December to include the exterior south wall of the bark sanctuary where rain-washed mud from the roof obscured some of the reliefs. This mud has now been removed, allowing artist Sue Osgood to transfer newly exposed details to the drawings-in-progress of those wall sections. From 15 March to 15 April Lotfi removed the salt from the upper, south interior wall in the "King's Chapel," stained during the same rainfall, and tested different mortar infills between the stone wall courses.

Lotfi also consolidated with the silicate Wacker OH some of the large sandstone floor blocks of the small Amun temple exhibiting signs of decay, one in the northern ambulatory of the bark sanctuary, one in the eastern ambulatory, and three in the Ptolemaic wing addition to the north of the bark sanctuary. This work will continue next season.



Figure 2. Artist Bernice Williams penciling photographic enlargement in bark sanctuary ambulatory of Eighteenth Dynasty Amun Temple, Medinet Habu. Photograph by Sue Lezon

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Southern Well of Ramesses III

In January large-format photography of the inscribed southern well of Ramesses III, one of the priorities for this season, was launched in earnest. This well is one of two located on either side to the south and north of the mortuary temple used in Ramesses III's time to obtain sacred groundwater for purification rituals. The preserved area of the southern well consists of a short entrance corridor, an inscribed descending stepped passage to the right, and a third descending corridor to the left, now completely underwater. The last corridor leads to a submerged doorway that opens into the well shaft itself, which is open to the sky. While the carved decoration of the submerged corridor, although inaccessible at present, is in an excellent state of preservation, the reliefs of the first descending corridor, only partly submerged, are completely covered with salt, in some places up to 3 cm thick, with much of the present decoration now extremely difficult to see.

Due to the confined space within the well, the fragile nature of the reliefs on the walls, and a water level more than a meter and a half higher than in the 1930s, the logistics of photographing what is left of the interior decoration (Nile gods bringing sacred water up from the well, and purification scenes) were difficult to say the least (fig. 6). To facilitate the photography, Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle, with the assistance of Chicago House carpenter Shayib Kyrollos Abadir, designed and built a series of wooden "pier" sections that extend into the main descending passage just above water level and provide a firm footing for the camera tripod and photographer. These sections can be dismantled and removed when the well is not being worked on.

The east wall of the entryway is in an active state of decay. The middle course of the wall is being squeezed between the weight of the upper course and the unyielding lower course, causing the upper lintel stone to split in half and the whole left side of the well entrance to subside. Stabilization of this area is being undertaken now with the kind assistance of the local Supreme Council of Antiquities Gurna Inspectorate. Three large-format negatives of the well's interior taken between 1939 and 1946/47 were located in our Photographic Archives, and one of the shots shows the interior east wall, now damaged, and the exterior lintel block, before serious subsidence had occurred. These photographs will supplement a complete set of 35 mm reference photographs taken by former Staff Photographer Tom Van Eynde in 1986 that preserve numerous details subsequently destroyed by the salting of the walls. The 35 mm negatives, already scanned, will be joined into full wall montages using Adobe Photoshop software. Both sets of earlier photographs will be compared to the large-format photographs generated this season to determine the rate of decay of the structure from the 1930s till now.

When Yarko and Ellie Smith were finished with the arduous task of photographing every square centimeter of accessible, decorated wall surface in the well, a truly noble accomplishment, conservator Lotfi Hassan did some sample cleaning of the salt-covered, inscribed wall surfaces to determine how much stone was preserved beneath the thick layer of salt (fig. 7). He found differing amounts of preservation in different areas: on some wall surfaces the inscribed stone was intact beneath the salt, in others only partly preserved, and in others completely missing, with the salt alone preserving an impression of the carved decoration. We will con-

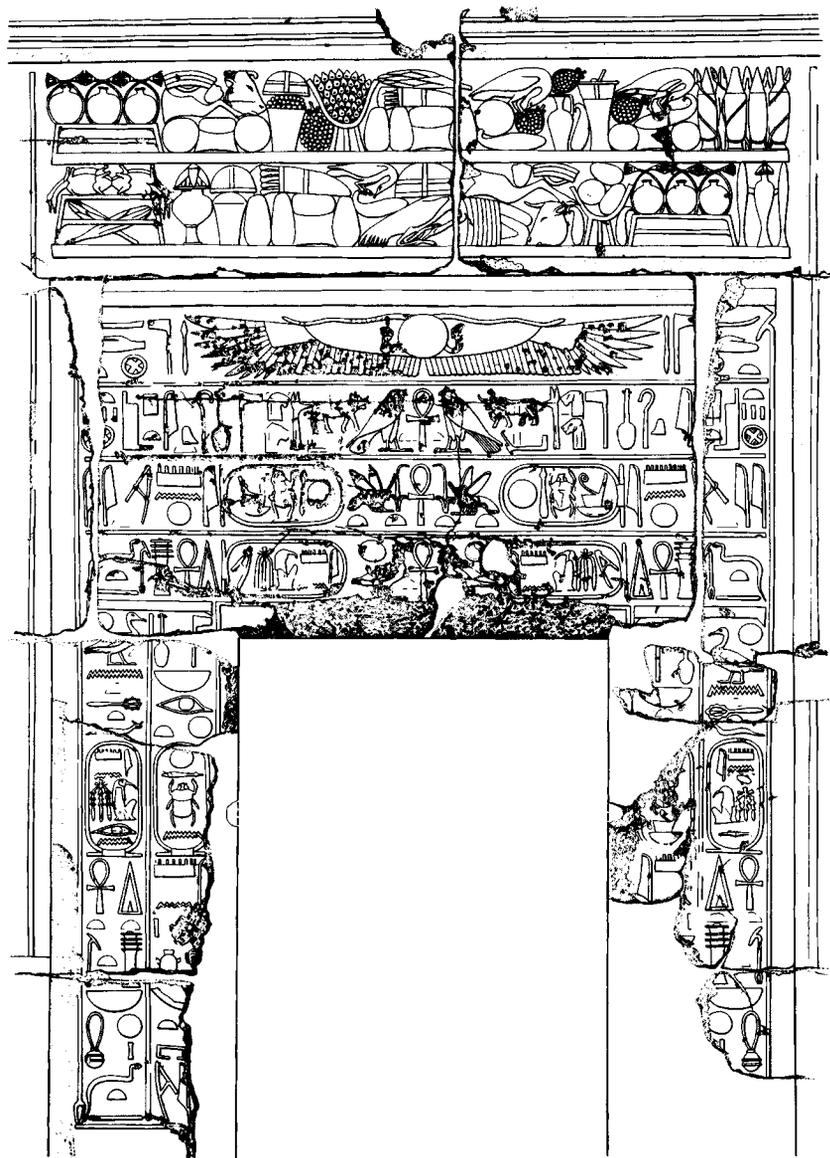


Figure 3. Inscribed doorway leading from sanctuary Room I to Room IV, small temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, time of Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III. Facsimile drawing by Susan Osgood. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky

duct more tests and cleaning next season in an effort to lessen the corrosive action of the salt on the walls.

Luxor Temple

The Survey's latest and long-awaited volume, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple, Volume 2: The Facade, Portals, Upper Register Scenes, Columns,*

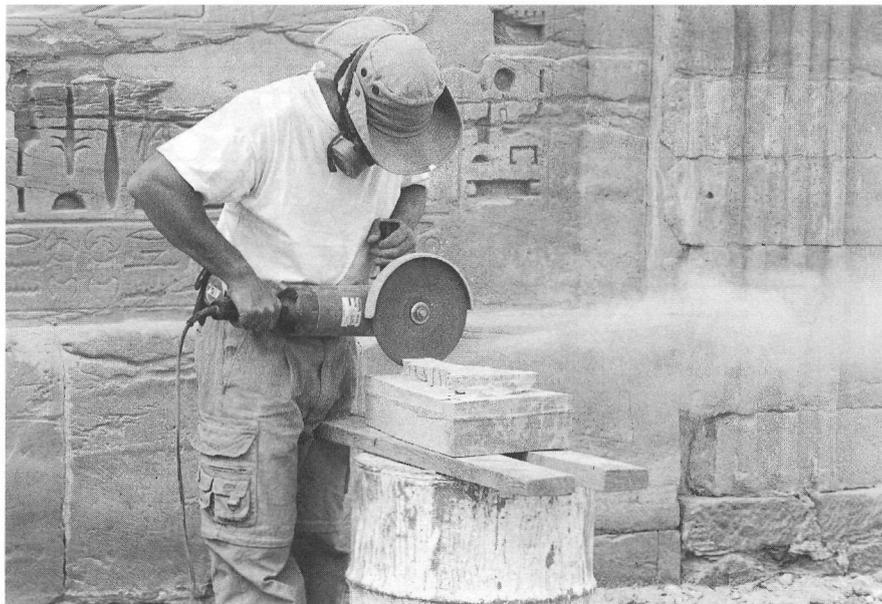


Figure 4. Stonecutter Dany Roy cutting new sandstone block for Eighteenth Dynasty Amun Temple roof, Medinet Habu, March 1998. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky

Marginalia, and Statuary in the Colonnade Hall (OIP 116), was finished and published this past fall. This volume completes the Epigraphic Survey's documentation of the standing wall remains of the great Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple, begun at the height of Egypt's empire period by Amenhotep III and finished by Tutankhamun, a magnificent and increasingly fragile structure. James Henry Breasted would be pleased; in correspondence dating from 1932 he expressed the wish to the first Chicago House Field Director, Harold Nelson, that the Colonnade Hall be included in the publication program of the Epigraphic Survey because of its condition, already precarious even then. We have tried to make up for lost time and are very proud of this milestone in the history of the Epigraphic Survey, but we are not entirely finished there yet; a third volume in the series will be dedicated to upper-register decorated stone fragment groups, the analysis of which is still in progress, and an architectural study, which will resume in a year.

This season marked the fourth year of a five-year grant generously approved by the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the Egyptian Antiquities Project of the American Research Center for the treatment and consolidation of deteriorating decorated stone fragments at Luxor Temple. Conservator John Stewart, Ph.D., returned for a week in January to consult with Hiroko Kariya in the continuation of the project, while Hiroko worked from 11 January to 13 February. All one thousand five hundred and forty fragments recorded on our computer database were monitored for stability. Seventy-four sandstone blocks were physically strengthened with the Wacker OH consolidant in the expanded outdoor laboratory. One hundred eighty-four fragments are currently sheltered in a special, covered platform that protects them from rainfall and wind erosion, or on covered tables and shelves. Trial

desalination was performed on four fragments, which included testing of various poulticing materials. Salt crystals found on twenty-four fragments were sampled and identified.

This season Chicago House received permission from the Supreme Council of Antiquities to expand the Epigraphic Survey Fragment Project to include all of the decorated stone fragments stored around Luxor Temple. During the first half of the season a prefabricated conservation laboratory/office was constructed in the Epigraphic Survey blockyard to facilitate the treatment of the deteriorating fragments and to function as the “command center” for the new operation. Chicago House residents Helen Jacquet-Gordon and her husband Jean Jacquet, Tina Di Cerbo, and Hratch Papazian carefully surveyed the entire area along the east side of the Luxor Temple precinct (fig. 8). Tina then generated an excellent map of the area which conserva-

tors John Stewart, Hiroko Kariya, and I used to plot the expanded Epigraphic Survey blockyard and fragment treatment area. During the latter part of the season four new, damp-coursed storage mastabas made of baked brick (three 12 m in length and one 7 m in length) were constructed south of the conservation laboratory, extending the blockyard to the south; and six were constructed in the lower area to the north, east of the Amenhotep III sun court (each 15 m long). Special thanks to Engineer Mohsen Fahmy Seweha for supervising their construction. As fragments are sorted, photographed, and moved next season and in seasons to come, more mastabas will be built in both areas, and also to the west and north of the temple. The long, meter-wide storage platforms will house fragments sorted by style and content carefully stacked by category with all carved surfaces visible for later documentation and study. Deteriorating fragments will be isolated and placed on special mastabas for future consolidation. It is the goal of Chicago House to raise all of the fragments off the ground in order to protect the fragile material from the corrosive groundwater, and to develop a special database for the entire assemblage.

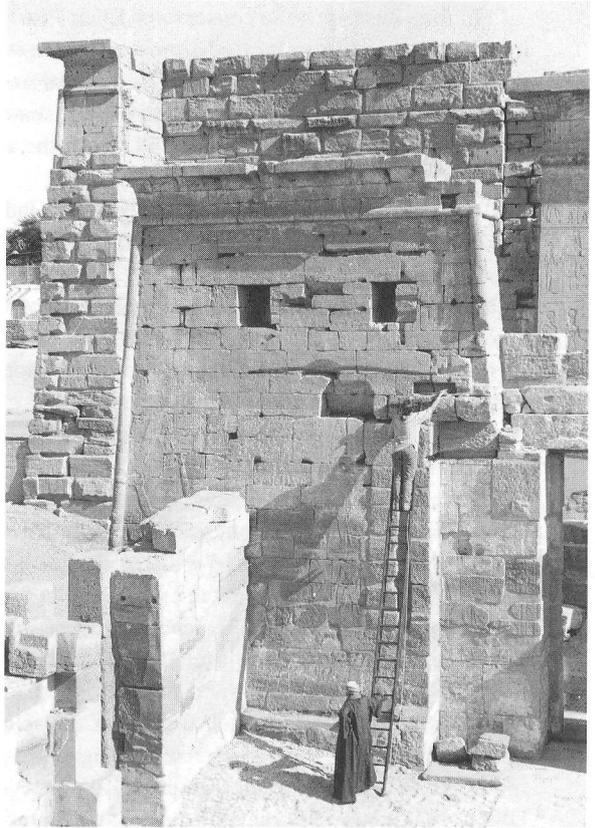


Figure 5. Epigraphic Survey Egyptologist and artist Tina Di Cerbo mapping Kushite (Twenty-fifth Dynasty) pylon, small Amun temple, Medinet Habu. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky

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In mid-January stone conservator Ellen Pearlstein returned to resume the cleaning of the colossal indurated-limestone statues in the Colonnade Hall (fig. 9), thanks to the continued generosity of friend and colleague Dr. Marjorie Fisher. Ellen concentrated this season on the small seated dyad of Amun and Mut on the east side of the hall (fig. 9) and will finish the cleaning of it and all three groups next year.

Continuous, above-average levels of salt-laden groundwater at Luxor Temple (and Karnak) and unusual humidity fluctuations during the last two seasons have resulted in dramatically increased salt efflorescence on the walls of the Colonnade Hall (fig. 10) and noticeable disintegration of the column bases. This is a truly alarming situation, in that the disintegration of some lower stone courses is now irreversible, and bodes ill for the future of the monument(s) if these conditions persist. Photographers Yarko Kobylecky and Sue Lezon took additional reference photographs in the hall this season to compare with earlier photographs of the same areas to help us gauge the rate of decay.

After long, on-site discussions with me and American Research Center in Egypt Director Mark Easton, the Honorable Daniel C. Kurtzer, United States Ambassador to Egypt, sponsored a historic meeting on 16 April at the United States Embassy residence to address the water and conservation problems in Luxor and to discuss possible solutions. Present at the meeting were the Director General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities Dr. Gaballa Ali Gaballa; Swedish Ambassador Sylvén; Bengt Hallmanns and Magda Houta of the Swedish engineering firm SWECO International; French Cultural Counselor Vincent Grimaud; Dr. Nicholas Grimal, Director of the French Archaeological Institute; Dr. François Larché, Director of the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak; Mark Silverman and Peter Argo of USAID; Dr. Chip Vincent, Director of the Egyptian Antiquities Project; and I, representing the Epigraphic Survey. The consensus was that we must all work together, but we must begin now because time has almost run out. A second meeting was held on 14 May in Luxor with the Governor of Luxor and the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss drainage measures that may be taken to lower the water table and slow down the decay. It was decided that engineering studies, sponsored by the Swedes, will begin immediately and will include both Karnak and Luxor Temples. It is only a first step, but it is a crucial one, and we owe a great debt to Ambassador Kurtzer for getting things started at this critical time.

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1999 began on an upbeat note with the arrival on 1 January of Photographer/Photograph Archivist Sue Lezon and assistant Ellie Smith, who jointly oversaw the Photographic Archives for the rest of the season. Sue immediately resumed the monitoring and duplication of deteriorating nitrate negatives (39 were duplicated this year), and both worked on refining our new Photographic Archives database, designed by John Sanders and Jason Ur. Sue brought with her a special gift, generously donated by our friend and colleague Dr. Fred Giles: a Microtek Scanmaker 5, a 36 BIT reflexive and transmissive flatbed scanner with an 8 × 14 inch scanning area. This remarkable machine scans large and small format negatives as well as opaque photographs at 1,000–2,000 dpi, and Fred's magnanimity has allowed us to begin the

scanning of the 17,000 negatives in our Photographic Archives for burning onto CD-ROM for inclusion in our database a year ahead of schedule. Thus we are pleased to announce the inauguration of the Chicago House Imaging Center, an exciting new extension of our Photographic Archives, with sincerest thanks to Fred for opening that door for us. The Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak has agreed to assist us in our task, having just finished the scanning of their own Photographic Archives, and Sue will be coordinating the scanning in both places. So far 248 4 × 5 inch Kushite block fragment negatives, 1,636 5 × 7 inch Luxor temple block fragment negatives, and 30 8 × 10 inch negatives have been scanned and burned onto compact disks (CD). By the end of the summer it is expected that the entire 5 × 7 inch holdings of the Epigraphic Survey will be scanned (painstakingly coordinated by Ellie), while the wholesale scanning of our 8 × 10 inch negative archive will begin next year. This year the only 8 × 10 inch negatives scanned were of the Ramesses III southern well, for computer joining and analysis starting this summer. In addition to the scanning, this season Yarko produced 102 large-format negatives, and the photographic team generated 148 sets of 35 mm negatives, all of which were carefully numbered and registered by Ellie.

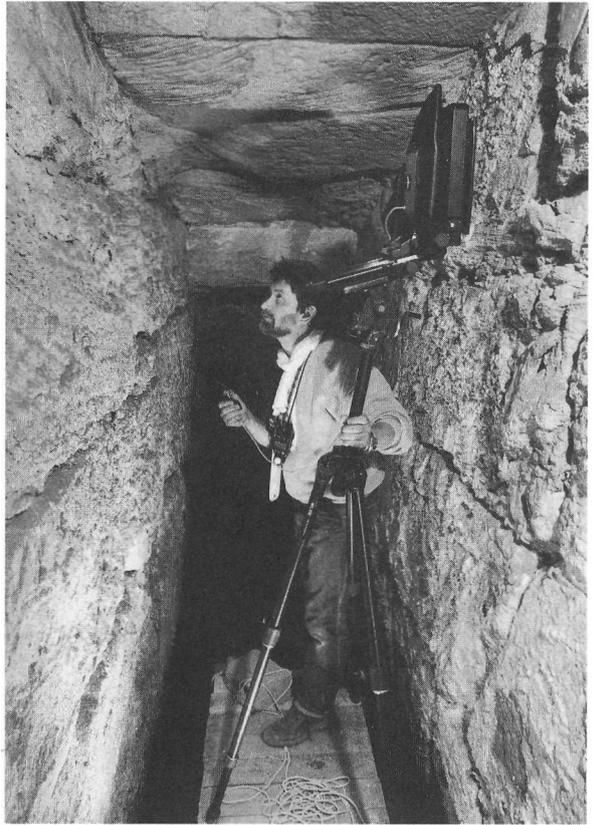


Figure 6. Epigraphic Survey Photographer Yarko Kobylecky photographing in southern decorated well of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu. Photograph by Sue Lezon

During the first part of December Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle, when not “at the wall,” oversaw the long-overdue review and updating of the Chicago House “Black Book,” our epigraphic operations manual, assisted by artists Sue Osgood, Margaret De Jong, and me. Initially written as a guide for the epigraphic copying and collating process at the beginning of our operation in Luxor, many of the procedures and conventions outlined in the book have been improved upon and refined considerably in recent years. Its updating was deemed particularly appropriate at this time, when so many new staff members are being trained and our whole operation in Luxor is being reviewed and reevaluated as the new millennium approaches; it will be a valuable reference work for all staff members, new and old alike, and I daresay we will always be tweaking it since the refining process is never-ending.

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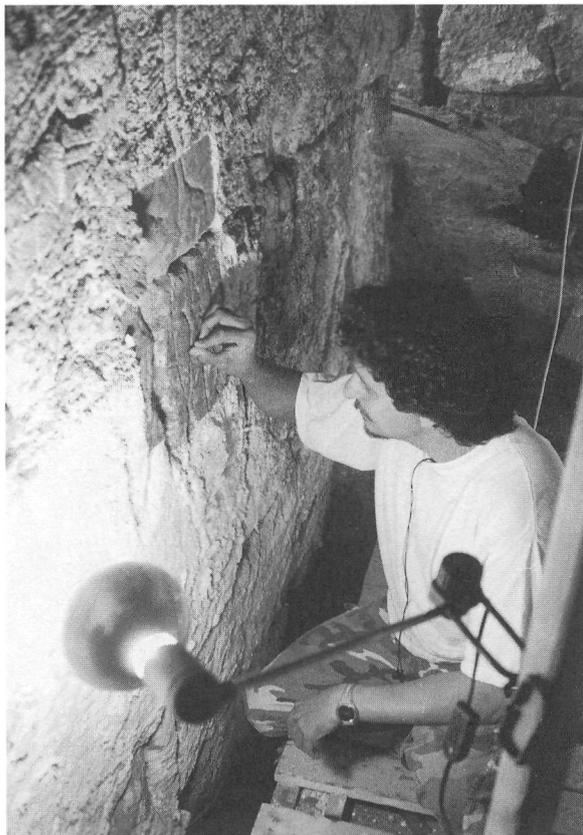


Figure 7. Epigraphic Survey conservator Lotfi Hassan test cleaning in southern decorated well of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky

Epigrapher and Chicago House Librarian Debbie Darnell continued to supervise the running of the library this season and registered 211 new acquisitions, upping our total holdings to 17,807 volumes and 410 journals/series. In January Assistant to the Director Carlotta Maher returned to Luxor for a two-month stint of her ever-gracious brand of development work, which included numerous stimulating library talks to interested individuals and groups, and hundreds of handwritten thank-you notes to our loyal supporters. Her personal touch is infinitely appreciated by all, and we are enormously grateful for every second she can be with us, not to mention all the work she does for Chicago House back home. In February Oriental Institute Visiting Committee member Nan Ray returned and kindly assisted Debbie in the library, Administrator Ahmed Harfoush in the main office, and Carlotta with the development work, and

was joined by her husband David later in the month, who helped staff engineer Jamie Riley with the house maintenance; they are a wonderful team. Oriental Institute Visiting Committee member Mary Grimshaw (fig. 11) joined the Chicago House staff for a month in February/March, generously assisted where needed in the library and Photographic Archives, and kept resident Egyptologist Dr. Henri Riad in line at the dominoes table after dinner. She is a very special addition to the house, and her help is very much appreciated. Our beloved Dr. Henri oversaw the library when Debbie was in the field, and continued to work through the Labib Habachi photographic archive, patiently identifying, sorting, and labeling hundreds of priceless photographs. Friends Helen and Jean Jacquet continued to lend their expertise where needed, whether it was surveying in the Luxor Temple blockyard, helping monitor the library, identifying photographs in the Habachi archive with Dr. Henri, or simply sharing their knowledge and experience with anyone who needed it. My heartfelt thanks are extended to all of our talented, dedicated friends and helpers. Without them, Chicago House wouldn't operate even a fraction as smoothly.



Figure 8. Epigraphic Survey Egyptologists Tina Di Cerbo and Hratch Papazian surveying east area of Luxor Temple prior to Epigraphic Survey blockyard expansion. Photograph by Sue Lezon

I am pleased to announce that Moataz Abo Shadi, CPA, who for the last two years, with the accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand, guided us in putting together our new Financial Management System, in March joined the Chicago House team as Finance Director. He and accountant Marlin Nassim will now oversee all of the accounting for our Luxor operation, which will greatly ease the burden of the Chicago House Administrator (and Field Director!). Next season his wife Dalia and new baby Seif will join him at Chicago House during the season. We extend to Moataz and his family the warmest welcome and look forward to many years of happy accounting together.

We were also very grateful to have engineer Jamie Riley return for the last half of the season to assist longtime Chief Engineer Saleh Shahat and me with the never-ending maintenance of the Chicago House house and grounds. Last spring it became clear that we had to face some major house repairs if we were going to be shipshape for the new millennium. Slow leaks in the southwest corner of the house required the replacement of all of the plumbing in five suites of rooms over the summer after we left, and the eastern dining room wall, severely damaged by the leak, had to be repaired and repainted in October. Another project requiring immediate attention was the residence courtyard; over Halloween the tiles were all carefully pulled up, a proper concrete underpinning was laid, and new tiles were laid down. In November we had to reseal and retile the roof over the north library wing and librarian's office, with the new tiles laid at a proper pitch to direct rainwater to the rainspout on the east end of the roof. After his arrival, and with the help of our friend Engineer Girgis Samwell, Jamie supervised the sealing and retiling of the southern library roof, and the sealing of the expansion joint high up above between the old and new

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library halls. He supervised the installation of a new kitchen drain system, the repair of the solar water heating unit over the back service area, and another unit over the darkroom. Jamie also coordinated the laying of a new, multiple-line telephone cable through the garden, encased in an insulated pipe for protection and buried a meter deep. Next season he will reapply all of the insulation on the hot water pipes connected to the solar heaters on the residence roof; the original insulation has been completely pecked to pieces by crows who have been using the shiny material for nests ever since it was first applied! It is great to have someone around who can deal with all of this, and his presence is much appreciated by us all, but especially by me.

December also saw the revival of the biannual spraying of the Chicago House grounds against insects, something that had not been done for a decade, and the lack of which had resulted in the decimation of the flower beds, particularly our famous rosebushes. Fifty-three new rosebushes were brought in to restore the old rose beds; by March they were gushing with blossoms. The remnants of the old bushes are perking up as well, blossoming like crazy and showing excellent signs of recovery.

Tourism was definitely "up" this year, and Chicago House saw many friends, colleagues, and guests stop by. In October Susan Allen from the Metropolitan Museum of Art stayed several nights with us after her season at Dashur, and reminisced about her earlier years here with husband and former Chicago House epigrapher James Allen. William Harms, Senior News Writer with the University of Chicago and good friend to the Oriental Institute, stopped by over Halloween to see our work, the result of which was an excellent article on our Medinet Habu work published in the February 1999 issue of the *University of Chicago Magazine*. Oriental Institute Visiting Committee member Dr. Marjorie Fisher paid us several pleasant visits during the season, including Halloween, while former Chicago House epigrapher and administrator Peter Piccione and his Theban Tomb Project crew (including wife Myrna and former Chicago House photographer Danny Lanka) came by often while working on the West Bank. Friends of Chicago House tour veteran Tom Granger came by to do research on his Masters thesis for Yale University, and Dick Cook from the Virginia Museum of Art in Richmond came by to prepare for the Hildesheim show of Egyptian art, scheduled for the Richmond Museum this summer. Former Epigraphic Survey Director Chuck Van Siclen very kindly presented Chicago House with a copy of *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Near East: Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell*, Volume 1, edited by J. Phillips (San Antonio: Van Siclen Books, 1998), which he has recently published. On 31 October, Chicago House hosted its annual Halloween costume party for all of our friends and expeditions in the area, always a popular event.

The beginning of November saw the return to Chicago House of the Demotic Dictionary's Steve Vinson and colleague Alejandro Botta for a visit, followed soon after by the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Dorothea Arnold, Malcolm Wiener, and former staff member Jim Allen, whose wife Susan had visited earlier. Colleague and roving reporter for the Egypt Exploration Society *Egyptian Archaeology Bulletin* Lisa Giddy stayed with us a week in the middle of the month. 17 November marked the first year anniversary of the Hatshepsut massacre, and wreaths were laid at Deir el-Bahri very quietly that morning by the Japanese and Swiss Ambassadors. That same day United States Consul Roger Pierce and Embassy Security Deputy Director

Scott Gallo dropped by Chicago House for tea. They were on an inspection tour of the major archaeological sites in the Nile Valley to check on security arrangements and reported that they were very pleased with what they saw.

Thanksgiving Day dinner guests included Geoffrey Martin, Peter Lacovara, and Nick Reeves (in town starting up their exciting new Valley of the Kings project); Nigel Strudwick and his Theban Tomb crew; the Antiquities Development Project's Bojana Mojsov who was working in the tomb of Sety I; United States Embassy Public Affairs Officer Bill and Cary Cavness and their two daughters; old friends David and Diana Lipsey; and American Research Center in Egypt Cairo Director Mark Easton. On the last day of the month we had a site visit from the Director of the Egyptian Antiquities Project Chip Vincent, Assistant Director Jarek Dobrolowski, and Antiquities Development Project Director Michael Jones, plus thirty members of the United Nations Donor Agency Group, who came to see the documentation and conservation work at the small Amun temple.

In December former Chicago House staff member John Darnell joined wife Debbie for a month of intensive surveying, exploration, and documentation of the western desert road, for which Debbie's time, one of our Land Rovers, and the use of our facility were donated by Chicago House in support of that important project. Barbara Adams and her University College London crew stopped by Chicago House after a month at Hierakonpolis on their way back to England for the holidays. In late December Colin Hope stayed with us for a few days on his way to Dakhla Oasis and assisted the Jacquets in the analysis of pottery found in their north Karnak excavations. The holiday season was filled with friends and holiday cheer. Dinner guests included Boyo Ockinga's Australian team working on late Ramesside tombs across the river; Nigel and Helen Strudwick and their Theban tomb team; Ted and Lyla Brock, working on the re-assembly of stone sarcophagi in the tomb of Ramesses VI; and Rosalind and Jac Janssen. Stopping by in mid-month were old friends Eleanor

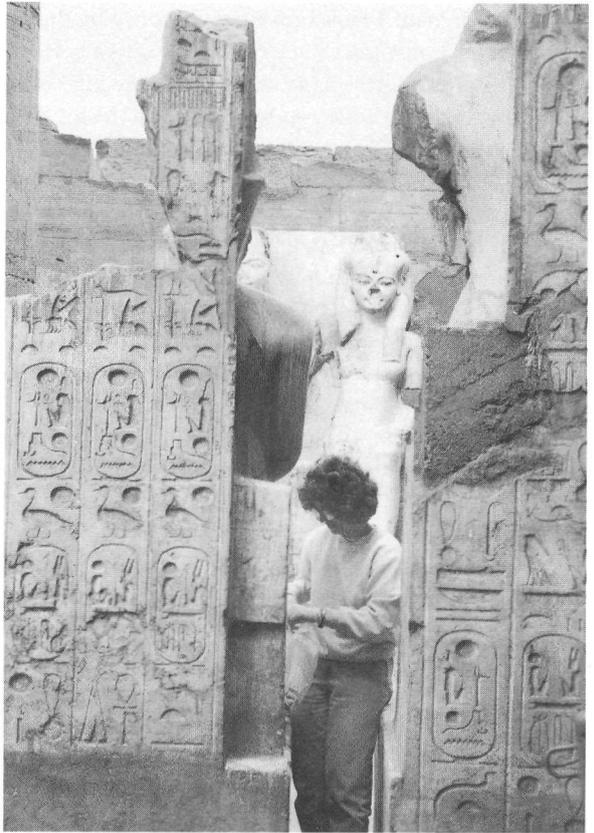


Figure 9. Conservator Dr. Ellen Pearlstein cleaning small diad of Amun and Mut, Colonnade Hall, Luxor Temple. Photograph by Sue Lezon

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and Richard Johnson, followed shortly by their newlywed daughter Betsy and husband Jason Crook. Our New Year's Eve celebration was small but merry, the only guests being Ros and Jac Janssen. The kitchen crew outdid themselves with a five-course dinner followed by dancing in the tea room to some of Breasted's old 78 rpm records, a fitting way to ring in the new year.

1 January also saw the continued steady influx of other friends and colleagues into Luxor. Bruce Williams stopped by to borrow our Nubian Expedition theodolite for his work at Hierakonpolis with the Penn State team. Former Epigraphic Survey Director Chuck Van Siclen and former Oriental Institute Museum Curator Tom Logan arrived to resume their excavations between the Eighth and Ninth Pylons at Karnak, and Betsy Bryan arrived with twelve students to conduct her final season's documentation work at the tomb of Suemniwet on the West Bank. A few days later American Research Center in Egypt Treasurer Charlie Herzer and his wife Adrienne stopped by for a visit and dinner, friends Renee Friedman and Will Schenck stopped briefly on their way down to Hierakonpolis to continue their work on the site, Berkeley's Candy Keller came by for a library tour with a large group from southern California, and former artist (now architect) Jay Heidel arrived for a two-week visit. On 11 January the United States Ambassador to Egypt Daniel C. Kurtzer and his family arrived in Luxor to visit and see our work. As the Ambassador was observing Ramadan fasting, we gave them an *iftar* dinner at sundown on 12 January, which was quite festive. I acted as their guide during their two days in Luxor, showing them our work at Medinet Habu and Luxor Temple as well as other sites on both sides of the river and took special care to point out the signs of accelerating decay everywhere. Finally, at the end of the month former Chicago House staff member Carol Meyer returned to resume her work at Bir Umm Fawakhir in the Wadi Hammamat with logistical support and food supplies contributed by Chicago House.

On Wednesday 27 January, Ambassador and Mrs. Kurtzer graciously hosted a reception at the United States Embassy residence commemorating Chicago House's 75th anniversary. The event was timed to coincide with the arrival in Cairo of the University of Chicago Women's Board tour, led by the Oriental Institute Museum Archivist John Larson and Director of Development Tim Cashion, and allowed us to inaugurate the celebrations in style with folks from back home. Other guests included Visiting Committee member Dr. Marjorie M. Fisher, USAID, American Research Center in Egypt, and Egyptian Antiquities Project directors, various Supreme Council of Antiquities and Embassy officials, corporate heads, and friends. Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle, Artist Bernice Williams, and Epigrapher Hratch Papazian assisted Carlotta and me in representing Chicago House. Carlotta and I visited various Cairo corporations in our ongoing fund-raising efforts, and while there I made the last payment on our renovation loan, another major milestone (and a terrific way to begin the new year!). We continued the 75th anniversary celebrations in Luxor by hosting the Women's Board tour at a reception, library talk, and dinner at Chicago House, where our guests were able to mingle and talk with the entire staff. That day I gave them a tour of Luxor Temple and the blockyard, while the next day Ted Castle gave them a tour of the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu and a closer look at our work.

On 8 February Chicago House hosted a reception and library talk for the American Research Center in Egypt conservation school led by Brooklyn Museum conservator Ellen Pearlstein (two weeks in Cairo, two weeks in Luxor). The sixteen Egyptian conservators were shown the fragment conservation work at the Luxor Temple blockyard by conservator Hiroko Kariya, the Colonnade Hall indurated-limestone statue cleaning and restoration by Ellen herself, and the Medinet Habu small Amun temple relief cleaning by conservator Lotfi Hassan. On 18 February Chicago House hosted a reception and talk for the American Research Center in Egypt New York tour; Ted gave the group a site tour of Medinet Habu featuring the work of the Epigraphic Survey, and I gave them a tour of Luxor Temple and the work of the Epigraphic Survey there. In mid-February USAID

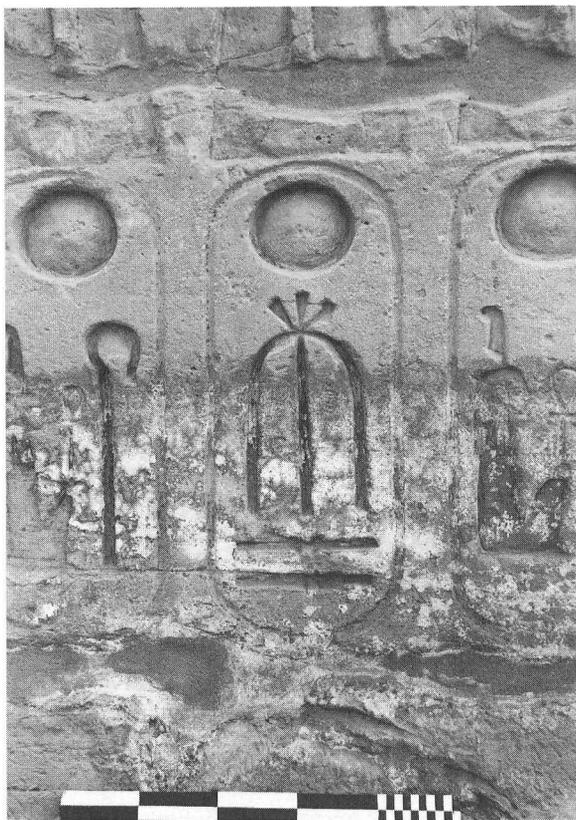


Figure 10. Disintegrating wall reliefs (cartouches of Ramesses IV), east wall Colonnade Hall, Luxor Temple. Photograph by Sue Lezon

Egypt Financial Director Shirley Hunter came down for a review of Chicago House's financial management system, and also to run in the annual Luxor Marathon with 15 other USAID members (Chicago House assisted with water along the West Bank race course). She had an excellent run, and I am pleased to say that we had an excellent review as well.

March was particularly noteworthy for friends who stopped by, although to our great disappointment beloved friend Barbara Mertz could not make it out this year (she swears she will make up for it next season, and we intend to hold her to her promise). Chicago House hosted a reception and library talk for the Washington, DC chapter of ARCE, guided by Ph.D. candidate Nicole Hansen. Mark Lehner and his family were in Luxor during the first two weeks of the month shooting a second obelisk documentary, and were able to join us for a meal or two. Jason Ur spent a good week with us working on our Photographic Archives database. Former Chicago House epigrapher Lorelei Corcoran stopped by on a tour, as well as friend Barbara Porter from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Kaylin Goldstein (who very capably oversaw the Epigraphic Survey's Oriental Institute office for a couple of winters while we were away) and her parents Iris and Paul Goldstein (Oriental Institute

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Visiting Committee) spent a very pleasant afternoon with us seeing our facility and the work at hand.

A most illustrious guest in March was the First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton, who visited Egypt with daughter Chelsea, and spent a total of two full days in Luxor. Preparations for this trip began in February, and continued all through March, as “pre-advance” and “advance” teams of White House and United States Embassy staff descended on us for a seemingly endless round of itinerary planning and site walk-throughs. Right up to the day she arrived the itinerary was in flux, but after all the hair-raising preparations, the visit itself was wonderfully pleasant. The First Lady and Chelsea arrived midday on Tuesday 23 March, and I was among the official “greeters” at the airport, along with the Governor of Luxor General Selmy Selim, the American Ambassador to Egypt Daniel Kurtzer, and the head of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Dr. Gaballa Ali Gaballa. Dr. Gaballa and I were her official guides during her Luxor stay, and that first afternoon we squired her, the United States Ambassador, the Egyptian Minister of the Environment Dr. Nadia Makram Ebeid, and the head of USAID Egypt Richard Brown through the Luxor Museum of Art and Luxor Temple. Debbie Darnell led the White House staff on a separate tour behind us, while our friend the General Director for the West Bank, Sabry Abdel Aziz, led the press corps.

Mrs. Clinton was clearly impressed with the extent, and scale, of Luxor’s ancient remains. An avid preservationist herself, she was distressed by the signs of accelerating decay that are now visible everywhere, particularly in the Colonnade Hall. While at Luxor Temple I was able to point out the all-too-visible problems caused by Egypt’s wetter climate, the high groundwater, and the resultant migration of salts trapped in the stone, all causing the bases of massive walls and columns to disintegrate. After visiting the Luxor Temple sanctuary, we paused beside the Epigraphic Survey blockyard with its thousands of decorated stone fragments, where I talked about our Egyptian Antiquities Project/USAID funded fragment documentation and conservation projects.

That evening I was invited by the First Lady to join her, Dr. Gaballa, Ambassador and Mrs. Kurtzer, several USAID officials, and the assembled White House Press Corps for an al fresco dinner and round-table discussion about Luxor, its heritage, and its preservation problems. Dr. Gaballa opened with a talk about the significance of ancient Luxor, after which I spoke about the documentation work of the Oriental Institute at Chicago House, our history, present programs, and future plans. This led to an open discussion of the conservation problems facing Luxor and all of Egypt, and what steps have been taken to alleviate some of those problems elsewhere, such as the USAID Old Cairo drainage project, which by lowering the water table has slowed down the deterioration process. It was such a stimulating discussion that the party only grudgingly broke up at midnight!

The next day we took the First Lady and Chelsea to the Valley of the Kings where Egyptian Antiquities Project Director Chip Vincent, Antiquities Development Project Director Michael Jones, Dr. Gaballa, and I showed them the tomb of Sety I and discussed its history and conservation problems. Then Dr. Gaballa and I took them to Tutankhamun’s tomb, followed by the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut, and Nefertari’s tomb in the Valley of the Queens. This in a motorcade 40 cars long,



Figure 11. Volunteer Mary Grimshaw hard at work in the Chicago House computer room, March 1999. Photograph by Sue Lezon

mind you. At about 1:30 the entire motorcade arrived at Chicago House, where we hosted a “private,” sit-down buffet lunch for the First Lady, Chelsea, and forty assembled guests: the entire Chicago House staff, Dr. Gaballa, the Governor of Luxor, the Kurtzers, the Minister of the Environment, USAID officials, Kent and Susan Weeks, American Research Center in Egypt Director Mark Easton, Chip Vincent, Michael Jones, and Sabry Abdel Aziz. Credit must be given to the entire Chicago House staff for making the place shine, and the luncheon table glorious; everyone pitched in. Our kitchen staff, headed by chief cook Tayib Abdel Aziz Mohamed, truly outdid themselves, and Mrs. Clinton endeared herself to them forever by having her photograph taken with them afterward in the courtyard. She said in a short speech at lunch that the Luxor trip was one revelation after another, chief among which was the University of Chicago’s efforts in Luxor. She told us that she was tremendously moved by our dedication, enthusiasm, and passion for this preservation work and was extremely proud that Americans were at the forefront of such work. After a group photograph of the entire luncheon party, Carlotta and I led the First Lady, her entourage, and the press into the library for a half-hour briefing of our documentation work, projects, and goals, which was very well received (fig. 12). I owe a tremendous debt to Carlotta for returning to assist with this event; we could not have done it without her. After signing the guest book, picking up a “Chicago House: 75 Years” button, and accepting a *Lost Egypt* print as a memento of her visit from Carlotta and Sue Lezon (and Chicago House t-shirts), we departed with Mrs. Clinton and entourage for Karnak up the street. There we had a very pleasant late-afternoon walk through the temple.

But that was not the end of the day. Later that evening at Luxor Temple, the Minister of Culture Farouk Hosny hosted a lavish banquet for the First Lady in the



Figure 12. *The First Lady's visit to Chicago House; in library, receiving Lost Egypt print from Carlotta Maher. From left to right, foreground: Carlotta Maher, Ray Johnson, Mrs. Clinton, Chelsea Clinton. Background: Supreme Council of Antiquities Director General Dr. Gaballa Ali Gaballa, Chicago House Staff Photographer Yarko Kobylecky. Photograph by Sue Lezon*

first court of Ramesses II. While a string quartet played in the southwest corner, and brilliantly-lit 35-foot statues of Ramesses II gazed down on the assembled Egyptologists and dignitaries, Mrs. Clinton, Chelsea, and the Minister of Culture greeted each guest in a receiving line on the east side. Ten tables were set up along the west side of the court, and I had the pleasure of being seated with the First Lady, the Egyptian Ministers of Culture, Health, and the Environment, Mark Easton, Ambassador Kurtzer, Dr. Gaballa, and the Governor of Luxor. The next day, while her mother was giving speeches at the El-Karnak Clinic and a local school, I escorted Chelsea and White House Social Director Capricia Marshall to the West Bank for a tour of Medinet Habu, where Ted Castle, Margaret De Jong, and Lotfi Hassan showed them our epigraphic and conservation work. We then took in some private tombs, after which we drove back to the Luxor airport for their departure to Tunisia. Later that afternoon I returned to Medinet Habu with new USAID Director Richard Brown for another important site visit before he returned to Cairo.

All in all it was a very stimulating visit, and the good will it generated was far-reaching and across the board. I truly believe that it was time well spent, and that we were a credit to the Oriental Institute and the University of Chicago.

Finally, our 75th anniversary was celebrated with our friends and colleagues back home in Chicago on 23 April, when I was honored to give the keynote address at the American Research Center in Egypt Fiftieth Annual Meeting, hosted by the Oriental Institute, entitled: "The Epigraphic Survey on the Occasion of its Seventy-



Figure 13. Chicago House professional staff 1997/98. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky

fifth Anniversary.” Most recently, on 20 July, I spoke on the same topic to the University of Chicago Women’s Board. There is much to be proud of in this anniversary year, but as Breasted would remind us, there is still much to do. Chicago House must adapt to the rapidly changing conditions in Egypt by expanding its documentation and conservation programs in order to preserve what little is left, a goal well worth striving for. Here’s to the challenge, the new millennium, and the next 75 years!

The professional staff this season (fig. 13), besides the Field Director, consisted of Ted Castle as Senior Epigrapher; Deborah Darnell as Epigrapher and Librarian; Hratch Papazian and J. Brett McClain as Epigraphers; Susan Osgood, Tina Di Cerbo, Margaret De Jong, Bernice Williams, and Carol Abraczinskas as Artists; Yarko Kobylecky and Susan Lezon as Photographers; Ahmed Harfoush as Administrator; Moataz Abo Shadi as Finance Director; Marlin Nassim as Accountant; Jill Carlotta Maher as Assistant to the Director for Development; Elinor Smith, Nan Ray, and Mary Grimshaw as Assistants for the Photographic Archives and Library; and Saleh Shahat Suleiman as Chief Engineer. Dr. Lotfi Hassan, John Stewart, Hiroko Kariya, and Ellen Pearlstein worked with us as stone conservators, and Dany Roy as stonecutter. Special thanks go to Dr. Henri Riad, Egyptologist in residence for the season, and to Drs. Helen and Jean Jacquet, who all shared their expertise generously. Numerous friends and members of the Supreme Council of Antiquities generously assisted us during our work this season, and to them we owe, as always,

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a special debt of thanks: Professor Dr. G. A. Gaballa, Director General; Dr. Mohamed el-Saghir, General Director of Pharaonic Monuments in the Nile Valley; Dr. Mohamed Nasr, General Director of Antiquities for Upper Egypt; Dr. Sabry Abdel Aziz, General Director for the West Bank of Luxor; and Mme Nawal, Chief Inspector of Luxor Temple. Warmest thanks and best wishes to all.

As the old millennium ends and the new millennium fast approaches, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the many friends of Chicago House whose support has allowed our work to continue without interruption into the 21st century; we truly couldn't do it without you. Special thanks must go to the American Ambassador to Egypt, the Honorable Daniel Charles Kurtzer, and Sheila Kurtzer; Vincent Battle, Deputy Chief of Mission of the United States Embassy in Cairo; William Cavness, Janet Wilgus, and Haynes Mahoney of the United States Embassy; Dick Brown, John Westley, Justin Doyle, Shirley Hunter, and Jean Durette of the United States Agency for International Development; Exa Snow of Coopers and Lybrand, Cairo; David and Carlotta Maher; David and Nan Ray; Mark Rudkin; Dr. Barbara Mertz; Daniel Lindley and Lucia Woods Lindley; Dr. Marjorie M. Fisher; Tom and Linda Heagy; Donald Oster; William Kelly Simpson; Kelly and Di Grodzins; Dr. Ben Harer; Anita and Solon Stone; Roxie Walker; Louis Byron, Jr.; Terry Walz, Mark Easton, Ray Salamanca, Mary Sadek, and Amira Khattab of the American Research Center in Egypt; Chip Vincent, Jarek Dobrolowski, and Cynthia Scharzter of the Egyptian Antiquities Project; Michael Jones of the Antiquities Development Project; and all of our friends on the Oriental Institute "mother ship." I must also express our gratitude to the Amoco Foundation, the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, Coca-Cola, Bechtel, Xerox, and LaSalle Banks for their invaluable support. Thank you all.

As always, members of the Oriental Institute and other friends of Chicago House are welcome to stop by to see us, and we suggest that you write or call in advance to schedule a meeting that is convenient to all. Chicago House is open from 15 October until 15 April, and closed Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Our address in Egypt: Chicago House, Corniche el-Nil, Luxor, Egypt. The telephone number is (from the United States) 011-20-95-37-2525; fax 011-20-95-38-1620.

The Epigraphic Survey home page is at:

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/EPI/Epigraphic.html>
