



CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN



Volume XXVI

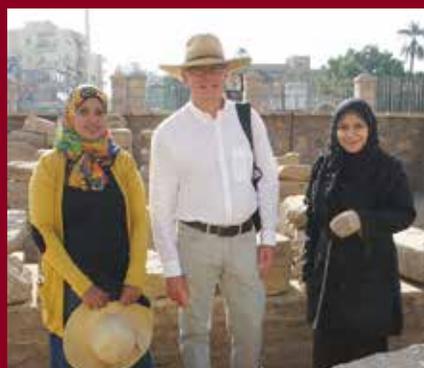
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July 2015



Conservation students, Chicago House team, and MAH inspectors, Medinet Habu, March 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky

THE 2014–2015 FIELD SEASON





Three standing in last row: (left to right) Hany Diab, Gaber Tohany, Al Azab Mohamed

Third (back) row: Fatma Mohamed, Dooa Al Sadek, Nehad Badry, Samwell Maher, Richard Jasnow, Tina Di Cerbo, Johannes Weninger, Jen Kimpton, Anait Helmholtz, Brett McClain, Frank Helmholtz, Marie Bryan, Gina Salama, Magda al Tahr, Anhar Hussien, Fatma Shalan

Second row: Sikina Oraby, Safaa Al Naby, Lotfi Hassan, Martina Roshdy, Jay Heidel, Ray Johnson, Essam el Sayed, Samir Guindy, Yarko Kobylecky, Eman Mohamed, Nema Ismail, Mona Hassan

Front row: Nahed Samir, Hiroko Kariya, Sue Osgood, Keli Alberts, Ellie Smith

Photo by Sue Lezon

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The Chicago House Field Season October 2014 to April 2015: A Season Diary

By W. Raymond Johnson, Field Director

OCTOBER

Chicago House officially reopened its doors on October 15 for the Epigraphic Survey's 2014–2015 archaeological field season, its 91st! I signed the contract for the season at the Ministry of Antiquities and Heritage (MAH) in Cairo the week before with new Foreign Missions director Mr. Hany Abu el-Azm, who was very helpful. Brett, Jen, Margaret, Keli, Jay, Frank, Anait, Lotfi, Marie, Krisztián, Yarko, Johannes, and I all arrived back in Luxor safely during the last couple of weeks; Tina has been in residence since September for the opening and cleaning with our workmen — a HUGE task that she makes look easy. Jay went immediately to Antinoupolis in Middle Egypt for a short autumn season with the Italian mission from the University of Florence directed by Rosario Pintaudi. On October 20 Brett



Staining and painting dining room windows. Chicago House. September 2014. Photo by Tina Di Cerbo



Sanding dining room windows. Chicago House. September 2014. Photo by Tina Di Cerbo

and I met with MAH Luxor director Abdel Hakim Karrar at the main inspectorate offices in Luxor and passed on the signed contract for the season, after which we met with MAH Gurna director Talat Abdel Hakim and met our two inspectors, Miss Fatma Ahmed Salem and Miss Sanaa Youssef Ahmed Ali in western Thebes. We resumed our work at Medinet Habu on October 22, unblocked and unlocked the doors to the small Amun Temple sanctuaries (and found it dry as a bone inside — the dewatering program funded by USAID Egypt continues to work well). That day we also transferred four trucks of equipment and supplies, including scaffolding, ladders, lights, etc. for our documentation, conservation, and restoration work. This season Chicago House is sponsoring another Egyptian student conservator program, supervised by Medinet Habu senior conservator Lotfi Hassan assisted



Courtyard plumbing project. Chicago House. September 2014. Photo by Tina Di Cerbo



Repairing library shutters. Chicago House. September 2014. Photo by Tina Di Cerbo

by Nahed Samir, which will include the six students from last year plus another new group of eight students this year, fourteen students total. There is more than enough to do, and at the same time this will give them all valuable field experience. They and the stone team will be working on the Domitian Gate restoration project, the Medinet Habu blockyard conservation project, restoration of the Ramesses III southern well blocks, desalination of the back sanctuaries of the small Amun Temple, and condition studying of the House of Butehamon at the western end of the complex (which we started this week). Our documentation programs will include the House of Butehamon plus the small Amun Temple reliefs (coordinated by Brett) and graffiti (Tina). We are also continuing the condition study, documentation, and preliminary analysis of the blocks and fragments of the western High Gate, destroyed in antiquity and excavated by the Architectural Survey/Chicago House in 1932. All of the work at Medinet Habu is generously funded by a grant from USAID Egypt, now in its final six months.

We reopened the Marjorie M. Fisher Chicago House Library on Friday, October 24, and immediately had three

patrons who joined us for lunch, including our old friend Andrzej Niwinski, who is continuing his cleaning and exploration of the Deir el-Bahri cliffs. In addition to opening and cleaning the house and library compounds and a zillion other maintenance tasks, Tina and the Chicago House workmen replaced all of the screens in the public rooms of the main house and did some pretty extensive plumbing work in the courtyard — onerous, but very successful. Most of the work is done in-house now by our talented crew under Tina’s capable and efficient direction.

Luxor was surprisingly full of tourists when we arrived; there had been a couple of conventions in town, and it remained lively for days, with dozens of felluccas on the Nile, buses everywhere, and hotels busy — just like old times. Our first week back a huge tour boat chugged by Chicago House with people dancing on the deck to an extremely amplified rendition of “*Besame mucho*” (!), quite surreal. Everyone hopes it’s a harbinger of better days to come. It’s good to be back, warm during the day, cooler at night, and getting cooler as the days go by. To mark the beginning of the new season, we resumed our annual Halloween party on Thursday (October 30); University of

Chicago faculty member Nadine Moeller, Greg Marouard, and the Edfu team joined us, as well as a host of other missions. We have a number of groups and visitors scheduled to come through town in November, including some US Embassy and USAID friends and perhaps even the new minister of Antiquities and Heritage, Dr. Mamdouh el-Damaty. We can already see that it's going to be another busy winter.

NOVEMBER

We had expected November to be as low-key and quiet as last season, but it has been quite the opposite, starting on the very first day of the month! On November 1 we had the pleasure of a site visit to Medinet Habu by the deputy Minister of Antiquities and Heritage Dr. Yousef Khalifa, who reviewed our documentation and conservation prep work at the House of Butehamon at the back of the Medinet Habu precinct and reaffirmed our concession there. The individual whose names and figures grace the slender, plastered-stone shafts of the four-columned hall that Chicago House and archaeologist/architect Üvo Hölscher excavated in 1930 was a 21st Dynasty official responsible for supervising the state-sponsored recycling of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings, despoiled in the civil wars prior to the 21st Dynasty. His tasks included rewrapping and reburying many of the royal mummies; his name was even found in an ink inscription on the linen wrappings of the re-wrapped Ramesses III mummy. Much speculation has been focused on his structure at Medinet Habu; was it a residence, or an office, or even a funerary chapel (as our colleague Takao Kikuchi suggested in the thought-provoking article “Die Thebanische Nekropole der 21. Dynastie – Zum Wandel der Nekropole und zum Totenglauben der



Conservation student drawing on Wacom tablet. Medinet Habu. Photo by Lotfi Hassan

Ägypter” (*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 58 [2002]: 341–71). The texts on the columns are funerary in form, but the structure of the building is decidedly domestic with a platform at the back of the hall, where the owner traditionally sat and received



Butehamon group shot with Antiquities Ministry officials and friends, including Dr. Yousef Khalifa (in suit). Medinet Habu. November 1, 2014. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Conservation students at Ramesses III well. Medinet Habu. Photo by Nahed Samir



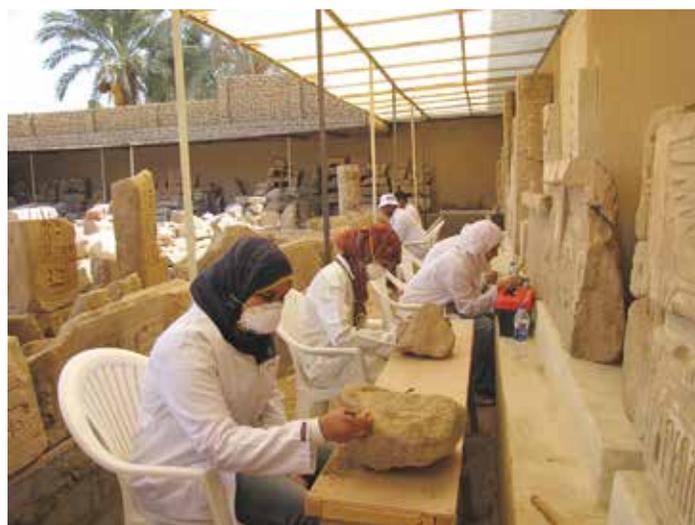
Conservation students. Medinet Habu. December 2014. Photo by Lotfi Hassan



Conservation students. Medinet Habu. November 2014. Photo by Lotfi Hassan

guests or supervised the work at hand. It is possible, indeed probable, that the structure had multiple functions. Butehamon's coffin can be seen in the Turin Museum, acquired in the nineteenth century, but the location of his tomb is unknown. The goal of our program is to do facsimile drawings and translations of the column texts based on stitched-together photographs taken by Yarko Kobylecky, (supplemented by photographs taken by Chicago House around 1930), conserve the fragile plaster in future seasons, extend the mudbrick casemate walls and add some fill for stability, and re-erect two fallen partial columns from a mostly destroyed entrance hall. Our plan is to also restore two sets of ancient sandstone-slab walkways from the time of Ramesses III on either side of his mortuary temple that will allow visitors to see the site.

On November 6 Jay and Frank returned from Antinoupolis in Middle Egypt, where Frank reviewed their stone needs and consulted with Rosario Pintaudi on some future stone restoration work at the site. That day we also had the pleasure of hosting a large Far Horizons tour group to Chicago House for a reception and library briefing, the first in almost two years. It was good to have our friends Bob Brier and Pat Remer back with us, and the group enjoyed a site briefing by Brett at Medinet Habu the next day. Emily Teeter and Joe Cain, in town overnight with another tour group, joined us for the reception and dinner on November 6. On November 9 Christian LeBlanc and the Ramesseum team inaugurated a new collaboration between Chicago House and the Franco-Egyptian Documentation Center at Medinet Habu. At our invitation the team has erected scaffolding along the inside of



Conservation in the blockyard. Medinet Habu. November 2014. Photo by Lotfi Hassan



Conservation students desalinating exterior western wall, small Amun Temple. Medinet Habu. Photo by Lotfi Hassan



Brett copying texts in the House of Butehamon. Medinet Habu. November 2014. Photo by Ray Johnson

the Medinet Habu small Amun Temple Ptolemaic Pylon in order to record the numerous reused blocks of Ramesses II that are exposed there, quarried from the side walls of Ramesses II's mortuary temple (the Ramesseum) in the late Ptolemaic period. Christian and epigrapher Philippe Martinez will be integrating the new block documentation with their drawings and photographs of the standing wall reliefs still preserved at the Ramesseum that they have been recording for some time. This collaboration will be of great benefit to both our projects and will eliminate duplicated efforts. On November 11 Jay resumed his work at Luxor Temple drawing Bentresh and Ptolemy I blocks on the Wacom Companion portable drawing tablet. Jay has finished digitally penciling the text blocks and is now penciling a series of Ptolemy I offering scenes in various scales from the same monument as the texts. We have identified fragmentary wall scenes from at least two registers,



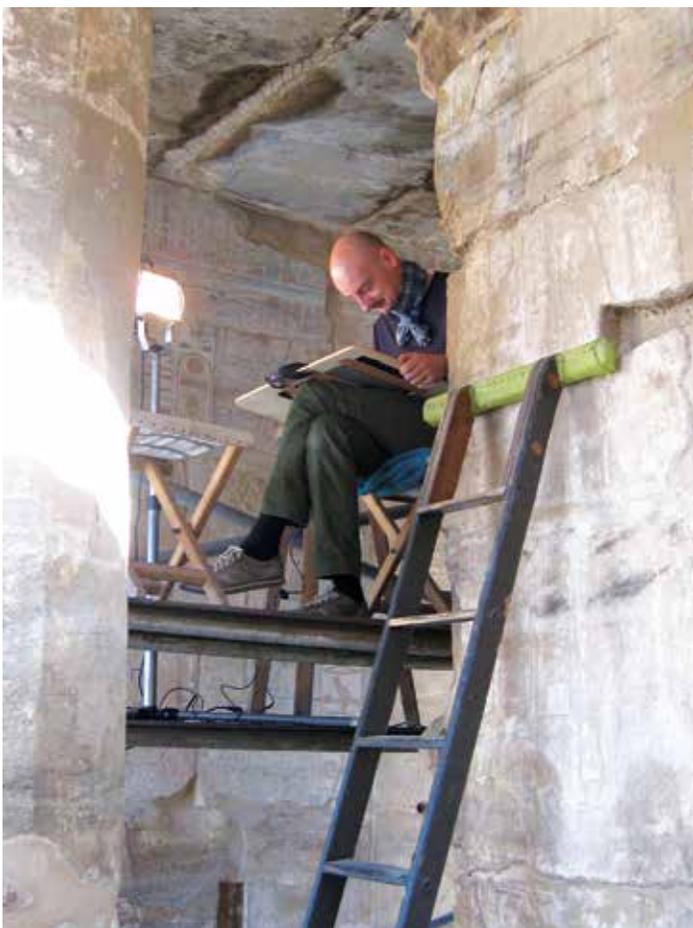
Margaret penciling Ptolemaic door thickness, small Amun Temple. Medinet Habu. Photo by Ray Johnson



Ray reviewing a drawing by Margaret De Jong for Medinet Habu X, small Amun Temple façade. Medinet Habu. November 2014. Photo by Margaret De Jong



Ray, Brett, and inspectors Fatma and Ghada reviewing Margaret's lintel drawings. Medinet Habu. November 2014. Photo by Margaret De Jong



Krisztián penciling in the small Amun Temple. Medinet Habu. November 2014. Photo by Margaret De Jong

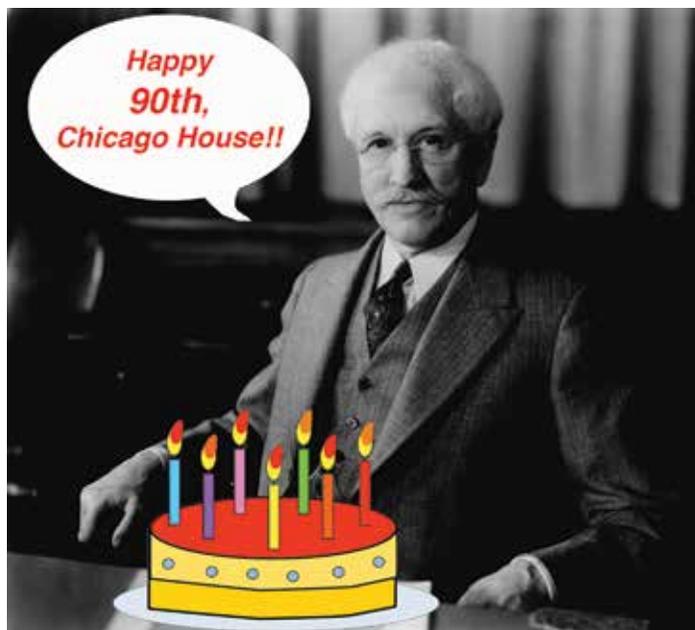
large-scale scenes possibly from a pylon or entryway, and some smaller-scale doorjamb scenes. It is hoped that once the blocks and fragments are documented and analyzed we will be able to establish the location of the original monument, somewhere in the vicinity of Karnak.

On the afternoon of November 11 about twenty members of the Mehen foundation (for the study of ancient Egypt) from the Netherlands visited Chicago House, and we had a very pleasant time discussing archaeological preservation issues in the library. They had visited the Oriental Institute Museum in September, guided by Emily Teeter, and were very pleased to visit Chicago House in Luxor. Speaking of the Chicago House library, there were so many expeditions in town, by November we already had record numbers of library users in addition to our regular Egyptian Masters and PhD students. Fridays during November were standing-room-only in the library, something that usually only happens in the spring!

On November 15 we began the second year of our most recent Egyptian conservation-student training program at Medinet Habu, generously funded by a grant from USAID Egypt that covers most of our Medinet Habu work.

Six students from last year continued their on-site conservation training, and eight new students started this season. The program is directed by Medinet Habu senior conservator Lotfi assisted by Nahed, and is designed to give students fresh out of school valuable, hands-on field experience that will make them better qualified for future employment. They are a bright, motivated group, and it is a great pleasure helping them achieve the conservation skills that Egypt needs so badly, and that also will help them get good jobs.

On November 17 we marked a very important event. That day, ninety years before, the Epigraphic Survey began its work in Luxor supported by a generous gift from John D. Rockefeller Jr. and his family — Chicago House was launched. We celebrated the occasion by taking a house trip to Edfu to see the work of Nadine, Gregory, and their team at the Edfu settlement site. We have watched their work with great interest over the years, and it just gets more amazing. We also saw the not-yet activated dewatering project sponsored by USAID Egypt designed and implemented by our friend, CDM engineer Thomas Nichols, whose work is sensitively and beautifully done. We look forward to its activation soon, as the area is quite damp and the groundwater salts are a real threat to the ancient temple as well as the settlement remains. While there we were allowed by the local Antiquities Ministry officials to visit the roof area of Edfu Temple, a very special, breathtaking treat and something none of us had ever experienced before. Because I was obliged to be in Cairo that night, we postponed the Chicago House 90th birthday dinner until a few days later, and on November 20 we had



J. H. Breasted and Chicago House birthday cake. Digital composite by Jen Kimpton



Chicago House 90th birthday party. Photos by Yarko Kobylecky

a warm, in-house celebration that included members of the some of the earliest staff of Chicago House. Yes, as a surprise, Jen passed out masks of previous Chicago House staff members that she had beautifully crafted out of the 1927 staff photograph, digitally enlarging the faces. I was given first director Harold Nelson's face; Brett was given John Wilson's face; librarian Marie was given original librarian Phoebe Biles' face; Jen had first female epigrapher Caroline Ransom William's mask; Jay got architect Üvo Hölscher's face; Yarko received former photographer Hans Lichter's face, etc. Our predecessors felt very close to us that night, and I think that wherever they are now, they were pleased to be included.

In mid-November I finished the final director's review of four extraordinary drawings done by Margaret of the Ptolemy VIII lintel over the façade entryway of the 18th Dynasty Amun Temple at Medinet Habu. As part of the restoration and renewal of the bark sanctuary and peripteros, Ptolemy VIII's workmen erased the original Thutmose III winged sun disk over the façade doorway (traces still remain). They replaced it with a completely new composition: four, small-scale, sunk-relief offering scenes with incised hieroglyphic texts that are very difficult to see and little-known, but are very important for understanding the later theology of the temple. During the penciling stage of the drawings, before inking, Margaret worked closely with Brett — who specializes in Ptolemaic texts

— on the difficult spots, facilitating the whole collation process. The four drawings are a technical tour de force, and some of the most beautifully drawn Ptolemaic reliefs in the history of Egyptian epigraphy. They are also the last of the drawings earmarked for *Medinet Habu Volume X*,



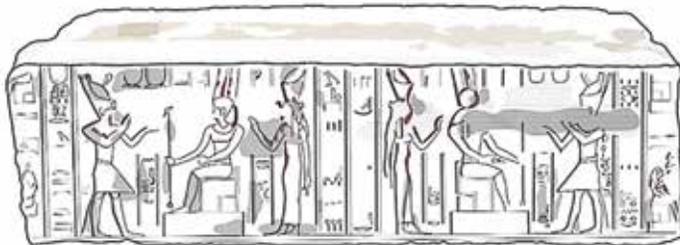
Conservation team consolidating Domitian Gate blocks. Medinet Habu. Photo by Lotfi Hassan



Restoration work at Domitian Gate. Medinet Habu. Photo by Ray Johnson

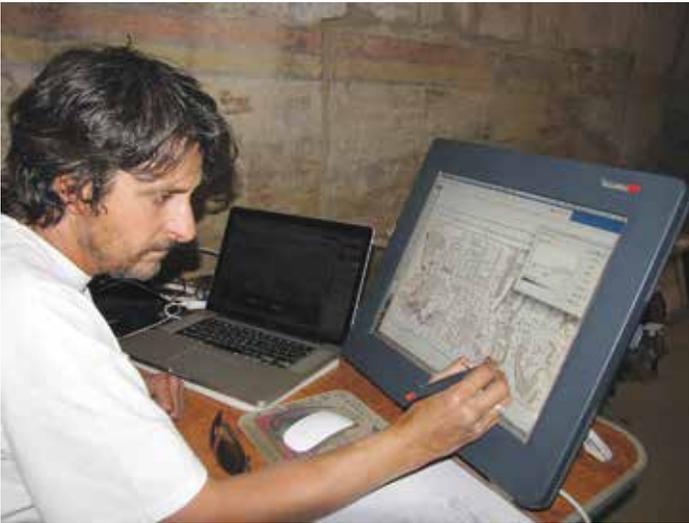


Frank checking block placement. Medinet Habu Domitian Gate. December 2014. Photo by Ray Johnson



BL S5 North side - 10th course - Domitian gate - Medinet Habu
Chicago House 2014-2015 - drawing by Lotfi Hassan

Domitian Gate block condition survey sheet. Medinet Habu. Graphic by Lotfi Hassan



Lotfi documenting Domitian Gate block treatment on Wacom drawing tablet. Medinet Habu. Photo by Nahed Samir



Tina recording graffiti for Medinet Habu X using the Wacom Companion digital drawing tablet. Photo by Ray Johnson



Philippe Martinez and Mark documenting Ramesseum blocks. December 2014. Medinet Habu. Photo by Ray Johnson



Thanksgiving 2014 turkey. Chicago House. Photo by Marie Bryan



Thanksgiving 2014, finance manager Essam's family, Nidaa, Bismala, Abdel Rahman, and Sansabil. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Thanksgiving 2014, Antiquities Ministry and foreign friends. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Thanksgiving 2014, Ibrahim Soleiman; Francisco Valentin-Martin, wife Teresa, and Spanish team; Louise Gestermann and Farouk Goma. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Ekbal, Samy, Soher, and administrator Samir at Thanksgiving. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky

The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part 2: The Façade, Pillars, and Architrave Inscriptions of the Thutmoside Peripteros, and represent a major milestone in our Medinet Habu documentation program. Production of this volume will begin in Chicago this summer.

In late November a Spanish-Egyptian security team started trenching the Medinet Habu precinct for electrical cables that will power a new lighting and security-camera system being set up all over Luxor: Karnak and Luxor Temples, Deir el-Bahri, the Ramesseum, Gurna hill and the Tombs of the Nobles, the Valley of the Kings, and Medinet Habu. We have shared copies of Hölscher's extremely detailed plans of the entire Medinet Habu precinct with the team and our antiquities ministry colleagues and inspectors to help them avoid buried walls and features that are not visible from the ground, and will be assisting wherever we can in the installation process.

On November 27 Chicago House hosted a festive Thanksgiving dinner with our friends and colleagues, including Nadine, Greg, and the Edfu team; Peter Brand and his University of Memphis team; Piers Litherland and Mohsen el-Kamel; many antiquities ministry directors and friends; numerous heads of foreign missions and colleagues; and even some US Embassy friends, Acting Deputy Chargé d'Affaires David Ranz and his family. We were eighty total, and while the turkey was the size of a small car, there wasn't anything left of it by the evening's end. A fine time was had by all, and the holiday season was well launched.

DECEMBER

Our December just flew by, and even with the holidays it was a full and productive month. At the very beginning of December, after her Edfu season, Nadine stayed at Chicago House with us for a few days and helped with some surveying at Medinet Habu. On December 13 Krisztián joined Jay at Luxor Temple and resumed his drawing of the late third century AD Roman frescos in the Imperial Cult Chamber for our volume devoted to those extraordinary paintings; he will continue that work later this month. Jay continued his digital drawing of the Bentresh and Ptolemy I blocks in the Luxor Temple blockyard and resumed work on the new Luxor Temple blockyard database and management system. He has continued to enter and update the blockyard data and is presently drawing up (using AutoCAD) a key plan of the blockyard holding areas, platform by platform, to facilitate tracking and finalizing the exact locations of the blocks and fragments.

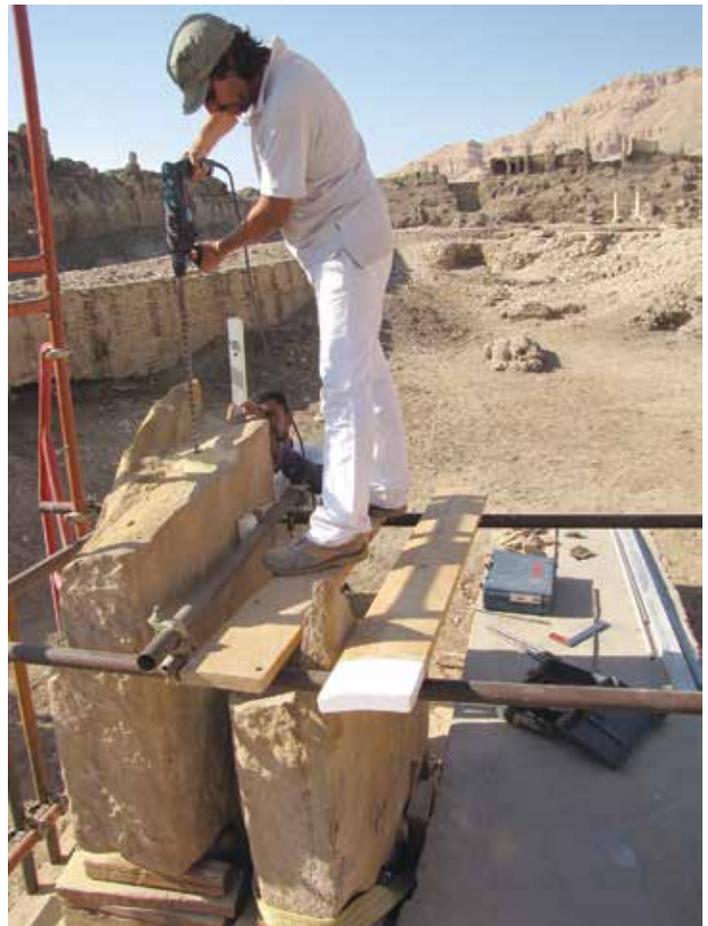


Roof-block restoration at Ramesses III well. *Medinet Habu*. December 2014. Photo by Nahed Samir

At Medinet Habu the fourteen Egyptian conservation students have been busy learning and applying stone conservation techniques in the Medinet Habu blockyard under the watchful eyes of Lotfi and Nahed. Lessons take place in the Medinet Habu blockyard, but the students have also resumed the consolidation of the shattered blocks from the upper wall blocks of the Ramesses III southern well. Lotfi, Frank, and the combined conservation and stone teams restored the first of several broken roof blocks from the well with two stainless steel dowels and successfully rejoined the two pieces, a major milestone. Stone mason Frank and the team built up the Domitian Gate doorjamb to their original height to test the dimensions, made some adjustments, and took down some of the blocks to prepare them for permanent placement. On January 5 they successfully rejoined the broken lintel (the largest block of the gate) with two one-meter-long stainless steel dowels, a significant step toward completing the project. The epigraphic team has been working on finishing up any loose ends for *Medinet Habu X*, including adding the painted borderlines beneath the square pillar scenes in the ambulatory — the major focus of the publication — where they were not already indicated. They have also been working on the completion of the 21st Dynasty Pinudjem inscription that wraps around the outside of the small Amun Temple (to be published in *Medinet Habu XI*). Artists Margaret, Sue, Krisztián, and Keli displayed all of the facsimile drawings in the Chicago House Library for Brett, Jen, and me to review, and I must say, it is quite an achievement. Some of them were drawn with pen and ink, and some were drawn completely digitally with our new Wacom digital “tools,” and it is impossible to tell which is which. Before he transferred to Luxor Temple, Krisztián finished most of the work on

the small Amun Temple bark shrine exterior western wall and gate, which will be published in *Medinet Habu XII*; yet another tour de force, seamlessly combining digital and inked drawings. Photo archivist Sue Lezon and registrar Ellie Smith arrived in the middle of the month; they are now working with Brett compiling and arranging the photographs and scans that we will publish in *Medinet Habu X*.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, and before some of the staff took off for the holidays, our kitchen crew produced batches of Christmas cookies that we decorated with brightly colored frosting, packaged up, and distributed to friends and colleagues on both sides of the river, a tradition since the time of Lanny and Martha Bell. On December 13 we put up and decorated the Christmas tree and public rooms, and put out red poinsettia plants in the dining room and tearoom that Tina had procured in Cairo. Kitchen helper Zakaria single-handedly decorated the courtyard with lights and decorations as a gift to the house, and it has never looked so festive; *shukran, ya Zakaria!* We were fifty-five at Christmas dinner, a nice mix of Egyptian and foreign friends, colleagues, and whole expeditions, including the University of Memphis



Well roof-block joining. *Medinet Habu well*. December 2014. Photo by Nahed Samir



Well roof-block joining. Medinet Habu. December 2014. Photo by Nahed Samir



Well roof-block joining. Medinet Habu. December 2014. Photo by Nahed Samir

American team working in the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak; the Waseda University Japanese team working in western Thebes; the Australian mission working in Dra Abu el-Naga; Ibrahim and Isabella Soliman; and ARCE Luxor director John Shearman and wife Khadija. Dr. Wafaa el-Sedik and her family joined us for the holidays, an annual event now, and Mark Chickering joined wife Sue Osgood, adding a sweet touch to our holiday. Our New Year's Eve was a smaller affair but warm and festive, with additional guests from Rome, cartographer Marcello Spanu and his wife Emanuela Borgia from the Antinoupolis team (who will be back at the site at the end of this month). Richard Jasnow joined Tina to continue their graffiti documentation at Medinet Habu and was a welcome addition to our New Year's celebration.

On December 21 we celebrated the Winter Solstice with a small bonfire (in a broad metal bowl) on the Chicago House roof at sunset. We had much for which to be thankful; on December 18 one of our more beloved workmen, Abdel Haris (who has tended the library as long as I have been here) and his son Ahmed (who works with us at Medinet Habu) were on their motorcycle heading home when they were struck by a speeding car on the west bank. Both suffered broken limbs — Abdel Haris two broken legs — but we are lucky that they weren't killed outright. We sent them both to a private hospital in Qena where they were treated, and they will be at home recuperating for the rest of our season.

JANUARY

In the weeks after New Year's Day the Chicago House staff members who were away on holiday returned to Chicago



Jen inventorying miscellaneous inscribed fragments at the destroyed western High Gate site. Medinet Habu. Photo by Ray Johnson



Nadine, Jen, and the Total Station. December 2014. Photo by Ray Johnson



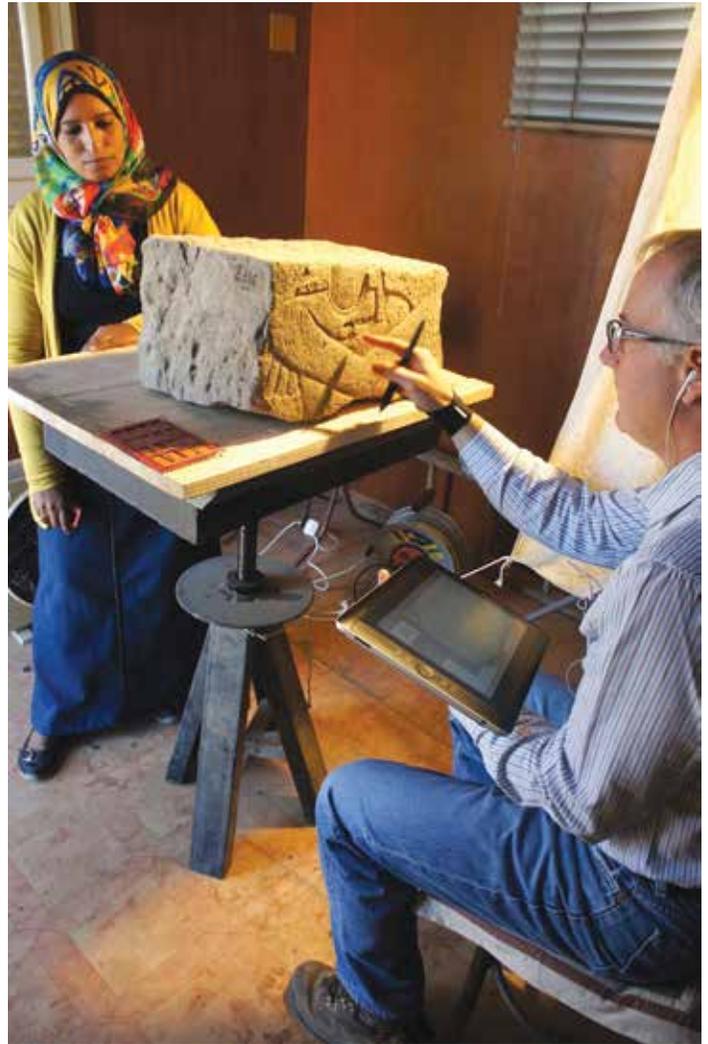
Christmas Nefertiti. Chicago House reception room. Photo by Ray Johnson



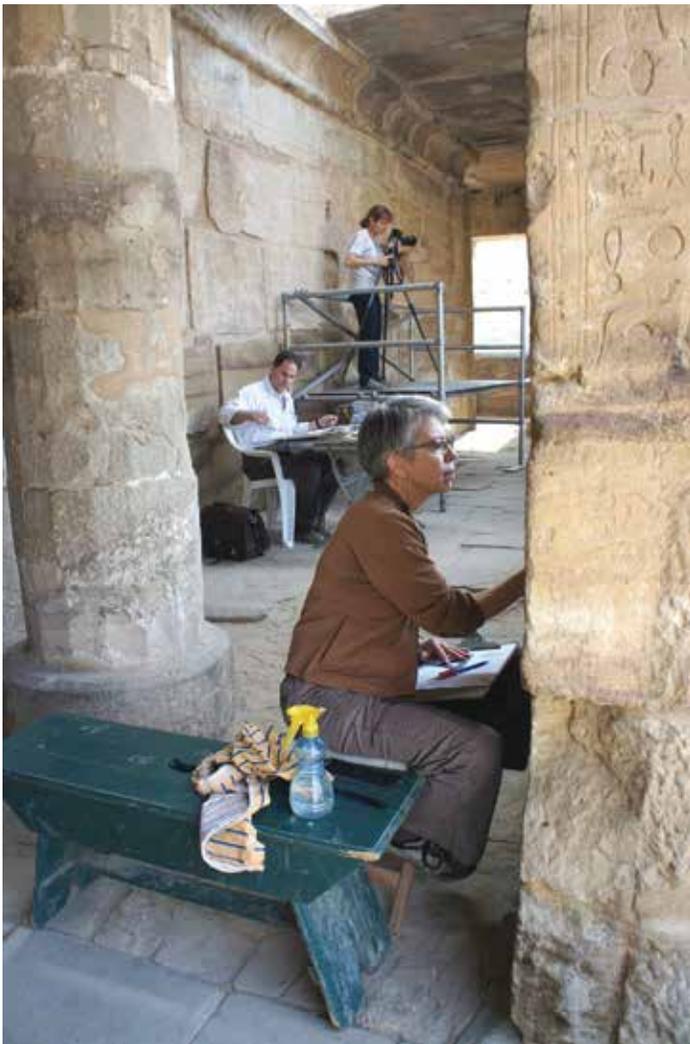
Chicago House Christmas hippo cookies. Photo by Ray Johnson



Gina sorting pamphlets in the Chicago House Library. Photo by Marie Bryan



Jay and inspector Nadia documenting Ptolemy I blocks. Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson



Brett, Tina, and Sue documenting reliefs at the small Amun Temple. December 2014. Photo by Ray Johnson



Conservation students consolidating decaying northern wall. Medinet Habu small Amun Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson



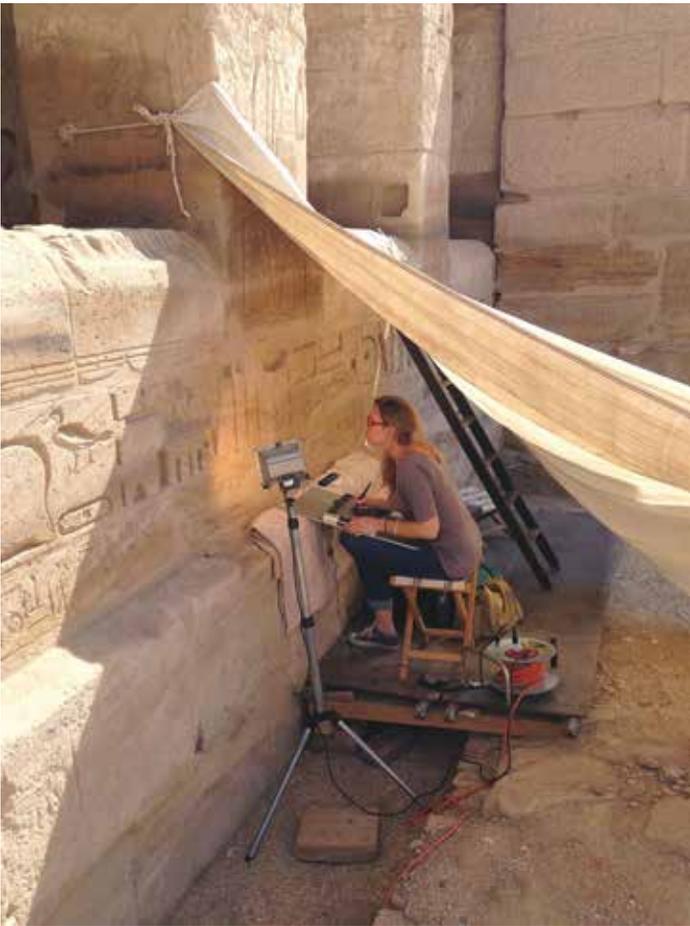
Johannes and new block for the Domitian Gate. Photo by Ray Johnson



Domitian Gate restoration, Frank. December 2014. Photo by Ray Johnson



Johannes shaping stone for the Domitian Gate restoration. Medinet Habu. Photo by Ray Johnson



Keli copying the Pinudjem inscription. Small Amun Temple, Medinet Habu. December 2014. Photo by Ray Johnson



Zakaria and courtyard Christmas tree. Photo by Ray Johnson

House to resume work, our holiday guests departed, and additional expeditions began to arrive. Among them were Suzanne Onstine from the University of Memphis, Betsy Bryan from Johns Hopkins, and Peter Lacovara, who on January 6 took up residence with us for most of the month before his Amenhotep III Malqata Palace season with the Metropolitan Museum of Art team. MMA Egyptian Department director Diana Craig Patch, Catharine Roehrig, and Janice Kamrin arrived on January 29 and whisked Peter away to their west bank hotel, the New Memnon, where they were in residence during the entire month of February. Once again we shared our Land Rover with them for the month, an annual tradition now. On January 7, Coptic Christmas, we were visited by former Chicago House finance manager Safi Ouri and her mother Nabila, who were in town for some Egyptian sun and a change from bitter cold and rainy Jordan. Unfortunately they hit town just as we experienced a two-week cold snap with nighttime temperatures just above freezing (I can hear you all back home snorting with derision, but you must remember that Chicago House has no heat!). Luckily the days stayed sunny and pleasant, and we got through the cold snap just fine



Dr. Wafaa el-Seddik in the Chicago House library. January 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



Inspector Nadia and Hiroko. Luxor Temple. January 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson

(in case you were wondering), with just a few cases of the sniffles and some of that awful flu going around. On January 8 Professor Janet Johnson was honored at the Oriental Institute and presented with a mockup of her Festschrift, *Essays for the Library of Seshat: Studies Presented to Janet H. Johnson on the Occasion of Her 70th Birthday*. The Chicago House team participated in the celebration long-distance with a short video of us all wishing her well, and Richard Jasnow hazarding a preliminary translation of an obscure Demotic text we found at Medinet Habu that seemed to refer to Jan herself; incredible! *Alf mabruk, Jan!!!*

At Medinet Habu the Domitian Gate work reached a major milestone at the end of the month. All of the new replacement blocks were cut and finished, and the testing, checking, trial placement, and tweaking of new blocks with the old ones is now completed. Under the supervision of master mason Frank assisted by stone mason Johannes and our trusty stone crew the permanent installation of old and new blocks with mortar began on January 27, right on schedule. In the coming weeks the Domitian Gate will slowly rise again, and this time it will be for good. Bravo to the stone team; it already looks sensational, the result of a lot of care and hard work.

Lotfi, Nahed, and the fourteen Egyptian conservation students have also made excellent progress with the



Building the access ramp. Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson

training and their various projects. One team has cleaned out decaying lower wall surfaces inside the small Amun Temple sanctuary, and part of the outside wall on the northern side, in preparation for infilling with porous lime mortar and sandstone patchstones. Another, more advanced team (from last season) has been working on reassembling shattered wall blocks from the dismantled Ramesses III southern well. Epigrapher Jen assisted by Anait has been doing preliminary surveying of the western High Gate area, blocks, and fragments, preparatory to our planned cleaning, moving, and consolidation program next season, and Jen has continued the preliminary entering of fragments on a master database. Photographer Yarko assisted by Ellie has been taking record shots of all the Medinet Habu work, including before and after cleaning and conservation, and some preliminary reference shots of some of the fragmentary inscribed sandstone relief material from the western High Gate and miscellaneous material in the Medinet Habu blockyard. Artists Sue and Keli have been working with Brett on drawings for



Hiroko and new access ramp. Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson



Ellie and Sue organizing images for *Medinet Habu* Volume X. Chicago House Library. January 2015.
Photo by Ray Johnson

Medinet Habu XII, specifically the eastern entryway of the bark sanctuary. I worked with Keli on the final director's review of a scene on the front of the bark sanctuary, MHB 156, with figures of Thutmose III and Amun recarved and "updated" by Ptolemy VIII in the Ptolemaic style, including a wildly exuberant repainting of the figures. It is pure delight for me to see how beautifully Keli has caught all of the details of this extremely detailed scene. Brett has been reviewing each and every drawing enlargement that will be published in *Medinet Habu* X back at the temple wall with the collation sheets, checking, updating, and finalizing all of the translations and epigraphic commentary.

At Luxor Temple Jay continued his digital drawing of the Ptolemy I block material for our "Bentresh" study during most of the month and gave informal drawing lessons to inspector Nadia, while Krisztián returned from the holidays and resumed his penciling of the Roman frescos in the Imperial Cult Chamber. On January 8 Luxor Temple conservator Hiroko Kariya arrived back for a couple of months' work in the blockyard, inventorying and tracking the blockyard collections (in coordination with Jay), condition-surveying the blocks and holding areas, and doing miscellaneous maintenance work with our workmen in consultation with the Luxor Temple inspectorate. This week we extended the chain-link fence in the center of the blockyard open-air museum to include a ramp that makes the whole area wheelchair (and baby carriage!) accessible. Jay departed at the end of the month for the Antinopolis winter season, but is continuing to enter data on the Luxor Temple blockyard database, including block locations, in

coordination with Hiroko, while he is away. He is also continuing to ink blocks on his Wacom drawing tablet, a tool that is proving to be enormously versatile.

On January 15 photo archivist Sue returned home after more than a month over the holidays with us finalizing the photographic images for *Medinet Habu* X with Brett, and arranging for Yarko to fill any gaps. On January 19 I had the pleasure of attending the Scientific Committee meetings of the Centre Franco-Égyptien d'Étude des Temples de Karnak (CFEETK) in Cairo at the Ministry of Antiquities and Heritage (MAH) headquarters. As an "outside reviewer" of the work of the Karnak Center, my task was to critique and comment on the work of the last two seasons, always a pleasant task, be-

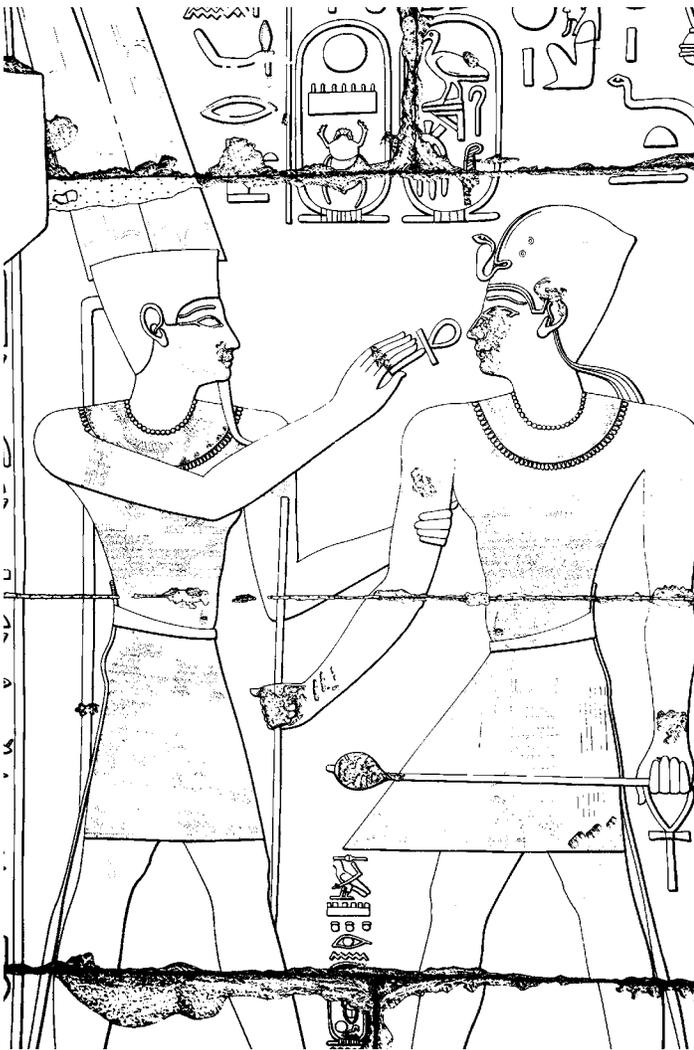
cause the excavation, documentation, conservation, and database work is always an inspiration.

FEBRUARY

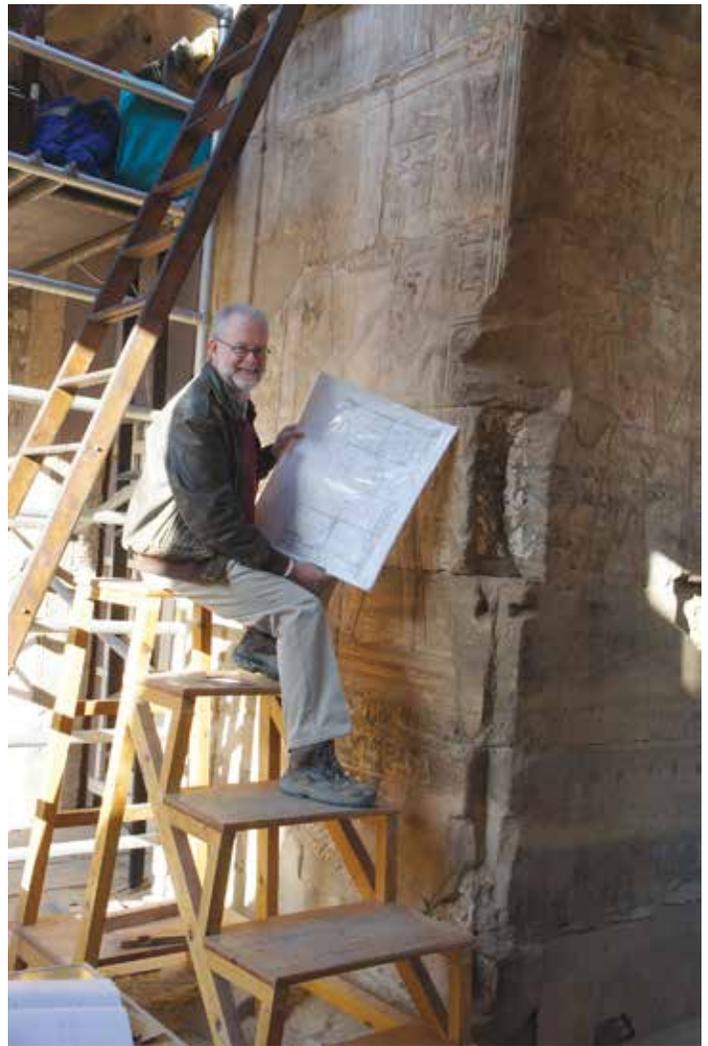
Februarys are usually among the busiest months of our archaeological field season, and this one was no exception. Old projects continued and new ones started, and there were lots of comings and goings at Chicago House. Conservator Lotfi's family (wife Dina, her sister Nora, and sons Karim and Hani) joined us from Cairo for a week; co-senior artist Margaret returned from the US for the last months of the season; stone mason Johannes departed for home after helping Frank and the stone team with the Domitian



Keli working in the studio. Photo by Ray Johnson



MHB 156, drawing by Tina Di Cerbo and Keli Alberts



Ray director-checking Keli's drawing. February 2015. Photo by Keli Alberts

Gate; Tina returned from the US; Pia is here visiting with husband Yarko, and co-senior artist Sue Osgood departed for home after three months' fieldwork.

Always a busy month for visitors, February also saw a whole series of briefings on site at Medinet Habu and Luxor Temple, as well as at Chicago House, for interested groups, students, and colleagues. These included a group of students from the Dutch/Flemish Institute in Cairo briefed by Brett at Medinet Habu and the Chicago House Library on February 3; the Society for the Study of Ancient Egypt out of England; and, also at Medinet Habu, a group of engineers from CDM, the firm who helped design and execute the USAID Egypt-funded dewatering programs on both sides of the river in Luxor (east bank 2006; west bank 2011), and more recently at the site of Edfu (2014). The group was escorted by engineer Thomas Nichols, who coordinated the Edfu project and is currently working on new dewatering projects in Alexandria and Kom Ombo. It was a pleasure to demonstrate

to our friends how worthwhile those projects are and to show them how the area around the site of Medinet Habu is drying out, allowing crucial conservation and restoration work to continue, and to begin. Other colleagues in town this month included Angus Graham and his family, Zahi Hawass (in town with a group of 130 Americans!), Hisham and Diane Tayeb and their family (who live in the same town as Sue O. in Vermont), Don Ryan, Betsy Bryan from Johns Hopkins working in Mut Temple, Pat Graham and Peggy King (University of Chicago Women's Board), and our ARCE friends Gerry and Kathleen Scott and Jane Smythe in town to review ARCE's west bank work.

Jay returned from a successful winter season at Antinopolis on February 21 and resumed his work in the Luxor Temple blockyard, continuing the documentation of Ptolemy I blocks and checking location data on the new blockyard database using his iPad, another first in the blockyard. He continued to work with conservator



Jay documenting fragment locations with his iPad. February 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson

Hiroko and Photo Archives registrar Ellie on filling gaps in the blockyard numbering system, and accounting for the location of every registered block in the precinct as part of our new blockyard data management program. He also continued his informal instruction of two of our inspectors, Nadia and now Marwan, in epigraphic drawing techniques. Hiroko continued her condition survey of the blockyard material, and Krisztián has been filling in the

gaps of his Roman fresco documentation in the Imperial Cult Chamber on the southern wall, eastern side, with Yarko photographing areas not covered before. Krisztián started the penciling of the eastern wall cavalry frescos while Yarko was photographing, and is now penciling the fresco remains of the Emperor and his court officials immediately to the left of the apse on the southern wall.

At Medinet Habu, Lotfi and Nahed continued the USAID grant-supported training program for our fourteen Egyptian conservation students. The teams worked on the consolidation of the southern well blocks, desalination and treatment of various deteriorating walls within the small Amun Temple precinct, consolidating fragmentary material within the Medinet Habu blockyard, and cleaning/consolidating Domitian Gate blocks in the final stages of restoration. They have gained a lot of field experience and have been a big help in the process. The Domitian Gate work supervised by Frank is reaching the final stages of construction; the eastern jamb is now mortared and complete, with the western jamb following suit. Next up: winching the first of the great lintel blocks into place. Artists Sue and Margaret have been working with Brett on the final details and consistency tweaking of all the drawings and photographs that will appear in *Medinet Habu X*,



Theban Tomb 107 site. February 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson

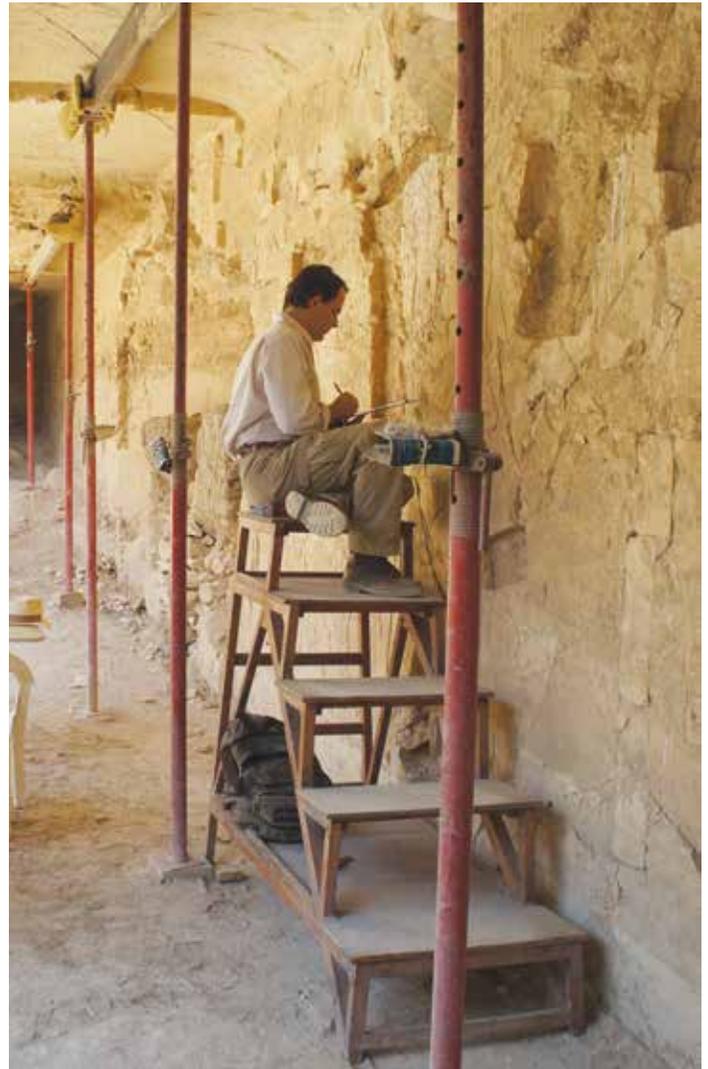


Brett collating drawings in the portico. TT 107. Photo by Ray Johnson

but they are also working on drawings that will appear in *Volumes XI and XII*. Jen has continued her painstaking preliminary documentation and inventory of the hundreds of blocks and block fragments of the destroyed western High Gate in anticipation of a major conservation and restoration effort there starting next year. Yarko continued his Medinet Habu photography in the blockyard, the western High Gate, and the small Amun Temple assisted by Ellie.

February also saw the resumption of our work at Khonsu Temple Karnak and Theban Tomb 107. On February 10 artist Keli supervised by epigrapher Jen resumed her documentation of two inscribed blocks of Horemheb recarved by Ramesses II and reused by Ramesses III over the entrance doorway of room 11 in Khonsu Temple, still partly covered by Ramesses III-inscribed plaster. She is drawing both sets of inscribed decoration, since the Ramesses III reliefs are in a very fragile state. She — and we — are very pleased to acknowledge that two of our

antiquities inspectors from last season, Shimaa and Peter, were chosen to participate in a month-and-a-half-long ARCE/AEF-funded epigraphy field school coordinated by our colleagues J. J. Shirley and Will Schenck in Theban Tomb 110, recently cleaned and conserved by ARCE. Both Shimaa and Peter were coached by Keli last season in epigraphic drawing techniques which they practiced under Keli's watchful eye while they worked with us at Khonsu Temple. *Mabruk* to them both! The field school will focus on the documentation of the Hatshepsut and Thutmose III-period reliefs of the tomb, but will also teach the five students research skills in the Chicago House Library. The field school participants had an orientation session in the library last week courtesy of librarian Marie, who showed them how to use the library resources, and Ellie, who showed the group how to access our photo files in the Tom and Linda Heagy Chicago House Photo Archives.



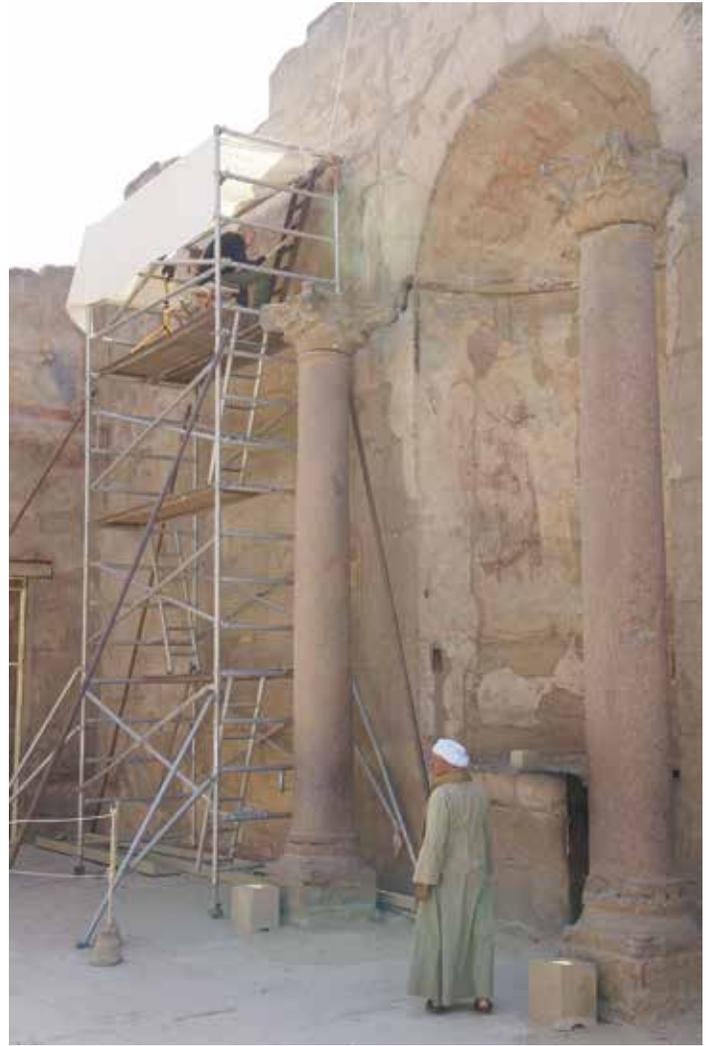
Brett collating portico relief drawings. TT 107. February 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



J. J. Shirley and epigraphy field school library orientation. February 23, 2015. Photo by Marie Bryan



Yarko photographing Roman fresco sections in the Imperial Cult Chamber. Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson

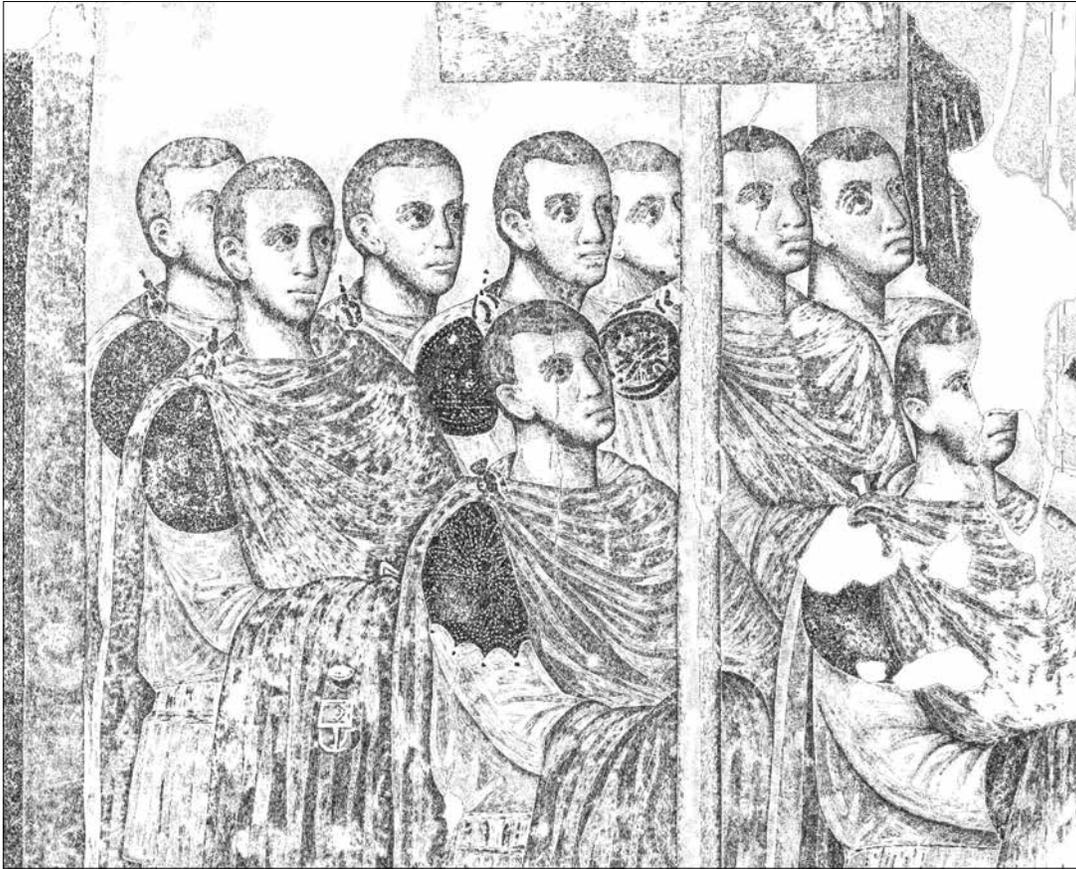


Krisztián penciling Roman frescos. Luxor Temple. February 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



Krisztián documenting Roman frescos in the Imperial Cult Chamber. Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson

On February 11 Brett resumed the collation of the wall reliefs in the portico of TT 107, the tomb of Nefersekheru, steward of Amenhotep III's jubilee palace at Malqata, a sprawling, six kilometer-long complex south of Medinet Habu. The exquisitely carved sunk relief details of the noble steward and his entourage were barely begun, and are in rough shape because of the poor limestone, but are well worth the effort of properly drawing and recording them. Sue and Margaret's drawings are among the most beautiful and detailed of their careers in Luxor. Because the limestone in which the reliefs are carved is in such terrible condition, our drawings will be an invaluable reference to their current condition, essential for the conservation of the reliefs and the restoration of several missing pillars of the portico, future components of our project. The palace itself has been the focus of excavation and restoration measures this month by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Diana Craig Patch, Catharine Roehrig, and Janice Kamrin) and the Ancient



Detail of Roman fresco drawing by Krisztián. Photo by Krisztián Vertés

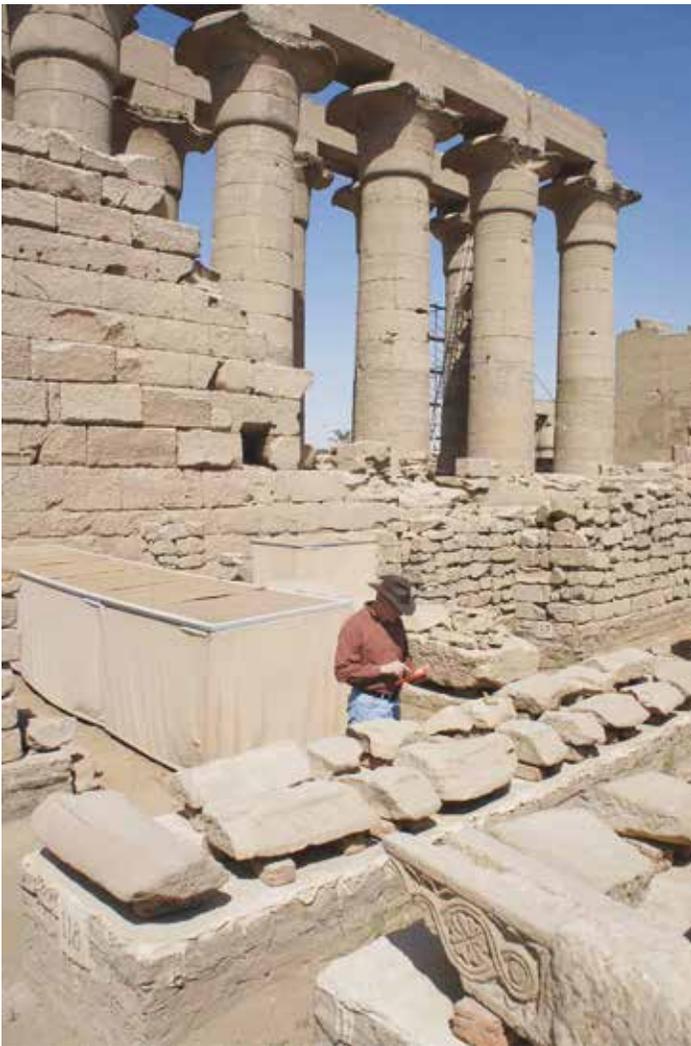
Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund (Peter Laco-
vara), with some conservation assistance from Hiroko.
Despite suffering a broken arm two weeks ago, plucky
Diana squired her team through their normal season;
they completed their fieldwork on schedule at the end
of the month.

A very special double event occurred on February 23
at Deir el-Bahri: the official opening of the Hatshepsut
mortuary temple Third Terrace Re-Horakhty solar court
restored by the Polish-Egyptian team currently directed
by our old friend Dr. Zbigniew Sfranski, followed by a cel-
ebration of the 100th anniversary of the Metropolitan
House in the Assasif plain in front of the temple. Antiqui-
ties Minister Dr. Mamdouh el-Damaty presided over the
opening of the solar court, assisted by the Minister of
Tourism as well as the Polish Ambassador. The luncheon
at the Metropolitan House following the inauguration was
a very pleasant affair, attended by many of our colleagues
and friends. This beautiful facility with its domed cen-
tral reception area was built by the MMA as their base of
operations in Luxor and has been used as an expedition
house by the Polish-Egyptian team since the 1960s. *Mabruk*
to Zbigniew and our Polish-Egyptian colleagues, the Polish

Center for Mediterranean Archaeology in Egypt, the Min-
istry for Antiquities and Heritage, AND to the Metropoli-
tan Museum of Art.

On February 10 I attended a farewell reception at the
US Embassy in Cairo for outgoing USAID Egypt director
Mary Ott, who is now based in Washington, DC. From the
time more than a decade ago when she was USAID Egypt
deputy director under mission director Ken Ellis, to her
time during the last few years as director, she has been
a good friend to cultural heritage preservation work in
Egypt, and to Chicago House. We will miss her, and wish
her all the best back home. During the reception I had
the pleasure of meeting and welcoming new US Amba-
sador R. Stephen Beecroft (coming to Egypt from Iraq),
new Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas H. Goldberger, and
Consul General Sean Murphy. We look forward to hosting
some site visits for them here in Luxor in the near future.

And so it goes. What I have related is of course only
a fraction of what happens out here; it is always aston-
ishing to me how much goes on during the course of a
single day! But we are all well, working hard, and enjoying
the final months of the season. Changes are in the air ...
Egypt is preparing for new Parliamentary elections, so the



Jay entering location data on the Luxor Temple blockyard database. Photo by Ray Johnson



Jay digitally penciling Ptolemy I blocks at Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson

campaign posters are beginning to appear everywhere. Luxor has a new governor, and the Antiquities Ministry Luxor director, our old friend Abdel Hakim Karrar, has just this week retired, with the choice of his replacement still pending. We continue to observe an increase in tourism, both western and Egyptian tourists — including American groups — which is making everyone happier. Luxor is busy. And dare I tell you that the temperatures already started to climb...? During the last week of the month we had several days in the upper 80s F, quite in contrast to the blizzards and freezing temps in the Midwest and eastern USA!

MARCH

March in Luxor was full of events, discoveries, milestones, visitors, and yes, continued rising temperatures. It was

HOT; 90°–100° F by month's end. And there was endless excitement. Hourig Sourouzian raised yet another Amenhotep III colossal statue section, this one the lower part of the second, southern quartzite colossus of the Amenhotep III mortuary temple second pylon (leg, throne, and another beautiful Queen Tiye figure) behind the Memnon Colossi — it's breathtaking. She has also started erecting a beautiful, secure grill fence around the site — with educational signage that when finished will allow visitors to access the temple axis, currently off limits. This month our ARCE friends discovered two unknown, exquisite 18th Dynasty painted tomb chapels in the clearance of the courtyard in front of TT 110, where conservation continues, and an epigraphy field school for Egyptian inspectors conducted by J. J. Shirley and Will Schenck has just finished for this season. Two of our Khonsu inspectors trained in drawing techniques last season by artist Keli Alberts were part of the program, Shimaa and Peter, and the whole group regularly used the Chicago House library for their research.

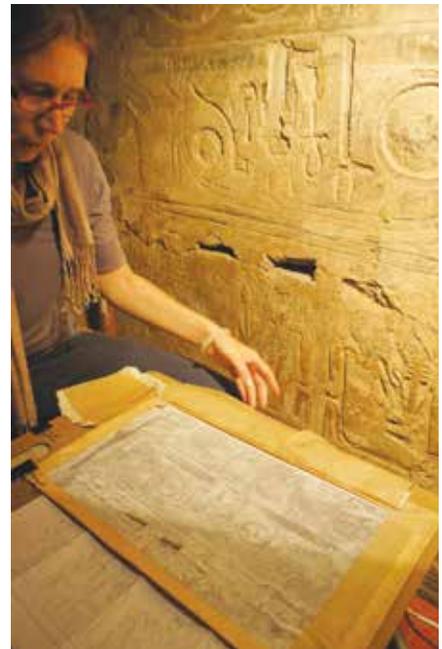


Keli working in room 11, Khonsu Temple. March 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson

From March 5 to the 17 we were joined at Chicago House by staff member in absentia (and Krisztián's wife) Juli Schmied and their son David on his first trip to Egypt and Chicago House. It was sweet to have Juli back even for a short while, and to meet little David. In the middle of the month Jay and I were very pleased to attend Margie Fisher and Roy Furman's wedding in Palm Beach (March 14). Seeing our friends so happy was purest joy and WELL worth the jet lag. We are still smiling.

On March 12 Brett McClain finished his collation for the season at TT 107, the tomb of the noble Nefersekeru, and our hope is to finish the collation of Margaret's and Sue's beautiful drawings next season. Jay and Krisztián continued their documentation work at Luxor Temple, Jay in the blockyard drawing Ptolemy I blocks and updating the new blockyard database, and Krisztián in the Imperial Roman sanctuary penciling Roman frescos on the southern wall. Photographer Yarko assisted by Ellie photographed miscellaneous blocks in the blockyard, including two additional Ptolemy I blocks. He also continued the hi-res scanning of all of the large-format negatives produced this season. Conservator Hiroko finished her condition study of the blockyard holdings, moved the last of the small fragments to protective shelving, and finished her work for the season on March 14.

During the month Keli continued working on some devilishly tricky reused blocks in the walls of Khonsu Temple, finished her work in room



Keli drawing in room 11, Khonsu Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson



Conor and Keli. Khonsu Temple. March 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson

11 and moved on to room 1, where she is recording blocks reused in the south wall right under the roof line. More on them in a future report!

On March 15 our fourteen Egyptian conservation students concluded this year's program at Medinet Habu with a special graduation ceremony in the Chicago House library, followed by a celebratory luncheon in the residence. *Alf mabruk* and congratulations to them all, and to instructors Lotfi and Nahed for helping to "launch" these talented young conservators on their way. Some will go on to work in the antiquities ministry, some in the private sector, and a few of them may even continue work with us!

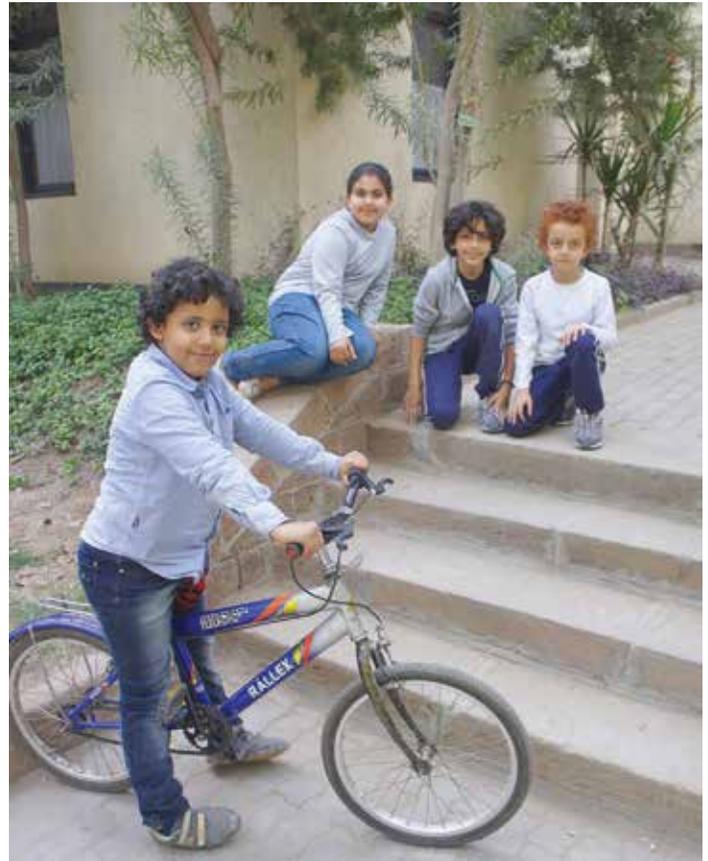
On March 19 we hosted a review of our work on both sides of the river by USAID representative Sylvia Atalla in anticipation of the conclusion of our USAID grant on March 23. The next evening I attended the inauguration of a new, computerized security system at Luxor Temple by Antiquities Minister Dr. Mamdouh el-Damaty, Deputy Minister Dr. Youssef Khalifa, Supreme Council of Antiquities Chairman Dr. Mustafa Amin, newly appointed Director of Upper Egypt Sultan Eid, and newly appointed Luxor Antiquities General Director Dr. Mustafa Waziri, where I also met the new governor of Luxor, Dr. Mohamed Sayed

Badr. That same evening I joined Sylvia, Julie, ARCE director Gerry Scott and wife Kathleen, and John Shearman to meet new USAID mission director Sherry Carlin, in Luxor for her first briefing. The next day, Sunday, March 22, we were very pleased to host a review of our work at Medinet Habu for the Antiquities Minister Dr. Mamdouh, SCA Chairman Mustafa Amin, and their respective entourages; the governor of Luxor and his entourage; our USAID Egypt friends including mission director Sherry; plus all of our Ministry friends from both sides of the river, and our ARCE friends (whose new tombs were viewed first that morning). There were over a hundred people, and it was like trying to control a tidal wave, but it went very well.

The throng stayed for two hours, saw every aspect of our operation, and met our epigraphic, conservation, and restoration teams, including the Egyptian conservation students and Chicago House conservators Lotfi and Nahed. Our visitors were also able to meet with the antiquities ministry conservators with whom we work on the site and who do the conservation maintenance work on the mortuary temple proper. Of special interest was the sandstone Domitian Gate, presently covered in scaffolding, in the final stages of restoration supervised by Frank and our stone team, where that very day (quite by chance



Dina and Hany. Chicago House. Photo by Ray Johnson



Abdel Rahman, Bismalla, Karim, and Hany. Chicago House. February 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



Juli and David. Chicago House. March 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson

— really!) the last big block was hoisted into position. Our friends were also very interested in our epigraphic recording, both traditional and digital. Margaret and Tina gave excellent demonstrations on our various techniques, and Tina demonstrated how some of the ink graffiti has disappeared from the walls since we began our recording there in the 1920s and 1930s. We showed everyone the southern Ramesses III well that we are restoring, and briefed the group on how the USAID-funded dewatering program for the west bank (activated in 2011) has dried out the area sufficiently to allow much-needed conservation and restoration work, impossible even a couple of years ago because of the wet ground. We showed everyone the House of Butehamon at the far western end of the precinct with its inscribed slender white columns that we excavated in the early 1930s and are now documenting and planning to conserve. While there I explained what we have done and what we need to do in future seasons in the southern and western areas. We even made it out to the ruins of the destroyed western High Gate where Jen is working, kindly assisted by Anait, doing preliminary database recording and mapping of the hundreds of shattered sandstone gate blocks and fragments that cover the site. Jen explained the history of the gate to the group,



Sue, Brett, and Margaret reviewing drawings for Medinet Habu X in the Chicago House dining room. Photo by Ray Johnson

including its partial destruction during the civil wars at the end of the 20th Dynasty, and the more thorough destruction later. We described our plans to record, move, conserve, analyze, reassemble, and present the restored blocks and wall sections in an open-air museum at the gate site. It was hot that day, especially out in the back, but we were very fortunate to have a sweet, cool wind during the entire visit.

We ended up in the mortuary temple proper where there was some shade, where the minister gave interviews and met with our conservation students and the ministry conservators working in the first court. The review was a great success and everything we had hoped for, thanks to the kindness of the minister and our ministry friends. Now everyone knows what we are doing, why, and how. After everyone left, and a little lunch, I hopped across the river to show our work at Luxor Temple to the USAID group, plus squeezed in a visit to Chicago House and the library afterward — it was definitely a full day!

Photo Archivist Sue Lezon spent the first part of March with us working with Brett on assembling all of the

material for the production of our next volume *Medinet Habu X*, scanning what still needed scanning, and packing it up for transport back to the USA; Sue herself took a large portfolio of drawings and negatives back to the US. While with us she discussed necessary computer and



Conservation students and Lotfi (center) finishing the consolidation of a block in the Medinet Habu blockyard. Photo by Ray Johnson



Medinet Habu visit, Chicago House conservation students, USAID director Sherry Carlin (second from left), Lotfi, Nahed, and Ray. March 22, 2015.
Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Conservation students graduation in the Chicago House Library. March 14, 2015. Photo by Frank Helmholz



Conservation and restoration teams working together on the Domitian Gate. Medinet Habu. March 2015. Photo by Lotfi Hassan

software upgrades with the epigraphic team members, also Yarko, Tina, Ellie, and with Alain and Emmanuelle Arnaudies, who arrived on March 8 to continue their work on the Chicago House Photo Archives master database. Structural engineer Conor Power joined us on March 7 for a few days to review the structural integrity of Luxor Temple, check the plumb bobs and crack meter on the pylon to see if there was any movement (there was none). His report was a good one; the USAID-sponsored dewatering program continues to function well and has stabilized the Luxor Temple foundations.

The last week of the month was action-packed as we started tying up our work for the season. On March 28 I had the pleasure of attending a dinner hosted by Luxor British Consul Ehab Gaddis in honor of the British Ambassador to Egypt, the Honorable John Casson, where we discussed tourism, economic development, and cultural heritage issues. On March 29 Chicago House was paid a first visit by new US Embassy Cultural Attaché Mark Wenig. On March 30 after dinner we had the pleasure of hosting Luxor governor Dr. Mohamed Sayed Badr to a tour of Chicago House and the Chicago House library and a

discussion afterward about Luxor's future, the governor's visions, the realities, and our part in it. On March 31 we hosted our Getty Conservation Institute friends to dinner at Chicago House, including old friend Neville Agnew and Getty Trust president Jim Cuno, former Chicago Art Institute director, a most pleasant reunion.



Saber working on the mortar of the Domitian Gate. Photo by Sue Lezon



Cornice raising. Medinet Habu Domitian Gate. March 22, 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Visit for Domitian Gate review. March 22, 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Review visit. From center to right, Minister Dr. Mamdouh el-Damaty, Luxor governor Mohamed Sayed Badr, Frank, SCA Chairman Mustafa Amin. Medinet Habu. March 22, 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Domitian Gate. March 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



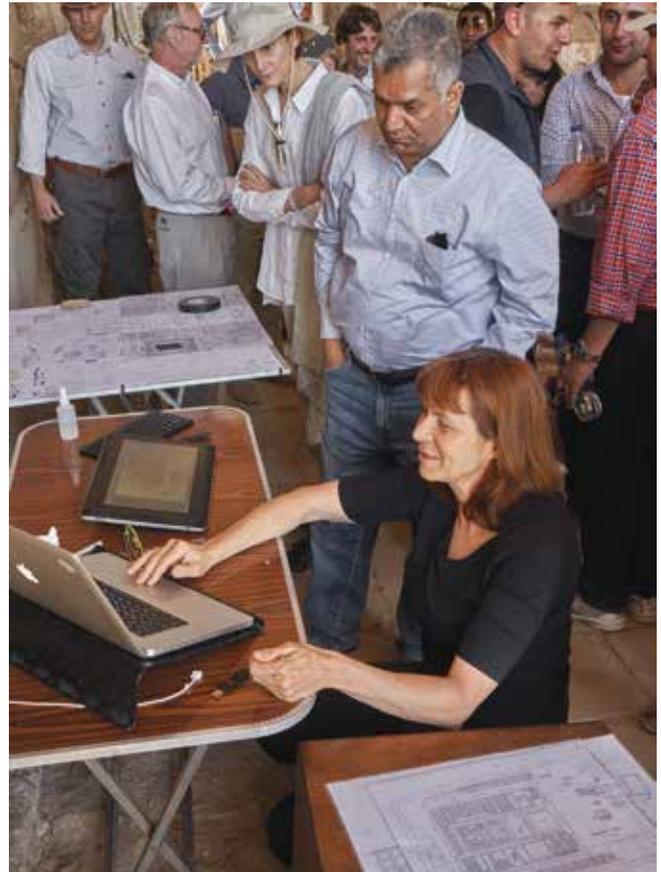
Antiquities Minister Dr. Mamdouh and Sherry review the epigraphic drawing process with Margaret. March 22, 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky

It is always bittersweet to realize that our field season will soon be at an end. In a few short weeks it will be time to head home to process the data we have collected, ink penciled drawings, write reports, start production of our next volume, raise funds for the work, and prepare for the 2015–2016 season. In the meantime there is much to do here as things wind down.

APRIL

On April 15 the Epigraphic Survey successfully completed its 2014–2015 archaeological field season, its 91st, and the Chicago House team departed Luxor for home. The week before, we closed our operations at Medinet Habu, Khonsu Temple, and Luxor Temple. Equipment including ladders and scaffolding was trucked back from the temple sites for cleaning and storing at Chicago House. Friday, April 10, was the last day of library use. It's always a busy time, as we compile reports on the work accomplished during the last six months for the antiquities ministry and the Oriental Institute and prepare to uproot and head home for the summer months. The weather was hot, but the nights were comfortable, which always makes it harder to leave.

During the first week of April I spent a few days in Cairo paying my respects and saying goodbye to our friends at the US Embassy, ARCE, USAID Egypt, and the



Minister and Tina, digital epigraphy review. March 22, 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky



Ray, Sherry, and Julie visit Medinet Habu. March 22, 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky

antiquities ministry. I had a long and very pleasant meeting discussing cultural heritage preservation issues — including the work of Chicago House — with US Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft and Cultural Attaché Mark Wenig. I met with our dear friend, ARCE Assistant Director Mme. Amira Khattab, and delivered the preliminary reports and staff paperwork for next season (security forms, passport documentation, and photos, all prepared by Tina) that she kindly submits on our behalf to the antiquities ministry later in the summer, God bless her. I had good meetings with our USAID Egypt friends in Maadi, including new director Sherry Carlin. I also had very cordial meetings at the antiquities ministry in Zamalek with antiquities minister Dr. Mamdouh and Foreign Missions Director Mr. Hany, both of whom have been tremendously helpful and enthusiastic colleagues and greatly facilitated our work in Luxor. I also had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Yasmin El Shazly in her new office at the ministry. Dr. Yasmin was formerly registrar of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, but she is now coordinating registration and data-tracking systems for all of the Cairo and regional museums, including the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) as well as the

Egyptian Museum in Tahrir. We wish her the best of luck in these important new endeavors.

This season we brought back to the USA something very precious: all of the facsimile drawings (85), photographs, and large-format negatives (105) for the production of our next facsimile publication, *Medinet Habu X, The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part 2: The Façade, Pillars, and Architrave Inscriptions of the Thutmoside Peripteros*, production of which will begin this summer. *Volumes XI and XII* are also well underway, but this one, *Volume X*, is particularly sweet. The façade and ambulatory pillars that are the major focus of this volume have a long and rich history, the nuances of which we have learned as we recorded them. Carved after Hatshepsut's death by Thutmose III, they depict the king before the major gods of Egypt, offering to and being recognized by them as king. With only two exceptions (Re-Horakhty and Atum), all of the god figures were later chiseled away by Akhenaten's agents, but were recarved and restored after Akhenaten's death in the late 18th Dynasty. Horemheb's names survive on several restoration inscriptions, but the restoration probably started earlier, perhaps during Tutankhamun's reign. Between four and five painting phases have been noted



Raising Domitian Gate cornice during Minister's visit. March 22, 2015. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky

by our team, particularly eagle-eyed Krisztián Vértés. These correspond to the initial decoration of Thutmose III plus several different restoration and renewal phases: the post-Amarna restoration, a 20th Dynasty phase (when Ramesses III incorporated the structure into his enlarged mortuary temple precinct); a 21st Dynasty renewal phase under Pinudjem; a 29th Dynasty Akoris restoration phase;

and at least one and possibly two Ptolemaic painting phases. In each phase the color scheme of the painted reliefs changed, sometimes dramatically, and because the new painting was applied over the old, traces of all phases of painting survive in bits and pieces. It has taken some careful observation and thought to sort it all out, but Krisztián has done so, in consultation with Brett and



Luxor Temple blockyard. Yarko and Ellie documenting blocks. Photo by Ray Johnson



Sue and Krisztián working on the Wacom in Sue's studio. February 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



Luxor Temple team, inspector Nadia, Jay, and inspector Marwan. March 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



Luxor Temple Director Gamal, Nashet, and Reis Badawy positioning the Thebes orientation panel designed by Jay. April 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson

the epigraphic team, and is preparing a special study of the painting phases exclusively for this publication.

Just days before we left we installed two educational signage panels for Luxor Temple. Laser-etched aluminum, they were produced in Cairo and arrived in the nick of time, one for the front of the complex that describes the context of Luxor Temple, and a second panel that describes and presents a plan of the first court of Ramesses II. Both panels were designed and drawn by Jay. We will see how they weather over the summer, and are planning many more, for Luxor Temple as well as Medinet Habu.

And so it goes. Tina and the workmen have closed up the house for its hot summer sleep, and most of the team have brought back work for the summer, to process, ink, analyze, translate, or prepare for publication. Krisztián will be preparing an updated *Digital Epigraphy* with a new chapter on digital penciling utilizing the Wacom Companion portable drawing tablet. We will let you all know

when this “second edition” is available for free download. I am preparing a round of reports for our friends and donors, with our heartfelt thanks for your help, in anticipation of our annual donor appeal. Our USAID Egypt grant, which has sustained us for ten years and allowed us to grow to meet the challenges of a changing Luxor, concluded on March 23, and we have a LOT of fundraising to do to keep our operation going at this high level. We have made a real difference, and we cannot stop now. Your help, through outright gifts — and bequests — has become even more important. In response to our omnipresent funding needs, this summer Chicago House is inaugurating a new endowment campaign, with the goal of being self-sufficient by our 100th birthday in 2024. Thank you for your help, and for spreading the word!

Let me extend my sincerest thanks to the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and Heritage (MAH) and the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), Minister of Antiquities



Medinet Habu, closing up our operation. Frank and the Domitian Gate. Photo by Ray Johnson

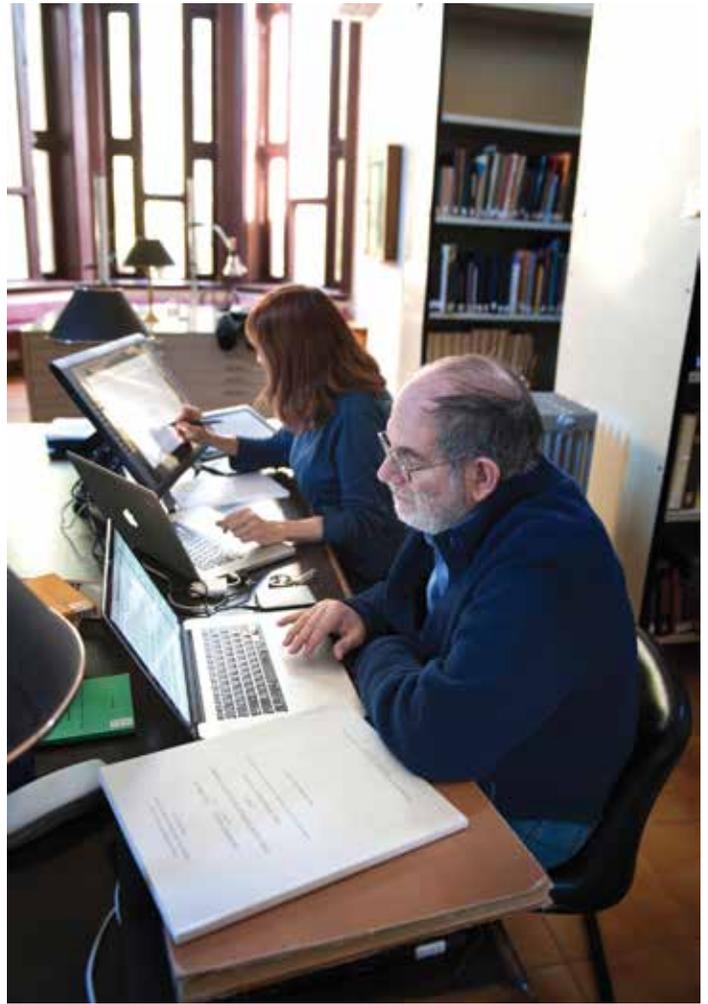


Southern well blocks being wrapped for the summer. Medinet Habu. April 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson



Ahmed, Reis Badawy, Nashet, Mohamed, Saoud, and Said. Luxor Temple sign installation, first court. April 2015, designed by Jay

and Heritage Dr. Mamdouh el-Damaty, and all of our friends and colleagues in Egypt for another productive collaboration this season. Special thanks must go to USAID Egypt for its generous assistance during the last ten years; our gratitude is heartfelt. For those of you who continue to faithfully and generously support our preservation work in Luxor, I cannot thank you enough; bless you! If you are planning a trip to Luxor and would like to stop by and see our work and the Chicago House facility, please contact us in advance to determine the best time for a meeting. Chicago House is open from October 15 until April 15 each year and is closed Saturday afternoons and Sundays. To arrange a visit during the season, please contact the Oriental



Tina and Richard working on graffiti publications in the Chicago House Library

Institute Membership Office at (773) 834-9777, or contact me, Epigraphic Survey director Ray Johnson, directly at: wr-johnson@uchicago.edu

Please see facing page for our contact information in Egypt and Chicago.

Best and thanks to you all!

*Ray Johnson, Director,
Epigraphic Survey*



Neil Miller, in memoriam, who left a generous bequest to Chicago House



Chicago House staff portrait 2014–2015 season. Photo by Sue Lezon and Yarko Kobylecky

Support the Epigraphic Survey and Chicago House

Partly funded by the University of Chicago, the Epigraphic Survey relies heavily on tax-deductible private and corporate contributions and grants to support its continued efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of ancient Egypt through documentation and conservation.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED A BEQUEST?

Contributions may now be made online! Go to:

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/support/how-give>

and check the “Epigraphic Survey” box, or any of the other Oriental Institute projects listed there.

For further information on contributions to the Epigraphic Survey and the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, please contact the Oriental Institute Development Office at (773) 702-5062 or visit oi-development@uchicago.edu

ADDRESSES OF THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

October through March:

Chicago House
Luxor
Arab Republic of EGYPT
TEL: (011) (20) (95) 237-2525
FAX: (011) (20) (95) 238-1620

April through September:

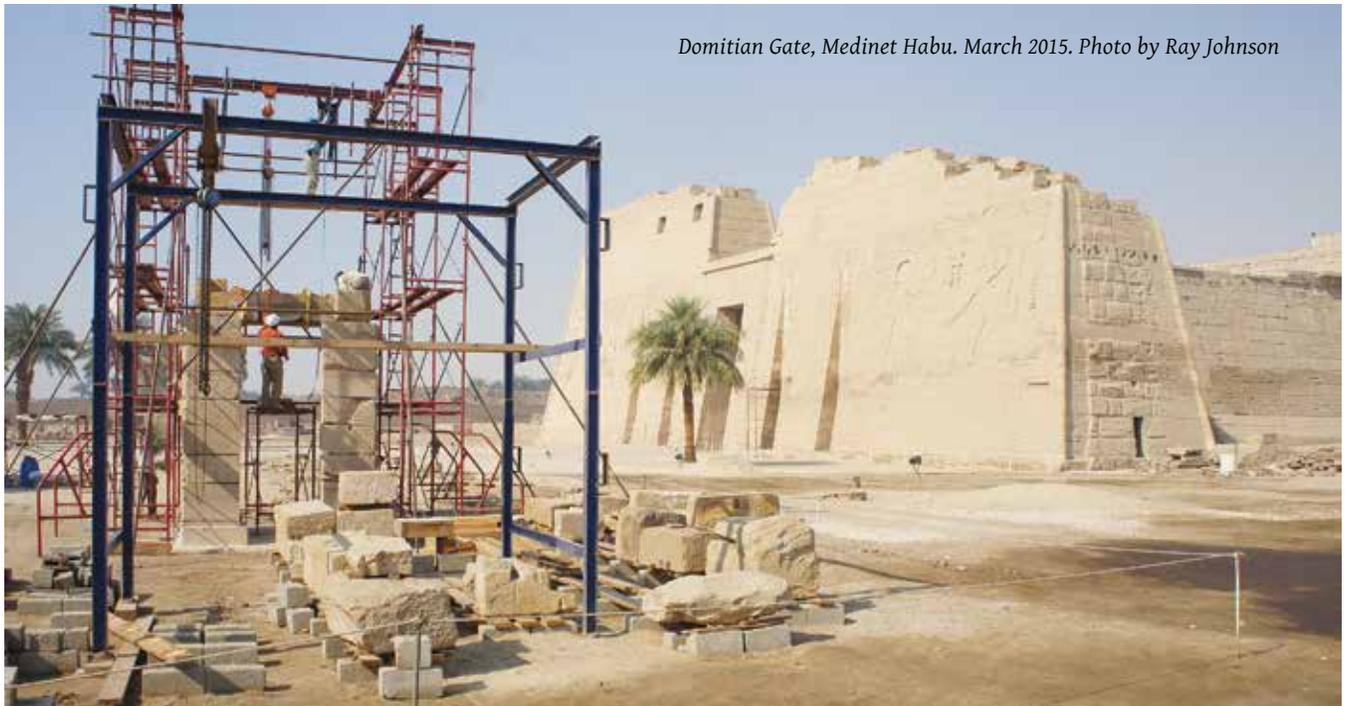
The Oriental Institute
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The Epigraphic Survey home page is located at:
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Domitian Gate, Medinet Habu. March 2015. Photo by Ray Johnson