THE 1992-1993 SEASON AT CHICAGO HOUSE
By Peter Dorman, Field Director

The sixty-ninth season of the Epigraphic Survey opened on October 6, 1992, coinciding precisely with the beginning of the University of Chicago's second century: the inaugural inspection of Luxor Temple and the adjoining fragment blockyards took place at 1:30 AM, Chicago time, in the first twenty-four hours of the University's next hundred years. With the successful conclusion of work on the Opet reliefs, the chief goal of the 1992-93 season was the completion of epigraphy on all remaining areas of the Colonnade Hall, as well as the commencement of epigraphic work on the small temple of Amun at Medinet Habu.

The earthquake that rocked Cairo on October 12th had little effect on Upper Egypt, but we felt a light tremor even as far south as Luxor: the three hanging overhead lights in the library were set eerily moving in slow, concentric circles. Fortunately, there was no apparent damage to monuments in the Theban area.

The growing tensions caused by sporadic acts of terrorism in Egypt this year were reflected in the gradual decrease of tourists evident in Luxor as the season wore on. The central provinces of Minya and Asyut in middle Egypt were declared off limits to Americans, but Aswan and Luxor remained on the approved tourist itinerary. Despite these uncertainties, we were visited by over a thousand guests during the season, and at least 67 library tours were given to tour groups and individuals stopping by. The only real danger to our own property was caused by two police guards stationed outside our gate who, in laying small fires to warm themselves at night, inadvertently set fire to one of the nearby ficus trees, which luckily collapsed onto the corniche rather than onto our sleeping gateman.

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At Luxor Temple, the primary challenge was documenting the great facade and northeastern corner of the Colonnade Hall, which are among the best preserved architectural features. The facade of the Hall was apparently not decorated with light raised relief; subsequently, Horemhab usurped Ay's cartouches. The facade was radically altered when Ramesses II added a porticoed court directly in front of the Colonnade Hall. Because the decorative registration of the new court did not match that of the Colonnade facade, Ramesses simply erased the scenes of Ay located below the portico roof and recarved new offering scenes in sunk relief, featuring the three gods of Karnak: Amun, Mut, and Khonsu. The epigraphers and artists worked over this crucial area for several months: the original Ay reliefs on the doorjamb of the northern portal and above the portico roof (accessible only by tall ladders), as well as the scenes below the roof, recut by Ramesses II. The main task was to verify the traces of the earlier scenes of Ay and match them to the extant relief above the portico roof.

The facade shows evidence of considerable reuse even after the addition of the court of Ramesses II. Mennepeht added a horizontal band of dedicatory inscription below his father's reliefs, but this was subsequently erased. The lower facade was to become a favored location for other kinds of votive inscriptions after the end of the New Kingdom.

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One of the more elaborate graffiti, which approximates the scale and quality of a formal relief, is central to discussions of the end of the Ramesside era. Here the High Priest of Amun Pinudjem is shown, grandson of the famous High Priest Herihor who claimed pharaonic titles in his reliefs at Khonsu Temple at Karnak. The Survey is making first definitive record of the figures and text. Higher up the wall, an inscription made by the High Priest of Amun Sheshonk, son of Osorkon I, has been recorded; he was later to become coregent with his father as Sheshonk II of Dynasty 22. A sizable graffito depicting the divine child Khonsu, tucked in between the much larger figures of Amun and Mut, can be dated to the Ptolemaic period, to judge from name of the dedicator, Khonsu-Iy. Other miscellaneous additions, clustered around the base of the wall, include later graffiti of Amun-Kamutef and Mut, small kingly faces, and a text naming a person called Miw-sheri, “little cat.”

The northern portal, leading into the Colonnade, also exhibits a variety of reuse. The recessed thicknesses of the doorway, originally decorated by Ramesses II, were entirely filled in with slim ashlar blocks, which were then adorned with identical reliefs in the name of Sety II. In examining a loose block fragment containing a cartouche frieze of Sety II, John Darnell happened to notice that the back of the block was covered with a thick layer of plaster that still bore the imprint of the original Ramesses II relief. The combination of the front and rear decoration will enable the Survey to reconstruct the location of this block within a few centimeters of its original position in the door thickness. Sety II also modified the northern portal by adding smaller door jambs, of which two blocks are still extant; this was in turn replaced by a similar structure erected by the Macedonian ruler Philip Arrhidaeus.

In the Hall proper, work continued on the final reinking of the great offering scenes of the columns and on a new survey of the cartouches of various kings that adorn the shafts of the columns. These royal names and the great architrave inscriptions will be given final checks in the season to come.

At the small temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, epigraphic work got into higher gear. Our artists penciled 23 drawings for summer work, and the epigraphers undertook collations on five inked drawings. In fact, the first drawings from the small temple will be ready for director’s checks at judge from name of the dedicator, Khonsu-Iy. Other miscellaneous additions, clustered around the base of the wall, include later graffiti of Amun-Kamutef and Mut, small kingly faces, and a text naming a person called Miw-sheri, “little cat.”
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Kathy Dorman during the winter months, he ran the household and kitchen as well. The Chicago House Bulletin, written by contributing members of the staff and formatted three times a year by Paul, is now finishing its fourth year and continues to be widely read by our friends all over the world. Kaylin Goldstein expertly managed the Survey office at the Oriental Institute in our absence, responded quickly to our pleas for assistance, mailed out our winter Bulletin, and served as a crucial liaison with the Institute. We were also able to assist several other expeditions in facilitating their work or various repair jobs: Carol Meyer’s Bir Umm Fawakhir project and John and Debbie Darnell’s Luxor-Farshût Desert Road Survey; the Ammenesse Royal Tomb project of Earl Ertman and Otto Schaden; the Polish-Egyptian Mission to Deir el-Bahri; the Belgian Mission to El Kab; Memphis State University’s epigraphic study of the Hypostyle Hall, directed by William Murnane; and the work of the American University of Cairo in the Valley of the Kings, led by Kent Weeks.

Several major receptions punctuated the progress of the season. Approximately eighty members of the World Business Council received a library tour and courtyard reception, as did a group from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. An especially welcome event was the arrival of the Oriental Institute's new Egyptologist, Edward Wente—a first visit to Chicago House for almost ten years. Toward the end of the season, Senator Patrick Leahy and several of his staff visited Chicago House for dinner and spent a day in Luxor touring the ancient monuments on both sides of the Nile. One especially memorable party was hosted by the Polish-Egyptian Mission to Deir el-Bahri; the Belgian Mission to El Kab; Memphis State University’s epigraphic study of the Hypostyle Hall, directed by William Murnane; and the work of the American University of Cairo in the Valley of the Kings, led by Kent Weeks.

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On January 28, the American Ambassador, His Excellency Robert J. Pelletreau, Jr., and Pamela Pelletreau hosted a grand evening reception in honor of Chicago House at their residence in Zamalek, which was the highlight of our Cairo season, attended by many of our donors, business friends, and professional colleagues. Forty-five Cairenes subsequently visited Luxor on February 13 for our annual friends of Chicago House tour, abbreviated to just one day this year due to the interruptions of the continuing renovation on our facilities. Tours of our field research at Luxor and Medinet Habu were augmented by what has become a traditional black-tie gala dinner and dance at Chicago House, enlivened by old tangos and waltzes played from the original 1930s record collection (entirely 78 rpm) that still resides in the music room.

The last twelve months have seen significant progress in the publication of the reliefs of the Opet procession, which will comprise the subject matter of our first volume from Luxor Temple. Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple Volume I: The Processional Festival of Opet in the Colonnade Hall will be the largest (and heaviest) volume ever produced by the Epigraphic Survey, due to the unprecedented number of fold-out plates demanded by the horizontal format of the reliefs. During the summer of 1992, the finished drawings were photographed at the reduced scales necessary for assembling each of the 130 folio plates. This summer artist Sue Osgood...
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was able to undertake the complicated task of assembling the individual plates, some of which contain over three dozen reduced drawing prints. With the addition of the printed caption information, this painstaking task was virtually completed in the spring of 1993, and we expect the volume will go to press this fall. In April 1993, the Survey was extremely fortunate to receive a generous award from the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, which will entirely cover the costs of publishing the first two volumes from Luxor Temple and will help in offsetting the expenses of future folios as well.

As always, we will be very pleased to welcome members of the Oriental Institute and other friends to Chicago House from October 1 to April 1. Please write to us in advance, to let us know the dates of your visit, and note the change in our fax number: 381620 (direct dial from the United States: 011-20-95-381620). Our telephone number—at least for the time being—remains the same as last year: 011-20-95-372525.

END

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trip. Emily writes, "We drove to Esna. Esna is a temple that was built so long ago that all the rubble around the temple has piled up about 50 feet. You have to walk down a very long staircase. "After seeing the temple we went to see a lettuce seed press in the Esna suq. The lettuce seed press is a big wooden device that is in two sections. Each section is in a separate room. The first room had a press that was run by a camel. The press crushed all the sesame seeds or lettuce seeds so the oil would come out better. The crushed seeds were made into patties and were sent to the next room. The next second room had two ancient unfinished tree trunks with a pressing screw in between them. This press used man power, not a camel. The seed patties were stacked between woven disks and the pressing screw would come down and out would come the oil. Don bought a bottle of sesame oil. We all took pictures." The trip was fascinating, but I'm glad none of us was barefoot.

Friends and colleagues in America sometimes sympathize with us about missing winter term in Chicago. We don't feel sorry for ourselves at all.

END

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