



# News & Notes

ALDRICH'S LIBRARY  
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

No. 74: December 1981

*Issued confidentially to members and friends  
Not for publication*

## CHICAGO HOUSE IN LUXOR CELEBRATES GOLDEN JUBILEE

The holiday season social calendar at Chicago House in Luxor is filled this year with dinners, receptions, parties, movie screenings, and lectures for staff, friends, American and Egyptian dignitaries, as well as other internationally recognized colleagues currently in Egypt. The throbbing activity is to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of this now historic building-complex in Egypt.

During his visit earlier in the year, Ambassador Alfred L. Atherton described Chicago House as "a bridge" between the people of the United States and Egypt. Locally, it represents a responsible presence. As the only permanent headquarters of any American archaeological mission operating regularly within Egypt, Chicago House functions unofficially as an American Egyptological research institute, corresponding to the German and French national archaeological institutes (whose directors however travel with diplomatic credentials).

Chicago House was built in Luxor on a three-acre plot of land owned by the Trustees of the University of Chicago. Its



*Chicago House today. Here we see part of Chicago House's spacious garden, lying between the library wing, on the right, and the residential quarters. Here, the staff members can relax in surroundings of great natural beauty, featuring a rainbow of colors produced by a host of semi-tropical plants.*

main function is to serve as the expedition house of the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute. The Survey has operated annually in Egypt since 1924 (with the exception of the war years 1940-45) for the main objective of documenting meticulously and thoroughly the relief and painted scenes and inscriptions on ancient Egyptian monuments, primarily those of the Luxor area, ancient Thebes. Operational in October of 1931, it replaced the original Chicago House, which had been built on the west bank of the Nile in 1924. The old house had to be abandoned when it proved to be not only too small and inconveniently located, but structurally unsound as well, infested with termites.

Hardly luxurious, the house should still not be compared to the usual dig houses occupied by other archaeological expeditions working around the world. The Chicago House com-

*(Continued on page 2)*



*The New Chicago House in 1933. When this aerial view was taken from James Henry Breasted's plane, Chicago House, built of fired brick, concrete, and steel, was only two years old. The limits of the Survey's three-acre plot are clearly visible, since the land is still nearly bare of vegetation. Most of the compound remains essentially unchanged today, but the sweeping vista to the Nile was sacrificed in the mid-1950's when Luxor's river road to Karnak temple was laid down.*

### Chicago House In Luxor Celebrates Golden Jubilee (Cont.)

pound was designed specifically to meet the very specialized needs of the Epigraphic Survey, and provides living quarters, a comprehensive library, offices, studios, and a darkroom, as well as domestic workrooms and storage areas. A machine shop, carpenter's shop, and its own generator, deep water well, refrigerators and freezer, orchard and vegetable garden, launch and cars—all give a considerable measure of self-sufficiency in otherwise somewhat unpredictable surroundings.

One of the outstanding features is its library, with holdings of about 15,000 items, which is one of the most important Egyptological libraries in the world. Its completeness within Egypt is rivalled only by the library of the Cairo Museum, and there is nothing like it outside Cairo. Not only is it indispensable to the Epigraphic Survey team, but scholars are also attracted to it from all over the world, and many expeditions depend on it for the success of their own field work. Equally impressive is the photographic archive of 13,000 large-format negatives, mostly of monuments in the Luxor area. Consulted by colleagues in Luxor, prints from this collection are made available through the museum office of the Oriental Institute in Chicago, and they frequently appear in scholarly and semi-popular publications. There is also a large reference collection of photographic prints whose negatives are held by other institutions.

The selection of sites for recording by the Epigraphic Survey is at present primarily a matter of satisfying fifty-year-old commitments, scholarly as well as contract—including three new projects added to the Survey's concessions from 1973 to 1977: the Sety I battle reliefs on the north exterior wall of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, the processional colonnade at Luxor Temple—both nearly completed—and the small Theban tomb of Nefersekheru, not yet undertaken.

The master plan is that once the Epigraphic Survey has completed all its commitments, there will be recorded a broad cross-section of the total spectrum of ancient Egyptian monumental reliefs and inscriptions from royal mortuary and great state temples, a provincial temple in Nubia, and private tombs at Thebes; from the sites of Karnak, the Khonsu and Mut temples, Luxor, Medinet Habu, Beit el-Wali, and the Theban



*The Final Check.* An epigrapher checks a detail on one of the immense columns of the Luxor Temple. Behind him are statues once inscribed for the famous King Colonnade wall; beneath him are statues once inscribed for the famous King Tutankhamun, but which were usurped by Ramesses II and now carry his name.

necropolis; and with a chronological range including the reigns of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut, Amenhotep III and IV, Tutankhamen, Sety I, Ramesses II, Ramesses III, Ramesses IX and Herihor, Dynasty XXII, and the saite and Ptolemaic periods. The labors of the Epigraphic Survey have already resulted in a steady output of documentary and analytical volumes. These include eight volumes on the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu; three volumes of Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak; The Bei el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II; The Temple of Khonsu I; and The Tomb of Kheruef. Three other volumes are pending as of this date.

The most meaningful way to commemorate the anniversary is by the continued zeal and devotion of the members of the Epigraphic Survey. Problems are varied and unpredictable but mere distractions to the workday of the specialist. There are hazards such as the one Lanny Bell encountered last year when a ladder cracked as he was nearing the top of a two-story wooden ladder to which a four-meter ladder in turn had been lashed, and the ladders tied to a swaying scaffold, which in turn was roped to the columns. The cracked ladder has been repaired of course and the others inspected, Lanny Bell was undamaged but one still has to be sure that a climb is made only on a calm day when there are no gusts of wind! Then one must beware of scorpions; occasionally combat water rats which invade the house; remember that the electric current can go off at most crucial moments; and be able to rebuild a 1950 Chevrolet with parts carried from America. Of course, it is distressing when the truck of food, supplies, and books catches on fire on the Cairo-Luxor road. Then, to insure privacy and the view of the Nile, Lanny Bell has had to secure the Chicago House claim to the landing in front, coveted for mooring by the enormous tourist boats, and to fend off attempts to establish a motor-vehicle inspection station on the sidewalk just outside the fence of the Chicago House plot.

Lanny Bell commented before taking off for Egypt this fall: "We can now look forward to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of this magnificent complex, secure in the knowledge that it ready to serve our needs into the next century." Happy birthday, and good luck!

—Elda Maynard



*Patience and Alcohol Retrieve History.* The Field Director is working on the last record of ancient Egyptian religion in the Luxor Colonnade. By the delicate application of alcohol, he can bring out the faint traces of a painted text left unfinished by the Roman Emperor Tiberius. A mirror casts bright light on the faded remains; a grid of string helps to provide reference points. Never before published, this inscription had nearly disappeared when it was copied by the Survey.



### BREASTED HALL IS FIFTY YEARS OLD

In commemoration of the dedication of the Oriental Institute building on December 5, 1931, Ulric Ellerhusen's epic relief in the tympanum over the entrance of Breasted Hall is reproduced here. The sculpture and the epic deserve study at all times. In the same spirit of appreciation for modern sculpture as for the ancient Near Eastern collections which are housed within, sculpture which is incised on the outside of the building also deserves recognition.

A publication prepared at the University of Chicago for the dedication describes the tympanum relief:

The East, on the left, is symbolized by the tall figure of an Egyptian scribe confronting the vigorous and aggressive figure of the West. The East carries over his right shoulder a palette and writing outfit. The West has just received from the East a tablet bearing an ancient hieroglyphic inscription suggestive of the transition of writing from the Orient to the West. This inscription, which reads "I have beheld thy beauty," is taken

from a Fifth Dynasty temple inscription. In the animals behind these two figures on either side the East is further symbolized by a lion and the West by a bison.

Behind the East are crowded the pyramids, the sphinx, the ruins of Persepolis, and a group of six great oriental leaders. Beginning with the foremost in the top row, the leaders are Zoser of Egypt, the first great builder; Hammurabi of Babylonia, the first great lawgiver; Thutmose III of Egypt, the first empire-builder; Ashurbanipal of Assyria, who collected the first great library; Darius, the great organizer; and Chosroes of Persia.

Behind the West on the right are the Parthenon, a European cathedral, and a modern skyscraper tower. The six heads represent Herodotus, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar; a crusader, a modern excavator leaning on his spade, and a modern archeologist at work with his lens. In the center, over all, shines the oriental sun, its rays ending in human hands.

### WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN

The Education Office and Docents will offer a series of workshops for children on Saturday mornings in January, 1982. Each session will feature discussion, gallery work, and a related craft project. The charge for each workshop is \$5.00. Enrollment is limited to 15 children, aged 7-12. Workshops will meet in Breasted Hall from 10-12 and can be taken separately or as a series. Pre-registration is required; call Joan Barghusen at 753-2573 to register.

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 9 METALS OF ANCIENT MAN

How were metals worked; what were they used for; why did they make a difference?

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 16 MUSEUM PIECES: HOW AND WHERE ARTIFACTS WERE FOUND

A look at some of the artifacts with a special focus on their discovery.

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 23 CREATIVE COLLECTION

Workshop participants will make an anthology of their own writings and drawings inspired by gallery objects and themes.

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 30 HIEROGLYPHIC WRITINGS IN THE EGYPTIAN HALL

Participants will learn to recognize some standard phrases used on Egyptian monuments.

### JANUARY MEMBERS' LECTURE

**"Pyrotechnology: The Materials Revolution of Antiquity"**  
Theodore A. Wertime, Smithsonian Institution  
Breasted Hall, The Oriental Institute  
Wednesday, January 13, 8:00 P.M.

The Quadrangle Club, 1155 East 57th Street, will be opened to Oriental Institute members who wish to make dinner reservations. Please call Mrs. Stratman, 493-8601. Please remember that the privilege of the use of the dining room at the Quadrangle Club is a courtesy extended to members of the Oriental Institute only on nights when there is an Oriental Institute lecture.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Membership Office greatly regrets losing its Secretary, Susan Smith. She and her husband moved to Austin, Texas on December 1st. The new Secretary is Gretel B. Manasek.

\*\*\*\*\*

There are still a few places left in our Greece/Crete tour May 6 thru 21, 1982. For more information and itineraries, please call or write the Membership Office.

**MEMBERS' COURSES FOR WINTER QUARTER, 1982**

**An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew**

**Lecturer: Lorenzo Vigano, S.S.D. (Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome)**

The course will begin with an introduction which will help place Hebrew among other Semitic languages. The alphabet and basic grammar will also be studied. The core of the course will be an analysis of selected texts from the Book of Exodus/Shemot including the call of Moses; the 10th plague, the crossing of the Red Sea; the covenant of Mount Sinai and the golden calf. No prior knowledge of Hebrew will be presumed.

**Mesopotamian Narrative Poetry (in translation)**

**Lecturer: Jeremy A. Black, Research Associate, Chicago Assyrian Dictionary**

Mortality, immortality and human fallibility are the major themes of the epic of Gilgamesh, the hero who "brought back news from before the Flood". We will focus on Gilgamesh as a vehicle for the study of the development of narrative poetry in ancient Mesopotamia from the earliest Sumerian folk tales to the refined literary composition of the Assyrian court. This will lead to wider discussion of cuneiform literature as illustrating the attitudes and culture of ancient Mesopotamia.

**Egyptian Hieroglyphs**

**Lecturer: Eugene Cruz-Urbe, Ph.D. candidate in Egyptology**

The language of the ancient Egyptians has always fascinated

modern man. This introductory course will provide the beginner with the elements of how the Egyptians wrote texts and the fundamental grammar. Selections from private statuary and funerary stelae will be read in class. No prior knowledge of Egyptian is required. Class notes, exercises and reading selections will be provided for each class.

All classes are eight sessions beginning January 9, 1982, 10:00 a.m.—noon each Saturday.

Tuition:

\$50 for O.I. members

\$65 for non-members (which includes a membership in the Oriental Institute)

Please register by Thursday, January 7, 1982. For more information, call the Membership Office, 753-2389.

Please enroll me in the following Member's course(s) in the winter quarter:

Course(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone number \_\_\_\_\_

My check for \$50 for each course is enclosed (\$65 for the first course if I am not currently an Oriental Institute member) Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Membership Secretary; 1155 E. 58th St., Chicago, IL 60637



**The Oriental Institute**  
The University of Chicago  
1155 East 58th Street · Chicago, Illinois · 60637

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
BULK RATE  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
PERMIT NO. 1504

Dated Material

*Season's Greetings*

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY  
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS