
Museum Archivist **John A. Larson** has been pursuing his interest in the history of Egyptology with a long-term study—based on previously unpublished archival sources and contemporary published accounts—of a controversial episode in the history of Egyptian archaeology. Larson delivered a preliminary report on his research, “Theodore M. Davis and Tomb No. 55 in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings,” at the Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, held in Philadelphia in April 1989. As a consequence of his ARCE presentation, Larson was invited to contribute a popular article to the new American magazine *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt*, published in San Francisco. “Theodore M. Davis and the So-called Tomb of Queen Tiye” appeared in *KMT* in two parts, Part One in the Premier Issue (Spring 1990) and Part Two in Volume One, Number Two (Summer 1990), and inspired the re-printing of the long out-of-print publication *The Tomb of Queen Tiye*, by Theodore M. Davis, et al., (1910) in the autumn of 1990. Under the title “*Membrae Dispersae* from KV 55: New Evidence from The Oriental Institute Archives,” Larson wrote a scholarly treatment of the subject for the German Egyptological journal *Göttinger Miszellen*, Heft 119, published in November 1990.

Larson’s study of Kings’ Valley Tomb No. 55 was stimulated by one of the last articles written by the late John A. Wilson of the Oriental Institute, “Mrs. Andrews and ‘The Tomb of Queen Tiye,’” which appeared in *Studies in Honor of*

George R. Hughes, SAOC No. 39, published by The Oriental Institute in 1976. In order to shed new light on the circumstances surrounding the January-February 1907 discovery and clearance of KV 55, Larson has adopted a “social history” approach, which he hopes will help to solve some of the Egyptological problems that have resulted from the apparent inadequacies of the early published studies of the tomb and its contents. He began his current research by drawing up a list of all known participants in the excavation and all known visitors to the site. As a result of Larson’s determination to track down any existing records that might have been left by each “informant,” a surprisingly large amount of unpublished data on KV 55 has re-surfaced. He has pursued this method chiefly by means of correspondence and through personal visits to archives, libraries, and museums in North America and Europe. In addition, Larson’s working bibliography for KV 55 now contains more than 200 entries, including many titles that have not been cited previously in the secondary literature on the subject. He is currently working on a narrative describing the excavation of KV 55—including a detailed chronology of its discovery and clearance—based on the information that he has collected so far.

In addition to his personal research, John Larson has been engaged in a number of activities during the past year. On June 9, 1990, he gave a special tour of the Museum for a group sponsored by the Philbrook Art Center Association of Tulsa, Oklahoma. In August, he presented an illustrated talk on the subject of ancient Egyptian faience technology to the Bead Society of Greater Chicago. Larson was away from Chicago for most of the month of October, during which he led the Oriental Institute Members Tour to Egypt; his report on the tour appeared in the *Oriental Institute News & Notes*, No. 127 (January-February, 1991). In January 1991, Larson participated with Associate Professor Lanny Bell and Ph.D. student Frank Yurco in an Egyptology panel, moderated by University of Chicago Professor Milton J. Rosenberg on WGN radio. The same trio of Egyptologists presented a workshop on Egyptology for the first “Winter Weekend” on January 25-26, sponsored by the Office of the University Alumni Association and the University Office of Continuing Education as part of the program in connection with the upcoming celebration of the University’s Centennial. In April, Larson gave an illustrated lecture on the history of Egyptology in Chicago to the Friends of Fabyan society in Geneva, Illinois. In May, he repeated his slide talk, “How to Look at Egyptian Art,” for the docent training course.
