

EDWARD F. WENTE At the Spring meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt held in New York, Edward F. Wente, in conjunction with Dr. James E. Harris, presented a paper on the subject of the royal mummies of the Thutmosid line. Since the biologic evidence of craniofacial morphology and variation does not neatly support the traditionally held identifications of certain of these mummies and their genealogical relationships, Wente has questioned some of the mummy labels and docketts, penned on the shrouds of the mummies that were rewrapped by restorers during the Twenty-first Dynasty, probably at the Temple of Medinet Habu before their transfer to two royal caches. Using the genetic evidence as a guide, one can propose new identifications, and suggest two possible solutions for the vexing problem of Tutankhamen's lineage. The results of this investigation are being prepared for publication by Dr. Harris and Wente.

During this past year, with the assistance of his advanced graduate students, he proceeded with the recording of the New Kingdom non-literary hieratic ostraca in the collection of the Oriental Institute Museum. Most of these flakes of limestone and pot-sherds, inscribed in the cursive hieratic script, derive from the ancient workers' settlement at Deir el-Medina on the west side of the Nile at Luxor. While the majority of these nearly two hundred documents are not preserved in their entirety, even such fragmentary information as can be gleaned from parts of letters, accounts, work rosters, etc., can provide the scholar with valuable clues regarding the life of the workers who built and decorated the royal tombs in the famous Valley of the Kings. Even a previously published large complete ostrakon, now on exhibit in our Egyptian gallery, was worth a first-hand reexamination that yielded a few revised readings significantly altering our previous understanding of a rather complicated legal case involving the sale of a jar of fat. His students have prepared an article presenting a new interpretation of this document, which other scholars writing on the subject of Egyptian law have misunderstood.