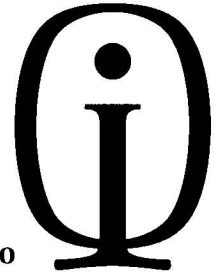




# CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN

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## THE CHICAGO HOUSE SEASON OCTOBER 1999 TO APRIL 2000: A MONTHLY DIARY

By W. Raymond Johnson, Field Director

### OCTOBER

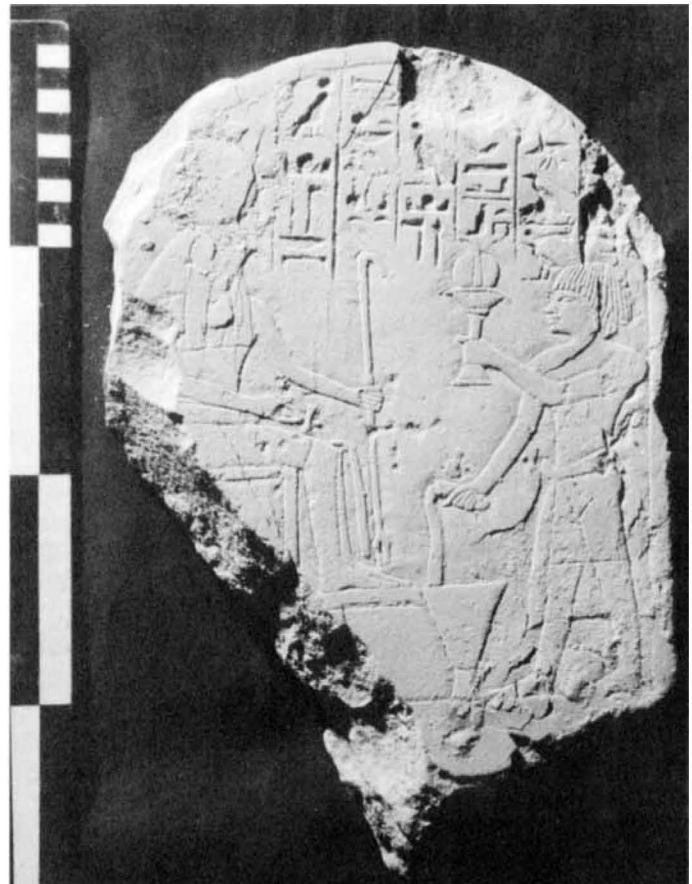
Chicago House reopened for the 1999–2000 season on October 15, thanks once more to the good graces of Egyptologist Tina Di Cerbo, who came two weeks early to open up and clean. Most of the staff arrived on October 14 and 15, while the rest will be trickling in over the next couple of months.

We found the gardens unusually lush, our guard dog Nikon looking fit and trim, and Luxor absolutely awash with tourists. The high season is clearly already here, and we are told that the hotels are fully booked for the winter months. Security is also excellent, even better than last year. The heat was intense when we arrived, but the temperatures are gradually going down, and it's very comfortable now.

We immediately reopened the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu and found everything dry (thanks to the newly sealed roof) and untouched. Conservator Lotfi Hassan did a condition study on the monument, inside and out, and on the Ramesses III wells. The southern well has been shored up by the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) with thick timbers, pending dismantling of the roof blocks and repair of the two disintegrating blocks on the east wall, which will get underway later this season. We have signed on a local SCA conservator to work with Lotfi this season, Mr. Adel Aziz; later in the winter conservator Veronica Paglione will join the Medinet Habu conservation team to further speed up the cleaning and consolidation process. Stonecutter Dany Roy will continue to seal the roof over the bark sanctuary, and will begin preparations for laying stone floors in the central chamber and king's chamber of the small temple sanctuary.

When Uvo Holscher excavated the central room for the University of Chicago in the 1930s, he found that the floor blocks had been removed in antiquity. In the fill he found the sad remains of what had been a three meter high granodiorite dyad of Thutmose III and Amun which had stood in the center of the room. The Amun had been severely hacked during the Amarna period, and at some point in time, perhaps the Ptolemaic period, the decision was made to remove the dyad. Since it was too big to fit through the door (in fact the chamber seems originally to have been built

around it) it was broken into pieces and buried. Holscher uncovered three major pieces in his clearance; an upper section was removed to the area outside the temple to the north. The large lower section was still too large to remove, so it was left buried, in situ. Parts of the statue were totally missing: the heads of Thutmose III and Amun, a large section from the legs/knees of both figures to the bottom of the statue base, and most of the front section of the base.



**Small limestone stela from the late Eighteenth Dynasty reused in the Ptolemaic Period as rooftop fill, small Amun temple, Medinet Habu. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky**



***Epigrapher Hratch Papazian, conservators Lotfi Hassan and Adel Aziz, SCA Inspector Ahmed Ezz, stonemason Dany Roy, Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle, and Chicago House and Supreme Council of Antiquities workmen triumphant after moving a two-ton fragment of a colossal granodiorite seated pair statue of Amun and Thutmose III from the floor debris of the inner sanctuary. Medinet Habu, small Amun temple bark sanctuary. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky***

In preparation for the eventual floor-laying in this chamber, we have located and uncovered the large lower section of the dyad. Since statuary in its original location is a rarity in Egyptian monuments, we have decided to recover the pieces and restore the group. This week we started to raise it with the kind assistance of the SCA West Bank engineers. We will put it to the side for future restoration in its original location when we re-lay the floor. At the same time we have started going through the debris of Holscher's backfill in this chamber, and are recovering sherds (primarily Coptic) and additional small sculpture fragments (some undoubtedly from the dyad) for future analysis. Since the restored floor will effectively seal off the debris, the time to recover this material is now.

On October 23 John and Debbie Darnell's Theban Desert Road Project material (being stored in the small temple for convenience) was moved to their newly completed magazine. Debbie will be leaving the Epigraphic Survey on November 15 to devote full time to their remarkable project, and is now training Briant and Karin Bohleke in the mysteries of the Chicago House library management. Like Debbie before him, Briant will work half-time as librarian and half-time as epigrapher, and his wife Karin will cover the library when Briant is in the field. Many of you will recall that Briant took his undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago, and

left us for graduate studies at Yale where he received his doctorate. It is now our good fortune that he has returned to the fold. His credentials as an Egyptologist are sterling, and his eighteen years of Yale University Library experience will greatly benefit the Oriental Institute's field library in Luxor. Karin received her Ph.D. degree in French at Yale as well, and is putting her extraordinary knowledge of foreign languages to excellent use in the Chicago House library.

It is a busy time in Luxor for Egyptological activity, and we have already been deluged with colleagues and guests. Nick Reeves, Geoffrey Martin, and Peter Lacovara have resumed work in the Valley of the Kings, and will continue into December. The Poles at Deir el-Bahri under Professor Andrej Niwinski have been doing some extremely interesting work in the cliffs over Hatshepsut's mortuary temple. The UCLA mission under Daniel Polz is working at Dira Abu el-Naga; the French at Karnak; and the Documentation Center at the Ramesseum and Ramesses II's tomb in the Valley of the Kings. A Belgian mission headed by Professor Roland Tefnin has been recording the tomb chapel of Sennefer (TT96) – long closed, quite dirty, but very well-preserved. Before our season, Lotfi did some preliminary cleaning for them that showed the garden of Amun scene intact beneath the grime, as well as a sensational granary scene. All of these missions and other friends attended our annual masquerade Hallow-



***Epigrapher Brett McClain, Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle, and artist Sue Osgood discussing a point at the wall, Medinet Habu, small temple of Amun. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky***

een party on October 31, always the perfect occasion to get together and celebrate the resumption of our fieldwork.

## **NOVEMBER**

November began on a bright note with the arrival of epigrapher Hratch Papazian after his successful Ph.D. dissertation proposal defense, and my departure for Memphis, where I am "loaned" each season to the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) for a few days of salvage epigraphy at the partially submerged Ramesses II Ptah chapel. Former Chicago House Librarian (and dear friend) May Trad and I flew back to Luxor together a few days later, and May stayed with us a night before continuing on to the site of Hierakonpolis for a week of fieldwork with University College London's Barbara

Adams. The beginning of November also saw the arrival of Finance Director Moataz Abo Shady's wife Dalia and their two-month old son, Seif, probably the youngest staff member Chicago House has ever seen. Dalia has taken over many of the Administrator's duties, and the whole family is a most welcome addition to the house.

Hratch's return boosted the epigraphy at the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu, and in mid-month artist Carol Abraczinskas also returned, further swelling the ranks of epigraphers and artists hard at work in the bark sanctuary and ambulatory of the core Eighteenth Dynasty temple. On November 15 Debbie Darnell finished her last day of work for the Epigraphic Survey and will now devote full time to her and husband John's Desert Survey Project. Briant and Karin Bohleke are now in charge of the Chicago House library, and Briant has also begun his training as epigrapher. On November 22 conservator Veronica Paglione joined the Medinet Habu conservation team and is now assisting Adel and Lotfi with the cleaning of the painted reliefs and ceilings of the southern sanctuary chambers of the small temple.

The cleaning and examination of Holscher's debris in the first chamber of the small temple sanctuary continued in earnest through the entire month and is in its final recording phases now prior to complete refilling. The cleaning, coordinated by Tina Di Cerbo, revealed many more fragments of the buried colossal granodiorite dyad of Thutmosis III and Amun than we ever expected to find, including major sections of the base of the statue, which will greatly facilitate restoration later. Cleaning also revealed a half dozen large paving blocks along the north and east sides of the chamber not recorded by Holscher, angled down toward a medieval pit which Holscher's men had followed when they

cleared the chamber, which we now believe was used in Medieval times as a convenient repository for the unwanted statue fragments. We have recovered all of the pottery and granodiorite fragments, in a range of sizes, from Holscher's backfill, and are now in the process of cleaning them. Photographer Yarko Kobylecky has been carefully documenting all stages of the process, now assisted by archivist Ellie Smith, who arrived at Chicago House the day before Thanksgiving. Helen and Jean Jacquet, also recently returned, are proving to be valuable consultants, particularly in regard to the pottery being found.

Thanksgiving was a small but festive affair this year. Guests included friends and colleagues Barbara Mertz, Dennis Forbes, George Johnson, Nick Reeves, Susanne Bickel,



**Stonecutter Dany Roy with newly restored sandstone roofing blocks, Eighteenth Dynasty Amun temple roof, Medinet Habu, March 2000. Photograph by Ray Johnson**

Lyla Brock, and UCLA archaeologist Mohsen El-Sayid (working with Nick Reeves in the Valley of the Kings and who will later work with Mark Lehner at Giza). Chicago House cooks Tayib and Ibrahim truly outdid themselves with two huge turkeys, heads intact, decorated with vegetable garnish, little chef's hats, and tin-foil bow ties. (The creativity in the kitchen sometimes takes one's breath away).

Visitors to Chicago House this month have been many and varied, and included David Kurtzer, son of American Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer; Lisa Giddy, gathering data for the EES *Egyptian Archaeology Bulletin*; and a large group of Fulbright alums. Barbara Adams and her crew, in Luxor for some rest and relaxation, came to dinner on the 14th, and Nigel Strudwick and his crew, including John Taylor from the British Museum, are in town to resume their Theban Tomb documentation project.

Luxor is awash with visitors, and tourism is at an all-time high. This is wonderful for Egypt, but it often makes our work more difficult, since we are documenting what is now a major tourist site. The last week has been unusually pleasant however, since almost all of the more than two hundred tour boats which usually cram the Nile banks for several miles along the Luxor waterfront have been obliged to moor south of Esna on account of the low water. The Luxor riverbank hasn't been this peaceful in fifteen years, and we are savoring every minute of it, since we are told that all the boats will be back within the week!

## DECEMBER

December saw the continuation of drawing and collating in the Medinet Habu Eighteenth Dynasty temple bark sanctuary and ambulatory, and the epigraphic training of Briant Bohleke "at the wall." The month also saw the final documentation and filling-in of the floor in the first chamber, supervised by Tina Di Cerbo, and the resumption of the roof-sealing work up above by stonecutter Dany Roy, who worked on the mortar infill between the new roof blocks. Conservators Lotfi Hassan, Veronica Paglione, and Adel Aziz continued cleaning and consolidating the painted wall reliefs of the two southernmost sanctuary chambers, and revealed for the first time since antiquity some of the painted stars on the ceiling.

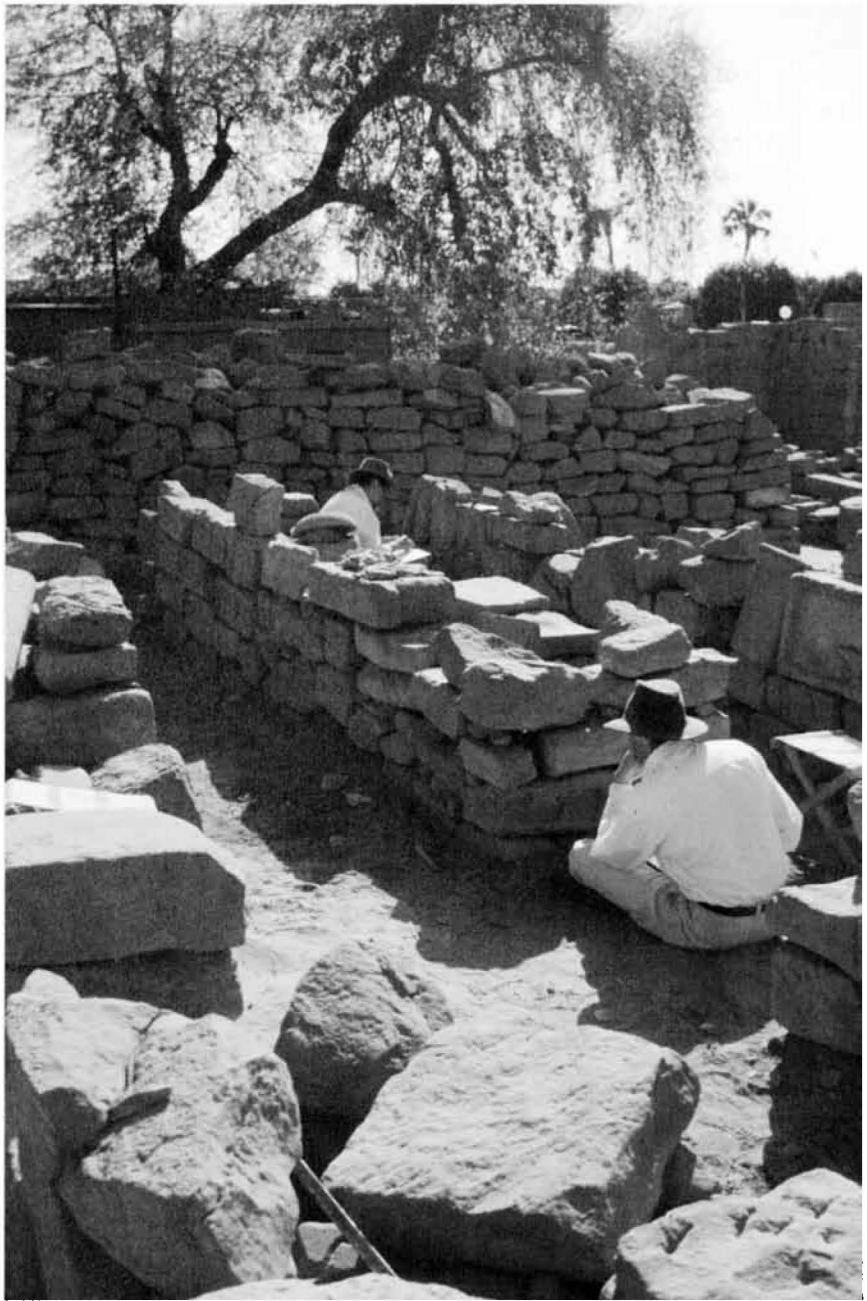
The fragments of the granodiorite dyad of Thutmose III and Amun which were recovered from the first chamber floor debris are now stored in the bark sanctuary which has been fitted with slatted, wooden, lockable gates for security. The fragments have all been cleaned, and will be documented, consolidated, and stored in the bark sanctuary until their reassembly next season. Before the floor was completely filled in, Dany constructed a concrete footing roughly in the center of the chamber to act as a foundation for the restored group.

At Luxor Temple the blockyard storage and treatment area expansion was resumed, and as of this writing, the

greater east area is now finished. Sixteen new damp-coursed brick mastaba storage platforms were constructed, eight of them up to fifteen meters long, and several more are planned for the south area. Chief Engineer Saleh Shahat supervised the construction of a steel framework which will be built around one of the new treatment mastabas which will then be covered with a canvas tarpaulin to protect treated fragments from the elements. Conservators John Stewart and Hiroko Kariya are due to arrive next week to resume coordination of the fragment consolidation project.

Earlier in the month the new Deputy Chief of Mission of the United States Embassy Reno Harnish and his wife Leslie paid Luxor and Chicago House a visit with a USAID review team, and it was my pleasure to show them our documentation and conservation work at Medinet Habu and Luxor Temples. Later Dr. Per-Olof Johansson, SWECO geology and groundwater engineer, and Engineer Maher Abd El Halim ElShiwy, Research Assistant, Head of Greater Cairo Research Unit, Research Institute for Ground Water, came by to discuss the groundwater drainage initiative currently under way in Luxor, partly sponsored and funded by the Swedish government. They will return this month with a larger team to study the best ways to implement proper drainage of groundwater away from the East Bank temple sites. Artist Sue Osgood returned at that time, as well as architect and former artist Jay Heidel for a visit, and other visitors to Chicago House included the Italian Ambassador to Egypt Francesco Aloisi de Larderel and wife Vittoria Buffe (an archaeologist herself); a group of Egyptology students from the Netherlands and Flemish Institute in Cairo (with whom Epigrapher Brett McClain discussed our work); Barbara Adams on her way back to London from Hierakonpolis; and Catherine Eaton from New York University. More recent visitors include Mary-Louise Mahdi; Senators Shelby (Republican, Alabama) and Bryan (Democrat, Nevada), their wives and entourage, with whom I spent a full day touring Chicago House, our projects, and the sights of Luxor; Jiro Kondo and Nozamu Kawai with the Waseda University, Tokyo, mission; and Amina Al Sabah from Kuwait.

It was a month of festivals. The holy month of Ramadan began on December 9 and ended last week with a three-day *Eid*, while Christmas and New Years made the end of the month quite lively for everyone. Christmas at Chicago House



***Epigraphers Ted Castle and Brett McClain copying decorated stone fragments, Epigraphic Survey blockyard, Luxor Temple. Photograph by Ray Johnson***

was warm and full of cheer as always, with our in-house Christmas dinner (turkey and goose). We rang in the New Year 2000 and the end of the old millennium with our beloved Carlotta and David Maher, who flew in just for the occasion; friends Bob Hamada (Dean of the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business) and his wife Anne; Nigel and Helen Strudwick; Francesco Tiradritti; and Donald Oster. And although we were prepared for any kind of Y2K problems (and were in close touch with the US Embassy about it), like most places in the world we luckily encountered no problems at all. An excellent beginning!



***Epigraphic Survey Photographer Yarko Kobylecky, assisted by Ellie Smith, photographing in the northern decorated well of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu. Photograph by Ray Johnson***

## **JANUARY**

January 2000 was noteworthy for the arrival of new staff members and stepped-up activity on all fronts. Sue Lezon, Jamie Riley, and Nan Ray arrived at Chicago House in mid-month, swelling the ranks in our secondary residence, Healey House. Sue reopened the Chicago House Imaging Center and began coordinating the digital scanning of our Photo Archives 8x10 large-format negatives. The negatives were all organized and boxed by Ellie Smith and are being scanned and burned onto CD-ROM at the Karnak Franco-Egyptian Center. Jamie was put to work almost immediately supervising the addition of a bathroom to the Healey House storage and refrigerator room, which by necessity is being pressed into service as a residence room. That work is finished, and Jamie and Administrator Dalia Abo Shady are now coordinating the construction and procurement of its furnishings.

Conservators John Stewart and Hiroko Kariya arrived on January 16 to resume the Luxor Temple Fragment Consolidation Project, just as Engineer Mohsen Fahmy put the finishing touches on the last of nineteen new, damp-coursed brick storage mastabas. John spent an intense week plotting the season strategy with Hiroko, and Nan Ray has been assisting Hiroko ever since organizing, numbering, monitoring, and moving decorated sandstone wall fragments to their new holding areas. The first fragments to be moved to the new

east storage area were a group of over a hundred fragments which join the east wall of the Amenhotep III sun court, partially restored on the wall a decade and a half ago by John Stewart. The remaining fragments have been moved to new mastabas and sorted into two groups: those requiring consolidation and those which are stable. Consolidation of this material will be one of this season's priorities, and it is hoped that the whole group can be restored to the wall the season after next.

At Medinet Habu epigraphic drawing and collation continued in the small Amun temple of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. Briant Bohleke continued his on-site training most mornings, while his wife Karin supervised the field library. While infilling the central room, Dany Roy prepared a half-meter thick reinforced concrete base for the colossal granodiorite dyad of Thutmose III and Amun which we will restore in the center of the room, its original architectural setting, next season. Dany then prepared the back central room for cleaning, where at month's end Tina Di Cerbo began the task of going through Holscher's backfill, recovering sherds and sculpture fragments in the process.

In mid-January a wooden "wharf" platform designed by Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle was constructed by Chicago House carpenter Shayib and inserted into the northern Ramesses III well just above the present water level. Shortly afterward Yarko and Ellie began arduous, emergency photography of every square inch of the inscribed inner wall

surface, now badly eroded by groundwater salts, with our large-format, 8x10 field camera. When they are finished with the first sloping corridor later this month, a second platform will be constructed in the second sloping corridor which continues at a right angle to the first, now mostly submerged.

Visitors this month included Donald and Susan Levy, and old friends and supporters Mark Rudkin and Fred Giles (back in Egypt for the first time in twenty-five years). Hratch Papazian left us at the beginning of the month to experience the joys of working at Giza with Mark Lehner and his crew for a month; we trust Mark will return him to us safely. And dear friend Marjorie Fisher has just arrived for three weeks work with us "at the wall."

## FEBRUARY

At Medinet Habu our documentation efforts continued in the bark sanctuary and ambulatory of the small Amun temple, with artists Margaret De Jong and Bernice Williams drawing inside the bark sanctuary, and epigraphers Ted Castle, Briant Bohleke, Brett McClain, Hratch Papazian, and artists Carol Abraczinskas and Sue Osgood working in the ambulatory. Tina Di Cerbo continued to supervise the cleaning of Holscher's backfill in the back central sanctuary, coordinated the recovery of artifacts from that fill (primarily potsherds and miscellaneous granodiorite sculpture fragments), and is finishing that task as I write this. This week Yarko will photograph and Tina will plan the exposed foundations and debris sections prior to careful reburial this month. We have discovered that Hatshepsut built her stone sanctuary over an enigmatic, earlier enclosed area containing horizontal plastered layers going well below the present water table. These layers may be floor levels, or they may be something else (a mound?), and the feature seems to have gone unrecognized by Holscher. Whatever this area was, it was located behind an earlier stone sanctuary Holscher found partly built into the front of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III's bark sanctuary; it had its own mudbrick enclosure wall, and was important enough for Hatshepsut to "cap" with her new stone temple.

Elsewhere at Medinet Habu, in the north well of Ramesses III, Yarko and Ellie continued the salvage photography of every square centimeter of decorated wall surface of the first sloping corridor. This is largely complete, and Yarko and Ted Castle are now planning a new wooden platform which will extend as far as possible into the second descending corridor, also decorated, but mostly flooded, which will allow its photography as well.

In the Luxor Temple blockyard, we finished construction of a sink/basin emplacement which will contain and drain away from the blockyard water drawn by the temple guardians/gafirs. We have tried to be sensitive to their needs while ensuring a dry blockyard, since any moisture activates migration of salts trapped in the block fragments. Conservator Hiroko Kariya continued to treat decorated stone fragments from previous seasons, moved deteriorating fragments to the new treatment areas, and started to treat fragments from the Amenhotep III sun court earmarked for restoration on the east wall in a year. Nan Ray continued to order the blockyard the same way Ellie Smith orders our Photo Archives, tracking fragments moved from their storage mastaba platforms to treatment mastabas, making sure that every fragment has an assigned number, and painting numbers on



*Artist Margaret De Jong drawing the limestone stela, small Amun temple Medinet Habu. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky*

the fragments which needed them. Later in the month Nan's husband David assisted in this process, and also helped paint numbers on the new mastabas.

Last week the Chicago House epigraphers started work in the south blockyard, beginning a preliminary catalogue of eight rows of fragments presently on the ground which will be moved to some of the new damp-coursed mastabas by the end of the season, sorted and stored by category (Amenhotep III sanctuary, porch, or sun court; Tutankhamun Colonnade Hall; Ramesses II first court; etc). On February 2 and 3 American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) Director Mark Easton, Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) Director Chip Vincent, and EAP Technical Director Jarek Dobrolowski conducted on-site reviews of our Luxor Temple and Medinet Habu EAP-funded conservation projects, and were very pleased with what they saw.

In this busy season the month of February was noteworthy for an unusual density of groups and visitors, many from Chicago. Most recently the Field Museum VIP tour led by former Epigraphic Survey Field Director Peter Dorman passed through Luxor and Chicago House; on February 4 I showed them our work at Medinet Habu, while later that day Carlotta Maher (recently returned to Chicago House) and I gave them a briefing on the work of Chicago House in the library followed by a tour of the grounds. Earlier in the week Director of the Art Institute of Chicago Jim Wood and his wife

Emese joined us for dinner and later, site tours of both Luxor and Medinet Habu temples. Later, Art Institute Curator of European Decorative Arts and Classical Art Ian Wardropper and wife Sarah McNear, Curator of the LaSalle National Bank Photography Collection, visited as well. Both sets of museum officials were in Egypt doing prep work for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts Amarna show *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and Tutankhamun*, slated for the Art Institute of Chicago from July 12 until September 24, and it was a great pleasure to share our work with them.

The Oriental Institute tours came through Luxor on February 24, led by John Larson and Robert Ritner, assisted by Emily Napolitano; we gave them a library talk and festive reception that day, site visits of Medinet Habu on February 26, and I lectured to the group later that afternoon on "The Legacy of Chicago House." They seemed to be having a terrific time, despite the initial delay in leaving Chicago due to snow.

Oriental Institute Museum Curator Emily Teeter joined the Chicago House staff from February 11 through 21 to study the three Medinet Habu magazines with me to ascertain what still remained there from Holscher's excavations of the site. We found one magazine totally empty, one full of objects from all over the west bank (including, I have recently learned, from excavations of Amenhotep III's mortuary temple in the mid-sixties), and one housing fragmentary material (blocks and some sculpture fragments) which appear to be from the



**Nan Ray and workmen moving decorated stone fragments to the new storage and treatment platforms, Epigraphic Survey blockyard at Luxor Temple. Photograph by Sue Lezon**



Medinet Habu complex, but which were recovered later than the Oriental Institute/University of Chicago's excavations there. The empty magazine undoubtedly held small objects excavated by Holscher which were subsequently moved elsewhere; we are trying to track that material down now. Emily's visit allowed us to focus on the problems of what is there, and to incorporate plans for its proper storage and documentation into our short and long-range program for Medinet Habu.

Finally, on the last day of the month, February 29, recently appointed President of the University of Chicago Don Randel and his wife Carol stopped by for casual drinks and dinner, to see Chicago House and relax a bit from their Cornell University tour. Carlotta and I gave them an impromptu library talk and tour of the complex, and Yarko gave them a special tour of the Photography Laboratory/darkroom facility, which they especially appreciated since both are avid photographers. They professed a real admiration for the Oriental Institute and its work, and I believe that their visit here was an excellent thing for the Institute. We've been trying to get a University of Chicago President out here for years!

Artist Sue Osgood departed Chicago House for home at the end of the month, which always signals the bittersweet beginning of the end of the season. At the same time, and after MUCH delay, Chicago House accountant Marlin Nassim gave birth to a bouncing baby boy, David. We extend our very best wishes and congratulations to Marlin and her husband Assem, and look forward to her return to Chicago House, with the little one in tow!

## MARCH

March in Luxor was a month of comings and goings, signaling the rapidly approaching end of the season. Things got off to an excellent start with the arrival of our beloved Mary Grimshaw, who worked with us in the library and Photo Archives for the entire month; and stone conservator Hiroko Kariya's husband Jeffrey, who visited for a few days. Mary's arrival was timely; she helped us entertain Xerox Corporation Egypt Director Bron Curley and his wife Jennie, who took a break from Cairo to come see our operation. Since Xerox is a long-standing supporter of Chicago House and the Oriental Institute, and currently loans us a Xerox copier rent-free, Carlotta and I have been trying to get Bron, who was appointed Director year before last, here for the last two seasons.

Nan and David Ray departed the first week of March, after Nan had spent two very productive months assisting Hiroko in the organization and tracking of the thousands of fragments in the Luxor Temple blockyard. I sense a budding new career here (she's even taken summer work home with her!). I am very grateful to her for her invaluable help which put Hiroko much farther ahead in the fragment program, and



***Conservators Hiroko Kariya and John Stewart discuss decorated stone fragment conservation strategy with Field Director Ray Johnson in the north blockyard, Alleyway of Sphinxes, Luxor Temple. Photograph by Sue Lezon***

look forward VERY much to her and David's return next January to continue that invaluable work.

Carlotta departed on March 5, always a sad occasion, but this time I accompanied her for some development work in Cairo. We rendezvoused with Carlotta's husband David, in town attending an international Internet convention, and enjoyed a lively dinner with Sheila Kurtzer, wife of the American Ambassador to Egypt, and their son David. Artist Carol Abraczinskas left for home to resume dinosaur-bone drawing for the University of Chicago's Paul Sereno on March 7, the same day Museum Archivist John Larson arrived for a week's stay after the successful conclusion of the Oriental Institute tour to Egypt.

On March 9 Jason Ur arrived to tweak the new Photo Archives database for a few days on his way to Syria, and on March 16 our colleague Marianne Eaton-Krauss arrived for a

week's stay and research. Other visitors included Betty Winklemann (who writes ancient Egyptian detective novels under the name of Lauren Haney); former Administrator Christian Loeben and ten students; Douglas Kofoid plus four University of Chicago Graduate School of Business students; Carol Redmount and Husband Maury; and former Senior Epigrapher and Assistant Director Richard Jasnow (always a joy to have around). Many of these friends were in town for the International Congress of Egyptologists held at Giza from March 28 to April 3.

And now it's the end of the season, which hardly seems possible. We've made incredible progress on all fronts, workwise. The epigraphers and artists are putting the finishing touches on their ongoing drawings and collations, and writing their reports for the season. Artist Margaret De Jong is finishing the penciling of a small limestone stela from Deir El-Medina we found used as a chinking stone on the roof. Tina is in the final stages of cleaning Holscher's backfill in the back chamber, and has found painted inscriptions on several foundation blocks; once they are documented, she will be filling the floor in this week.

Yarko and engineer Jamie Riley finished installing the final "wharf" section in the north Ramesses III well, and with the crucial assistance of Ellie Smith finished the photography of its deteriorating reliefs last week. At the small Amun temple, Yarko, Sue Lezon, and Ellie photographed all of the walls (and roof painted with stars) in sanctuary room 2 which conservators Lotfi Hassan, Veronica Paglione, and Adel Aziz had cleaned this season, in black and white and color transparency. Up above, Dany finished the roof sealing work over the sanctuary and ambulatory for this season, and, after two very trying days, successfully transported 50 square meters of sandstone slabs from Karnak to Medinet Habu for restoration work next season, a MAJOR accomplishment!

At the Luxor Temple blockyard, while Hiroko wrapped up her treatment program for the season, the epigraphers and I began a catalogue of the decorated stone fragments piled on the ground in the southeast area. This week I will finish raising two entire rows of over two hundred fragments onto new damp-coursed storage mastaba/platforms, sorted and arranged by category. It's only a small beginning, but this work represents another major milestone in the Epigraphic Survey's documentation and preservation efforts at Luxor Temple. Also, our custom-made, waterproof tent-awnings arrived last week for placement on the steel and wooden-framed treatment mastabas. These awnings will not only protect the treated fragments from the elements, but will also provide an enclosed space which makes the treatment more effective.

In the Photo Archives, among many other tasks, Sue and Ellie coordinated the ongoing scanning of our 8x10 negatives at the Karnak Franco-Egyptian Center, and have prepared many more for scanning over the summer. Sue has also started designing a database for Helen and Jean Jacquets' photographic archive, a copy of which will be permanently housed at Chicago House, and which we can adapt for the Habachi Archive as well with Jason Ur's kind help. Helen has

finished the mockup of the plate section of her Khonsu Temple rooftop graffiti volume, a sample of which I will take back to Chicago to the Publications Office (she is scheduled to finish the text next season, and the volume will be the next to appear in our Khonsu Temple series).

The constant maintenance work required for a facility like Chicago House goes without saying, but I must remark that engineer Jamie Riley has been a godsend once again this season. Jamie not only coordinates the dozen or more different maintenance tasks ongoing at any given time, from screen replacement, automotive and plumbing maintenance, refrigerator repairs, etc, but his presence has also allowed some major improvements to be made to the house, some of them needed for a long time. This season we have taken the plunge and are raising the front enclosure wall along the Corniche by adding an extension which matches the original grillwork. One section is in place and looks as if it was part of the original design, and the pillars supporting the grillwork are all being raised as I write this. I think it's the perfect compromise measure for raising the height of the wall (which has become necessary primarily for security reasons) without sacrificing light, air, or our view of the Nile and western cliffs. It wouldn't be happening as quickly or efficiently without Jamie.

Mark Easton, Chip Vincent, and Jarek Dobrolowski will be down on Tuesday, April 11 for a brief EAP end of the season review, and we will take advantage of his presence to give Mark, who is leaving ARCE in July, a HUGE party that night, in celebration of his extraordinary accomplishments as Cairo Director of ARCE, and his unstinting kindness to Chicago House.

And then, before you know it, we will be home. Like every field director (I am reminded of Miss Kantor in particular), I always have bittersweet feelings about the end of the season, feeling like we've only just reached our stride when it's time to head back. But as the temperatures climb, and the *kamseen* winds begin to blow (as they are now), and I think of how COOL it still is in Chicago, I will admit to a touch of homesickness... It has been an intensely productive and full season, and we are all ready for the change.

## APRIL

The Epigraphic Survey successfully completed its 1999 – 2000 field season on April 15. That day Tina Di Cerbo, Brett McClain, Hiroko Kariya, Yarko Kobylecky, and I oversaw the closing of the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu, a process which involved moving all equipment out of the temple for transportation back to Chicago House, cleaning the sanctuary chambers, and disconnecting the electricity. Once everything was made secure, the doors were locked and sealed by our inspector Ahmed Ezz with Supreme Council of Antiquities lead seals, the two doorways were blocked with stones, and the keys were returned to the Gurna Inspectorate. We will reopen the sanctuary when we return for our 77th field season in October 2000.

Back at Chicago House, staff members proceeded to depart Luxor while Tina began the task of closing the house.



***1999–2000 Staff of the Epigraphic Survey***

All ladders, scaffolding, and other equipment used at the temple sites were cleaned and packed away in our back ladder magazines, and all of the rooms in the house and library wings were cleaned, closed, and sealed (with University of Chicago lead seals) one by one. The whole process of closing, and opening, takes two full weeks, and we are extremely grateful to Tina for doing this each season.

The week before closing was busy with report-writing for the SCA, tying up loose ends, and of course, visitors. We finished our end-of-the-season audit on April 8, had an EAP conservation project review and party for outgoing ARCE Cairo Director Mark Easton on the 11th, and received old friend and Oriental Institute graduate Sandy Landis Gogol who came by with two of her children on the 12th. By that time the front wall construction on the river side of Chicago House was well underway; all of the brick piers had been raised in preparation for the new grill sections. When completed by the end of this month, the wall will be more than a meter higher with no loss of light, air, or view.

I departed Luxor on April 16 and the next day had a

meeting with US Ambassador Kurtzer about the groundwater initiatives in Luxor. We also discussed the two vacant lots on either side of Chicago House (a small one to the east and a larger one to the south), both of which are for sale. The Ambassador and I are exploring the possibility of the land-owners donating the property, or part of it, to the University of Chicago. While in Cairo I also met with Peter Janosi of the Austrian Archaeological Institute who brought the welcome news that the first volume of the Tel e-Daba excavations in the Nile delta, devoted to Labib Habachi's work there and illustrated with dozens of photographs from the Habachi photographic archives housed at Chicago House, is about to be published. Labib would be very pleased.

The Epigraphic Survey office in room 320, kindly looked after by graduate student Randy Shonkwiler during the winter, is now reopened, and I am back in room 307. Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle will be arriving back in Chicago this week.

It's good to be back! Now it's time to assess the season past, and plan for the next one. There is much to do...

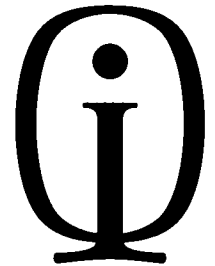
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