



# CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN

Issued by The Epigraphic Survey  
of The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago



Volume XIX

Privately Circulated

February 2009

## THE CHICAGO HOUSE SEASON OCTOBER 2007 TO APRIL 2008: A SEASON DIARY

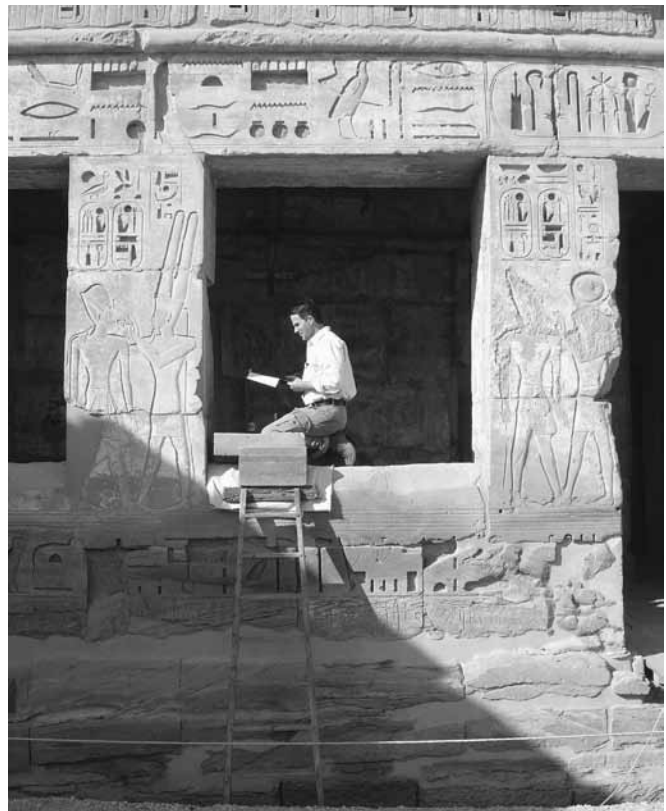
*By W. Raymond Johnson, Field Director*

### OCTOBER, 2007

The Chicago House season is beginning a week later than usual this year, after the Ramadan holiday, and the crew is slowly trickling in. Tina and our workmen have once again made the house look like we never left it, and everything is in readiness for the 2007–2008 season. While I was in Cairo signing the paperwork with the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), the city experienced a terrific thunderstorm, so the weather is actually cooler than usual and quite pleasant for this time of year. On October 22nd I delivered the contract for the season to Luxor SCA director Mansour Boraik and submitted the papers for our workmen and staff to Luxor Temple director Sultan. On the morning of the 23rd I delivered the Medinet Habu paperwork to Gurna director Ali Asfar at the west bank inspectorate, visited our colleague Melinda Hartwig (Georgia State University), who is coordinating conservation and documentation work at the famous tomb of Menna; then director Mansour, who is working at a newly exposed tomb above Menna of an individual named Nakht (another one) from the time of Thutmosis III. This is one of many tombs exposed when the modern village over the necropolis was demolished this year and cleared away, and marks the beginning of a whole new chapter in the study of the Theban necropolis. The owners of the house into which the tomb had been integrated (as a chicken and animal pen — the smells brought memories of my childhood on the family farm flooding back) carefully scratched away as much of the decorated plaster as they could reach before they left, as a little gift to the authorities, but there is still enough to see and get a sense of. There will be many more new tombs coming to light as more debris from the demolished towns of Gurna and Dra Abu El-Naga is cleared away.

On October 25th we resumed our operation at Luxor Temple and trucked in the scaffolding and equipment as well as bricks and sand for platform construction. Master Mason Frank Helmholz, our workmen, and Tina erected steel scaffolding on either side of the central apse of the Roman Vestibule for the resumption of the Roman fresco cleaning work. They also installed a custom-built, semi-

circular wooden scaffolding for the apse which will allow proper cleaning of the Roman emperors painted there. That same day, after finishing the paperwork at the Gurna inspectorate and locating the keys for the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu, we took down the stone blocking of the two entry doors and reopened the sanctuary. Conservator Lotfi Hassan and I checked for snakes, scorpions, damp, etc. (all was well), and set up for the resumption of the conservation work. We were appalled to see that the outer walls of the Eighteenth Dynasty temple have decayed markedly due to increased groundwater salt activity, which means that this season we will have to direct our attention to some major



*Brett collating at Medinet Habu*



*Epigraphic Survey Professional Staff, 2008 (left to right):* **Top row:** Jen Kimpton (epigrapher), Brett McClain (senior epigrapher), Christian Greco (epigrapher), Safi Ouri (finance manager). **Fourth row:** Mohamed Abou El-Makarem (conservator), Marie Bryan (librarian), Tina Di Cerbo (epigrapher), Adel Aziz San (conservator), Anait Helmholz (library assistant), Frank Helmholz (master mason), Margaret De Jong (senior draftsman), Krisztián Vértés (draftsman), Julie Schmied (Medinet Habu data manager). **Third row:** Assma el Badry (conservator), Hala Handaga (conservator), Louis Elis Louis (architect/library assistant), Nehel Yassin (conservator), Samir Guindy (administrator). **Second row:** Dina Hassan (conservator) with Hanni, Jean Jacquet (architect consultant), Helen Jacquet (Egyptologist consultant), Alain Arnaudies (database designer), Emmanuelle Arnaudies (Egyptologist database consultant), Sue Lezon (photographer/photo archivist). **Front row:** Lotfi Hassan (Medinet Habu conservation supervisor) with Karim, Nahed Azziz San (conservator) with Joia, Ellie Smith (photo archivist assistant), Carlotta Maher (assistant to the director for development), Ray Johnson (Chicago House Director), Hiroko Kariya (Luxor Temple conservation supervisor), Ginger Emery (epigrapher), Yarko Kobylecky (photographer). Photo by Yarko Kobylecky and Sue Lezon

repairs, particularly on the back west wall. The conservation team headed by Lotfi and including Adel Azziz Andraus, Nahed Samir Andraus, and four Egyptian conservation students had their work cut out for them this season. A few days later we transported ladders and scaffolding to the site after which the epigraphic team (epigraphers Brett McClain, Jen Kimpton, Christian Greco, and Ginger Emery; and artists Margaret De Jong and Krisztian Vertes) resumed the documentation work of the bark sanctuary ambulatory and later additions to the Eighteenth Dynasty temple. It should be mentioned here that epigrapher Brett McClain successfully defended his PhD dissertation for the University of Chicago earlier in the month, with honors, and is now Dr. Brett! *Mabruk ya doctor!*

Luxor is crawling with tourists, and the Luxor urban renewal program continues apace. Another road was widened near the train station and a whole series of beautiful turn-of-the-last-century beaux-arts apartment complexes were torn down in September (after we photographed them) to allow a doubling of the width of the road (like Station Street itself two years ago). The area behind Luxor Temple to the south is scheduled for demolition as well — including the Marhaba shopping center and the Russian-built New Winter Palace Hotel — which will give the temple more land at its back end, not necessarily a bad thing.

Now that Ramadan is over, Luxor is slowly filling up with Egyptologists! The venerable Geoffrey Martin and his team have arrived to continue work in Horemheb's royal



*Margie Fisher in the Luxor Temple blockyard*

stays put forever; we must simply do the best we can at the moment, knowing that everything moves on. Even so, Chip's legacy is pretty extraordinary. ARCE is producing a book now, *Preserving Egypt's Cultural Heritage*, that will outline all the ARCE/Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) projects Chip oversaw (over 50! including the two of ours — the Luxor Temple blockyard and Medinet Habu small Amun temple projects) that will now be dedicated to him. That's his immortality and his monument: his good works will live long after him.

The day before, on November 4th, dear friend and Oriental Institute Visiting Committee member Margie Fisher — in Luxor to help me in the Luxor Temple blockyard — and I were invited to the Valley of the Kings to witness the moving of Tutankhamun's body from his golden outer coffin to a hermetically sealed display case in the tomb. SCA Chairman Zahi Hawass explained to the assembled media that the new case — German made — is climate controlled and will ensure the long-term preservation of the body. The sad remains of Tutankhamun now lie in the glass case, with a linen sheet covering his body up to his chin; only his feet and his head are exposed. He looks quite peaceful, and far from this mortal world.

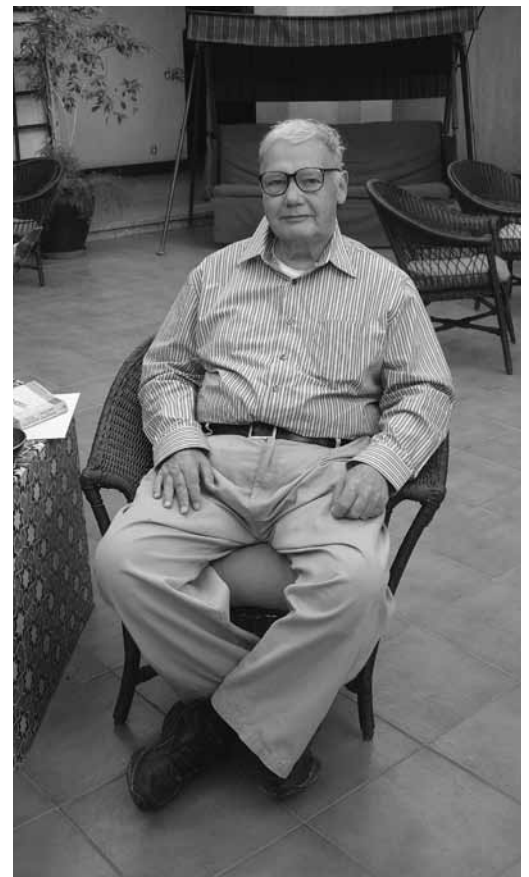
Luxor Temple has been humming with activity this month. Tina and conservator Hiroko have been cleaning up a storm in the Luxor Temple blockyard in preparation for the open-air museum supported by the World Monuments Fund (a Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Conserve Our Heritage grant), and building new, damp-coursed storage platforms for display and storage. I have been busy analyzing some of the fragmentary material we helped the SCA recover around the east Roman gate area at Luxor Temple last spring, reused in a huge medieval foundation. Some of the blocks are from a small shrine of Nectanebo II which all seem to join (always a joy) and which Margie helped me catalog. I have also noted at least sixteen bro-

tomb, and Don Ryan will continue his clearing of pit tombs in the Valley of the Kings. The small army of Italian conservators for the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE)/Chicago House Roman fresco cleaning project, as well as project director Michael Jones, are here and have resumed their cleaning and consolidation work in the Roman Vestibule at Luxor Temple.

#### **NOVEMBER**

On November 5th, former mistress of Chicago House, Myrtle Nims, turned 100! She may be the longest-lived Epigraphic Survey staff member ever. The Chicago House team prepared a special card for her that we all signed and sent off to Chicago where she still lives in the apartment she shared with husband and former Chicago House director Charlie. It arrived just in time for a round of parties given to her by her friends and family, and (we are told) was proudly displayed. (Since the time of writing, we are saddened by the news that Myrtle has passed away, but celebrate her life and memory here.)

On November 5th ARCE Cairo hosted a memorial for our dear friend Chip Vincent, who lost his long struggle with leukemia this past summer. The service was bittersweet, as none of his friends and loved ones can quite believe that this kind, wise man's voice is now silent. After the service I had a long, slow walk in the warm night back to my hotel along the Nile Corniche, the sidewalks of which were filled with happy crowds of young Cairenes enjoying the night air. The Nile was black but sparkling with the reflected lights of the highrises all around. I thought about Chip and the vacuum he leaves, and how inevitable change is. It's hard for a preservationist to admit that nothing really



*Mark Easton at Chicago House, November 2007*



*Dennis Forbes, Barbara Mertz, and Joel Cole  
at the Old Winter Palace*

ken-up Nectanebo I sphinxes, which also appear to be reconstructable. Our eventual aim is to put the restored sphinxes back on the newly excavated sphinx road, where most of the sphinxes are now missing, but from where they all came.

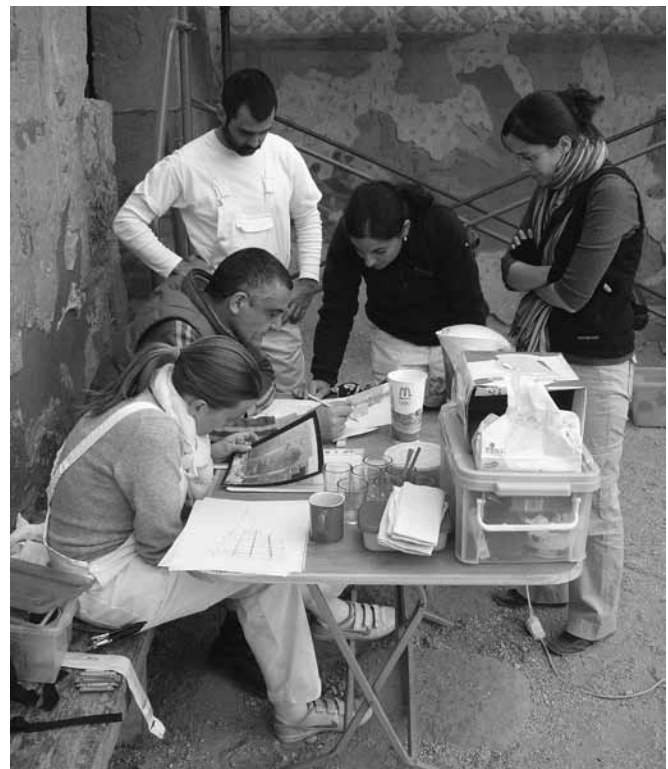
From November 11th to 16th, former ARCE director Mark Easton and Michael Jones, on a review of ARCE projects in Egypt started during Mark's tenure as director, had a very pleasant stay with us. It was good to spend some time with our old friend again and show him the many fruits of his labors. The Thanksgiving feast at Chicago House was attended by a whole bevy of Egyptologists, and many other Egyptian and foreign friends. Augmenting our talented kitchen staff, Brett made apple, blueberry, pumpkin, and cherry pies, and epigrapher Ginger made pumpkin bread. Our beloved Dr. Barbara Mertz (a.k.a. Elizabeth Peters) was back in town with KMT editor Dennis Forbes, Carl Kojis, and Joel Cole, who all enhanced the occasion. Chicago House later hosted a dinner party for Barbara on the 26th to commemorate a very special birthday (no, I'm not saying which one!). Here's to you, Barbara!

## **DECEMBER**

Plans are well underway for the long-awaited, USAID-supported west bank dewatering project. In a series of meetings this and last month, Chicago House, the SCA, and the major west bank antiquities concession holders (particularly Hourig Sourouzian, director of the Amenhotep III mortuary temple complex behind the Colossi of Memnon; and Christian LeBlanc, director of the Ramesses II mortuary temple site) have all been actively involved in planning the drainage system with USAID and the CDM contractors to ensure that no damage occurs to the adjacent antiquities sites that the system is supposed to protect. Deep, gravity-fed drains laid

in trenches from Medinet Habu to the Sety I Gurna temple three kilometers to the north, one hundred meters into the cultivation, will direct excess irrigation water to a pumping station in the cultivation just north of the Ramesseum. The pumps will pull the water from the desert back into the cultivation and to a drainage canal to the east. The system is beautiful, simple, and designed for easy maintenance, and will slow down the decay due to groundwater salt while the long-term solution — agricultural reform and the replacement of the sugar cane fields east of the antiquities sites with crops that require less irrigation water — can be effected.

The beginning of December marked the return of artist Sue Osgood, who resumed her recording work at Medinet Habu with the epigraphic team. At Luxor Temple the Italian conservators, directed by Luigi Di Caesaris, Alberto Sucato, and Maria Cristina Tomassetti, finished the cleaning of the central apse in the Roman Vestibule and exposed four destroyed but discernible Roman emperors (the second one from the right erased in antiquity), a mostly destroyed rondo figure of Jupiter in the center, and a Roman eagle with outspread wings above. The faces have all been destroyed, but the bodies are intact, with wonderful costume details preserved. On Christmas day we hosted guests for dinner, including the entire Japanese mission from Waseda University; Boyo Ockinga's mission from Sydney, Australia; Ted and Lyla Brock and Roberta Shaw from the Royal Ontario Museum; Polish Archaeological Institute, Cairo, director Zbigniew Sfranski and family, and others. Jay Heidel and Sue Lezon arrived for the holidays, just in time to help deliver



*Italian conservation team, Luxor Temple. Left to right, from front: Isabella, Luigi, Frederico, Cristina, and Susanna McFadden (project historian)*



## DECEMBER 2007–JANUARY 2008

Christmas cookies to all our friends and colleagues in Luxor. On the 28th we gave a reception for Oriental Institute Visiting Committee members Tom and Linda Heagy, who were in town with their family and friends (guided by Emily Teeter). During the evening the Heagy's friends decided to donate funds in honor of Tom and Linda toward the naming of the projected Chicago House photo archives expansion. It will now be named "The Tom and Linda Heagy Chicago House Photographic Archives." Congratulations to Tom and Linda, and sincerest thanks to their friends the Nicholsons, the Vitales, the Weislogels, Robert and Annabelle Moore and their children, Corinne Cochran, Betsey Teeter, and Joseph Cain. Just before New Year's Eve we were pleased to host our friends and Oriental Institute Visiting Committee members Misty and Lewis Gruber and their friends to a reception and library briefing. On New Year's Eve we trotted out the old Breasted 78 rpms (all the current dance music of 1924) and celebrated with friends from ARCE, Cairo, Luxor, and the United States, including Waseem Jafar of Nimrod Systems who is doing the scanning of our photographs and drawings for *Medinet Habu IX*, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple*, Part

1: *The Inner Sanctuaries*, and his friend Wendy. While he was in Luxor, Waseem and Sue went over proofs of the images for the publication and discussed the next steps in the production process, adroitly coordinated back home by Tom Urban in the Oriental Institute Publications Office.

At the end of the year we received some very good news: the five-year USAID grant extension for which we applied last spring finally came through, a wonderful Christmas present. This grant will allow us to continue our documentation and conservation work in Luxor at the present, expanded level, and is almost totally due to the extraordinary efforts of Chicago House Finance Manager Safi Ouri, who spent an enormous amount of time crafting the proposal. Sincerest thanks to Safi, the SCA, and our USAID Egypt friends for this vital funding.

**JANUARY, 2008**

The new year 2008 sees many exciting changes in Luxor. One pleasant innovation is a cafe at Luxor Temple, which sprang up practically overnight at the beginning of January and has proven to be extremely popular with the temple visitors. ARCE now has an office in Luxor and is sponsoring important USAID-supported post-dewatering conservation and technical training for Luxor and Karnak temple SCA conservation and engineering staff. The Salvage Archaeological Field School (SAFS), sponsored by ARCE/USAID and the Ancient Egypt Research Associates (AERA) directed by Mark Lehner and co-directors Mohsen El-Kamal and Ana Tavares, has started up and is focusing on sphinx road salvage excavations in the Khalid Ibn el-Walid Garden site north of the Luxor Temple precinct. All the Egyptian conservation and archaeology students receiving training and hands-on experience in these programs have come to the Chicago House library for orientation sessions and project research, coordinated by librarian Marie Bryan, and it is a great pleasure to be able to help support their work in this way.



*Sphinx fragment moving, Luxor Temple*



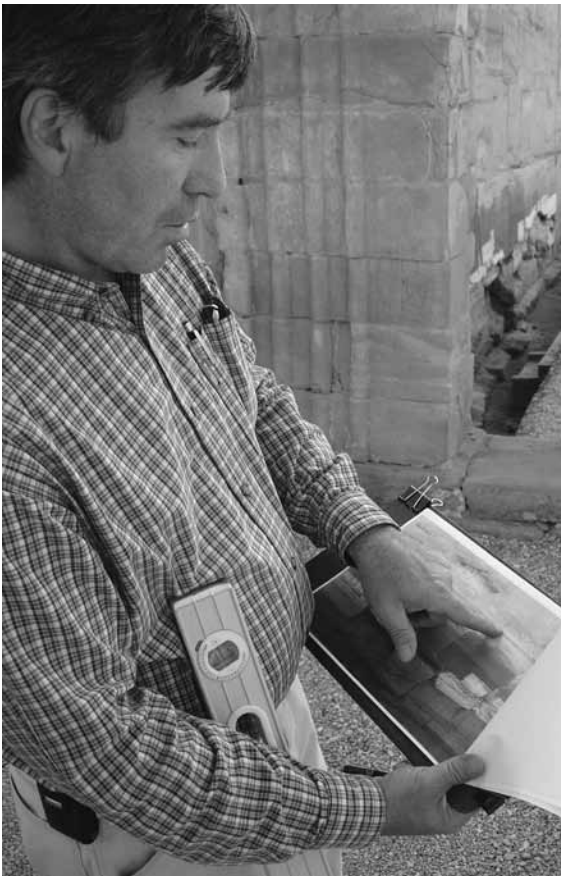
*Sphinx assembly yard, Luxor Temple*



*Luxor Temple inspectorate. From left to right: SCA inspectors Hanem, Hanem, Sanaa, Director Sultan, Ray, Yehia, and Omar. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky*



*Jen collating at Medinet Habu*



*Master Mason Frank explaining patching strategy, back sanctuary, Medinet Habu*

In the meantime, our own programs continue apace. Brett has resumed supervision of the epigraphic work in the Medinet Habu small Amun temple in the ambulatory and bark sanctuary of Thutmose III, on the Akoris columns in the ambulatory, and in the Kushite porch. Lotfi and the conservation team are consolidating the decaying foundations of the sanctuary on the western side, while Master Mason Frank and his men are preparing new stone blocks for replacing some of the old stone that is totally decayed. Frank continued to supervise the construction of damp-coursed platforms in the new blockyard and the completion of its perimeter wall. The inventory and documentation (on a new database) of all the miscellaneous fragmentary architectural and sculpture fragments presently scattered around the precinct was started by new staff member Julia Schmied. All this material will be moved to the new blockyard starting next season. Frank, Lotfi, and their teams also continued the dismantling and consolidation of the southern Ramesses III well, destabilized by groundwater salt decay, for eventual restoration. Discussions continued with ARCE's site management team directed by Naguib Amin about proposed signage for the Medinet Habu temple complex.

After the holidays at Luxor Temple conservator Hiroko, assisted by Tina, resumed the Luxor Temple blockyard conservation program and preparations for a blockyard open-air museum. They also constructed almost 100 meters of small fragment storage shelving along the eastern perimeter wall, northern end, where many of the smaller fragments can now be safely stored. Oriental Institute Visiting Committee member Nan Ray arrived in mid-January and for a month assisted Hiroko in blockyard data management and planning of the open-air museum displays and signage.

Margie Fisher returned to us in January with a special group of friends and family, including brother Phillip and his wife Lauren. At a dinner for the group on January 21st we hosted a surprise unveiling of the two plaques commemorating the naming of the Chicago House library by the University of Chicago "The Marjorie M. Fisher Library, Chicago House, Luxor" in recognition of Margie's long support of the work of the Epigraphic Survey and the Oriental Institute over the years. The bronze plaques — designed by former Chicago House artist, architect Jay Heidel — are mounted on either side of the library entrance, the one on the left in English and the one on the right in Arabic. Congratulations and sincerest thanks to Margie on the occasion of this well-deserved honor!

## **FEBRUARY**

On February 12th the conservation director for the World Monuments Fund Gaetano Palumbo arrived for his annual site reviews in Luxor, including our Luxor Temple blockyard work. His visit coincided with an all-day Getty-sponsored west bank coordination meeting on the 13th at the Nile Palace Hotel, where all the major concession holders for the west bank



*Open-air museum mastaba preparation, Luxor Temple*

## JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2008



*Open-air museum pavement construction supervised by Hiroko*



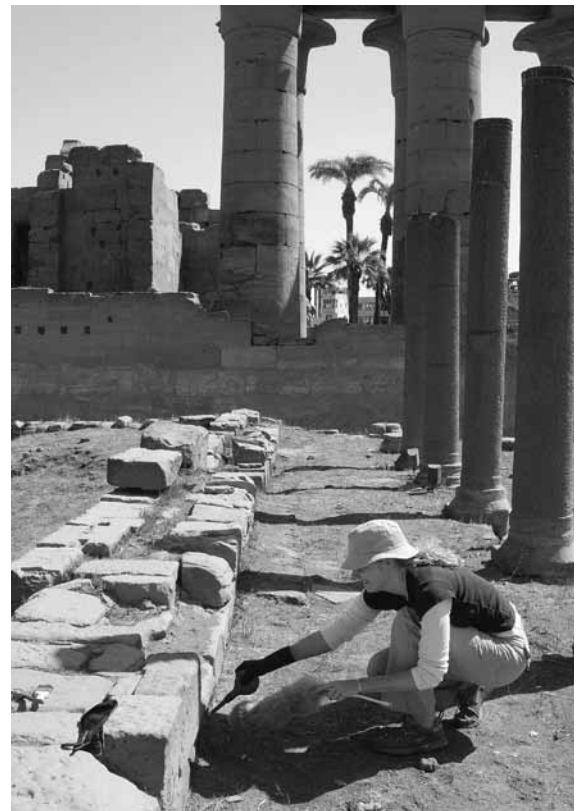
*Open-air museum prototype finished, Luxor Temple*

antiquities sites discussed programs and issues, and were briefed by the SCA, USAID, and CDM on the west bank dewatering program. One of the issues raised was the increasing threat of agricultural expansion into antiquities land, particularly the Amenhotep III palace area south of Medinet Habu where land reclamation is happening at an alarming rate. The area around Deir El Shelwit is now almost completely surrounded by new cultivation that threatens not only the Amenhotep III mudbrick jubilee platform there (Kom El-Samak), but also the Hadriatic stone Isis temple.

On February 3rd conservator Sylvia Schweri arrived to assist Hiroko with a new project: a condition study of two medieval church foundations at Luxor Temple, one to the west of the Colonnade Hall, and one to the north of the eastern pylon. Both are made of reused pharaonic material, some of it decaying due to groundwater salts, and Sylvia is helping us study how to proceed with the consolidation. On the 16th, the day after the annual Luxor Marathon, USAID Egypt director Bambi Arellano and husband Jorge (also an archaeologist) spent a day reviewing USAID-supported work in Luxor, including ours. They were also able to spend some time at the ARCE/USAID/AERA-supported archaeological field school on the sphinx road north

of Luxor Temple, where they were briefed by Mark Lehner and the field school instructors and students on the program. On February 17th Helen and Jean Jacquet returned to Chicago House, a bit later than usual this year, and Conor Power, P.E., arrived on the 19th for his annual structural condition study of Luxor Temple. This was particularly important this season as it was the first year after the implementation of the Luxor and Karnak dewatering program that has lowered the groundwater ten feet since November of 2007. The SCA and ARCE, under project director Fraser Parsons, are monitoring the two temple complexes as well, and Conor, who has worked with ARCE and USAID on other projects in the past, coordinated his study with theirs. He noted no significant movement or change of the temple structure, *alhumdililah*. This month Yarko Kobylecky and Ellie Smith finished the painstaking photography of all of the newly cleaned Roman frescos in and around the apse in color transparency and black-and-white film, as well as digital.

This month we had discussions with ARCE about a new conservation and restoration program for the Khonsu Temple at Karnak, and the Epigraphic Survey's possible involvement documenting the exposed reused floor and foundation material before floor restoration. Since it has long been known that Ramesses III built his Khonsu Temple out of several earlier monuments (among them parts of the mortuary temples of Amenhotep III, Horemheb, and Amenhotep son of Hapu) we have always planned on producing a volume dedicated to the reused material, so this fits well with our plans. We are also informed that ARCE will be assisting the SCA in the conservation and relocation of 17,000 small *talatat* blocks of Akhenaten presently stored next



*Sylvia cleaning foundation, Luxor Temple*



*Conservator Hala consolidating the back wall  
of the small Amun temple sanctuary*

to Khonsu Temple in the old University of Pennsylvania magazine (built by Ray Smith, founder of the Akhenaten Temple Project [ATP] in the 1960s). Jocelyn Gohary, who worked with Ray Smith on the project when she was a graduate student, will be supervising the project, and Hiroko will consult on the conservation. Since the Chicago House Photo Archives houses the ATP negative archives, we generated CDs of the material for Jocelyn's use in this exciting new program.

### **MARCH**

Photo Archivist Sue Lezon returned to Luxor on March 8th for publication production work with Brett on *Medinet Habu IX*, specifically to finalize the enormous files of digital images of the small Amun temple painted sanctuaries that will be presented in the book. Alain and Emmanuelle Arnaudès arrived on the 15th to continue their Digital Archive Project for Chicago House, a digital archive database of all the documentation generated by Chicago House in Luxor from 1924 to the present day, site by site, utilizing 4th Dimension™ program software to make the data accessible to all scholars. They were assisted by Egyptian architect Louis Elia Louis, who continued the process of redrawing all of Harold Nelson's key plans of the Luxor monuments in AUTOCAD to enhance their usefulness in this and all other databases. This season Alain and Brett designed the means to integrate the Chicago House dictionary cards into the digital program, a resource that until now has been accessible only



*Roman apse photography*



*Roman apse, detail of emperors, January 2008.  
Photo by Yarko Kobylecky*

to scholars working at Chicago House. Christian and Julia started scanning the cards this season (over 2,500 out of a projected total of 36,000–40,000 cards), and the scanned data will be entered into a custom-designed FileMaker database designed by Alain, starting this summer; scanning and data entry of the cards will continue next year under Julia's supervision. The Dictionary Project's ultimate goal is to create a comprehensive, publishable lexical reference of all the texts in Ramesses III's mortuary temple, and to provide a template for dictionaries of all the monuments published by the Epigraphic Survey. The Medinet Habu Dictionary will



be worked on by the Epigraphic Survey staff primarily during the summer months when the Survey is not in the field. Digital scanning of the cards allows the data to leave the facility since the cards must remain there.

On the 6th Oriental Institute Visiting Committee member and beloved friend Carlotta Maher returned to Chicago House to assist with the Chicago House development work and library briefings, and this time she brought her daughter Julia, a special treat, on her first trip to Egypt. On March 20th Carlotta helped us host a reception and library briefing for the Oriental Institute annual tour, this year led by Robert Ritner and accompanied by Oriental Institute Membership Coordinator Sarah Sapperstein. Close on their heels was Clemens Reichel, who stayed with us for a few days on his way back to Chicago from Syria, followed by Robert, who stayed with us a week after the tour finished up, for consultation and research. Christian Greco departed for home for a teaching gig on the 22nd, but not before we gave him photographs of some of the Greek- and Latin Roman-period monumental inscription fragments that we have been collecting in a special section of the Luxor Temple blockyard, which he will translate as part of his summer work. We are extremely fortunate that Christian is proficient in Greek and Latin as well as ancient Egyptian!

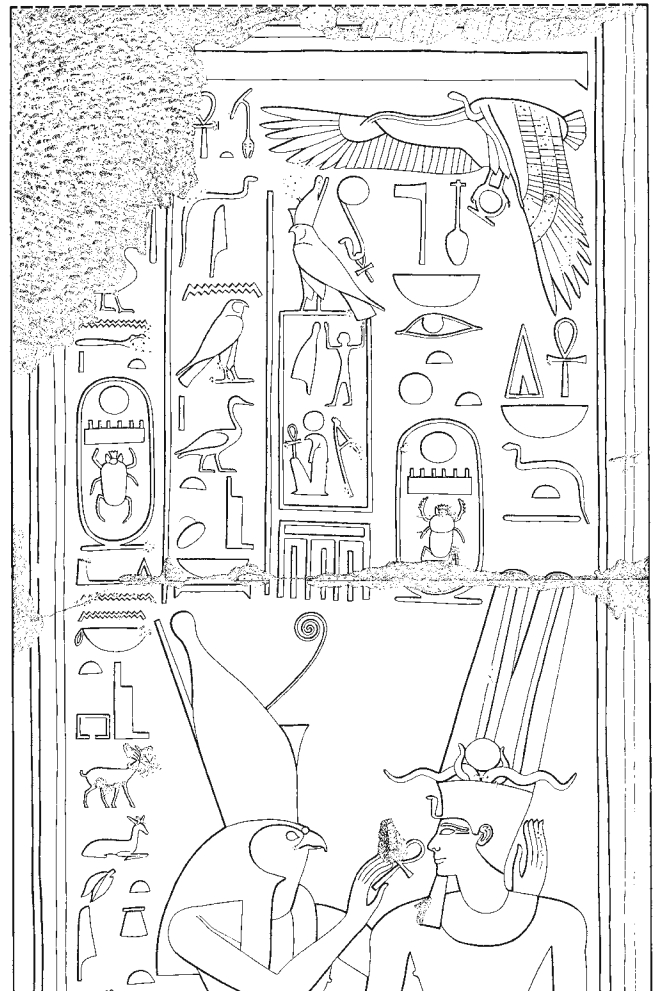
Tina finished building the last storage platform for the season in the Luxor Temple blockyard, and with Hiroko has finished construction of the first increment of the blockyard open-air museum; paving and guard rails are now installed along the southern third of the projected display area where one can view large blocks from Amenhotep III's sanctuary area. Hiroko also taught a conservation class for Egyptian conservators at Luxor Temple, part of ARCE's conservation training program, and conservator Sylvia finished her condition study of the two medieval church foundations, which Yarko and Ellie painstakingly photographed as part of the documentation of their current state.

#### APRIL

It's time to wrap things up. The dismantled Ramesses III well at Medinet Habu has been prepared for its summer sleep



*Ali patching sanctuary wall at Medinet Habu*



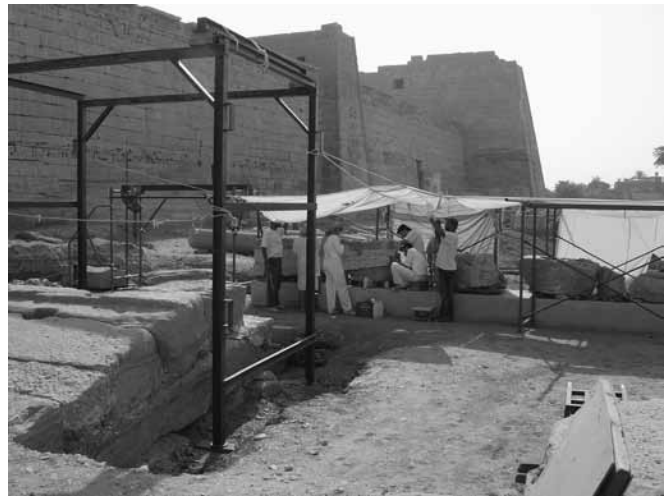
*Thutmose III given life by Horus,  
drawing by Di Cerbo and De Jong*

by Lotfi and his team, who protected it with scaffolding and plywood. Frank and his workmen have inserted eighteen patchstones into the back wall of the small Amun temple sanctuary. The epigraphers and artists have put the finishing touches on the last drawings of the season, are deep in planning for next year, and packing for home. Our Luxor Temple blockyard operation has been closed down for this year with the first increment of the open-air museum in place. The staff has started to depart, and the next few weeks will see the house slowly empty. This time of year is always very bittersweet for me... I hate for the season to end. But everyone has worked hard, is tired, and is ready to go!

But on April 5th I had a long meeting with Luxor governor Dr. Samir Farag about a new development project about to be launched by the Government of Egypt to address issues of traffic congestion and tourist flow along the Luxor Corniche Boulevard. The governor informed me that the proposed Corniche-widening project would entail tearing down every building along the Corniche river road between Luxor Temple and Karnak... except for our house, which the Egyptian government would allow to stand because of our long-standing service to the community. Our neighbors



*Ginger collating at Medinet Habu*



*Chicago House conservators consolidating blocks from the collapsing well of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, 2008*



*New blockyard, Medinet Habu*



*Adel, Nahed, and conservation team consolidating well blocks at Medinet Habu*

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*All photos by Ray Johnson unless otherwise indicated.*

to the north and south — the officers' club, the convention center, part of the Catholic Coptic rest house, the hospital, the garden of the Luxor Museum, the Bank of Alexandria, the front of the Etap Mercure Hotel, part of Dr. Samir's own office, the Mina Palace Hotel, and God knows what else — will all be demolished for the new super Corniche. And while Chicago House will be allowed to stay where it is, the governor informed me that the new Corniche-widening project would instead require the sacrifice of our entire front garden area. The new Corniche wall, which the city will build, will come right up to the house. The Luxor development program has finally caught up with us.

Thus began a long, hot summer of intensive discussions, networking, and negotiations with the Government of Egypt. The U.S. Embassy in Cairo (former Ambassador Francis Ricciardone and present Ambassador Margaret Scobey) were tremendously helpful in facilitating communication between Chicago House and the Egyptian government, for which we will be forever grateful. Many, many friends and colleagues took up our case and appealed to the government to modify its program and take less land from us and our neighbors. The end result, after months of talking, is that the government did eventually reconsider and modified its original plan.