

### JOHN COLEMAN DARNELL

**John Darnell's** personal research continues to center on the final stages of his work on netherworld cryptography. During the past year he essentially completed examination of the enigmatic treatise in the tomb of Ramesses IX. Along with the "cryptic" outer sides of the second shrine of Tutankhamun, this late Ramesside composition is an ancestor of many Third Intermediate Period mythological papyri, with a mixture of Amduat/Netherworld Book imagery

and texts, and Book of the Dead excerpts (in the Ramesses IX work is a variant of the first half of chapter 106 of the Book of the Dead, text 179 of the Coffin Texts). He also worked on a now much damaged hymn to the goddess Rait-Tawy as Hathor, located in a gateway into the Ptolemaic temple of Monthu at Medamud, to the northeast of Karnak. The final portion of the hymn describes the people and animals, real and mythic, of the lands to the south of Egypt praising the goddess. Lybo-Nubians dance ecstatically and chant, while griffins cover themselves with their wings in adoration, like the seraphim around the throne of Jehovah in Isaiah and Ezekiel. The hymn contains parallels to hymns in the Mut ritual, and portions of the Medamud text contribute to one's understanding of passages in the Tombos inscription of Thutmosis I and a love poem in P. Harris 500. There is even an interesting reference to a drunken call to prayer.

This year was Mr. Darnell's fourth season as epigrapher with the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor, Egypt. At odd times in the midst of completing work on the first volume of the Luxor Temple Colonnade Hall publication, his wife, Deborah Darnell, also an epigrapher with the Epigraphic Survey, and he explored the cliffs around Luxor. In January, while walking along ancient desert paths, they made the chance discovery of a fragmentary New Kingdom stele (mentioning Mut and Amun of Luxor) and broken sandstone blocks that may once have formed a desert shrine. Subsequent investigations in the area revealed hill shrines of the sort which the Davies found on the side of the Gorn, remains of Byzantine period huts, and a fragment of a possible second stele. They are now studying the desert routes in the area of the Thebaid and hope soon to produce a preliminary study of the stele, shrines, and surrounding areas. These remains, with the abundant pottery surrounding them (dated as early as the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty), may provide useful information on the now little understood internal, short range caravan routes that connect portions of the Nile Valley and link up with longer routes through the eastern and western deserts.

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