



CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN

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THE CHICAGO HOUSE SEASON OCTOBER 2005 TO APRIL 2006: A SEASON DIARY

By W. Raymond Johnson, Field Director

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

The Epigraphic Survey has been back in Luxor only a month and a half, yet I can't remember any October or November being so full of activity. Many of you are aware that epigrapher Harold Hays has left Chicago House for a new teaching position in Leiden, the Netherlands, which will start in the new year. While we are very, very happy for him, as this is a major milestone in his life, we miss him very much out here; epigraphy just isn't the same without him. But there are some bright new faces at Chicago House this season as well. New epigraphers François Gaudard and Vanessa Davies are working with senior epigrapher Brett McClain and are already doing drawing collations at the Medinet Habu small Amun temple bark sanctuary and ambulatory. New artist Krisztián Vértes is in the final stages of his training as well - he's honing his skills on sunk relief Thutmoside carving in the ambulatory at the moment - and will be producing original artwork after Christmas. All three new epigraphic staff members have finished intensive training with senior artist Margaret DeJong who has

expertly tutored them on epigraphic drawing conventions and drawing techniques, both at the wall and in the studio. We are all very pleased with the results, and have had a number of stimulating discussions at the wall and back in the studio about the nature, and nuances, of epigraphic recording. Brett and epigrapher Jen Kimpton are continuing the collation of the ambulatory drawings for volume 2 of the small Amun temple series, and are tying up loose ends for volume 1, being produced



Sue Osgood checking collations.

now. Jen is very kindly proofing the glossary section of volume 1, while Brett and I have gone over some of the final wall questions which have come up in the publication review process. This week co-senior artist Sue Osgood returned to Luxor and has resumed her work in the bark sanctuary. This season Sue celebrates her 20th year working for Chicago House; another milestone!

The conservation work at Medinet Habu continues as well, with good progress made already. Conservation supervisor Lotfi Hassan and assistant Nahed Samir have cleaned the star-painted ceiling of the southern sanctuary of the ithyphallic Amun, and are now working on the ceiling of the naos room. Conservator Adel Azziz has continued the cleaning, consolidating, and infilling of the lower sandstone courses around the sanctuary exterior with breathable lime mortar. This area at ground level has been terribly affected by ground water salts, which have literally dissolved the stone. Adel has largely finished the exterior south wall, and is working his way around the



Brett collating in the porch of the Kushite pylon, small Amun temple, Medinet Habu.

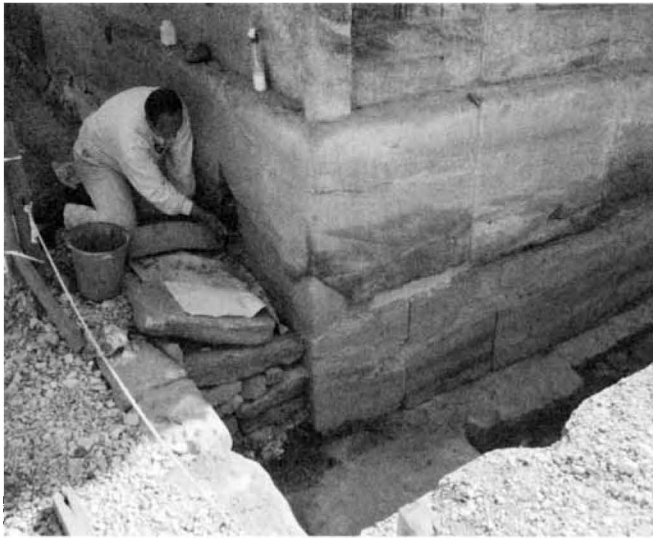
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back wall of the sanctuary. After that the plan is to tackle the crumbling northern wall as well.

At Luxor Temple Dany and his crew have finished the four upper courses of sandstone veneer slabs on the brick buttress we constructed last season in the Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple against a precarious outer section of the eastern wall. The effect is exactly what we hoped for; the buttress now looks - at first glance - like the original fabric of the wall. As I write this Dany and conservator Hiroko Kariya are preparing to restore a group of 48 fragments to the base of the buttress where they join the wall. This fragment group forms the better part of the Khonsu barge water procession from the Opet reliefs and completes the first register at that spot. The sandstone fragments will be set into a brick matrix, after which the missing areas will be covered with sandstone colored plaster; by the end of the project no brick will be visible at all. If additional fragments from the group are found in the future, they can be inserted with little trouble into the brick backing.



Hiroko Kariya consolidating fragments at Luxor Temple.

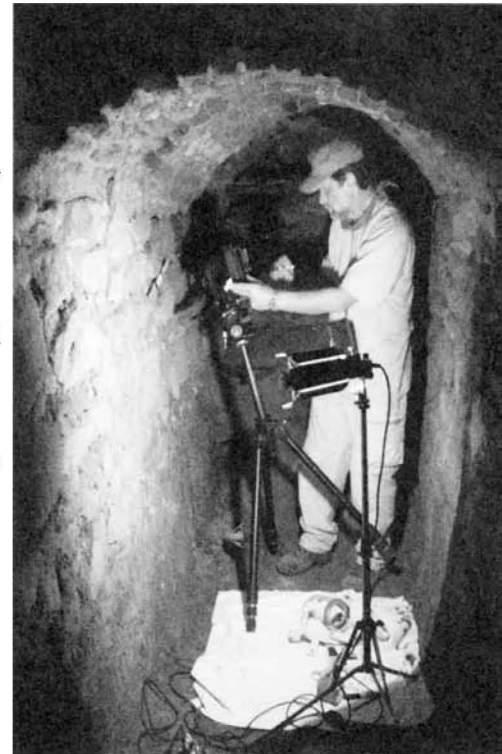


Adel infilling at Medinet Habu.

Hiroko resumed Chicago House's Luxor Temple blockyard protection and consolidation program in early November, and this week has been consolidating more of the large Amenhotep III blocks in the southern blockyard. The Luxor Temple ground water lowering initiative, which was fairly dormant during the summer, has now lurched into high gear, and trenching for drainage pipes has resumed east of the temple precinct. Almost a hundred inscribed wall fragments found in medieval foundations exposed by the trenching have been transferred to our blockyard by the SCA archaeological monitoring team headed by Luxor SCA director Dr. Mansour Boraik. Other team members with whom we have been working on this important project include our colleagues Atiyah Radwan, Mohamed Abu al-Yazid, Ted Brock, Mustafa Sughayir, Amar Hassan Hanafy,

Fathy Yassin Abd al-Karim, and Taha Mamoun; it has been a real pleasure working with them all. After the blocks are transferred to our blockyard Hiroko monitors their condition, and she and I determine where they will go for storage and integration into our blockyard program. A tunnel sunk under the Corniche boulevard on the southwestern side of the temple precinct at the time of the Corniche's construction - to allow floodwaters to flow back in to the Nile - was cleared during the summer for possible use as an outlet for pumped ground water. The arched roof is of baked brick, but the walls are ALL reused sandstone blocks. This

past week photographer Yarko Kobylecky photographed the approximately 30 block fragments with exposed faces. Soon the tunnel will be filled with pipes and inaccessible, but at least we have a permanent record of the exposed information. It's a tantalizing sample, as we now suspect that the Corniche is



Yarko photographing reused blocks in Corniche tunnel.

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Luigi and friend.

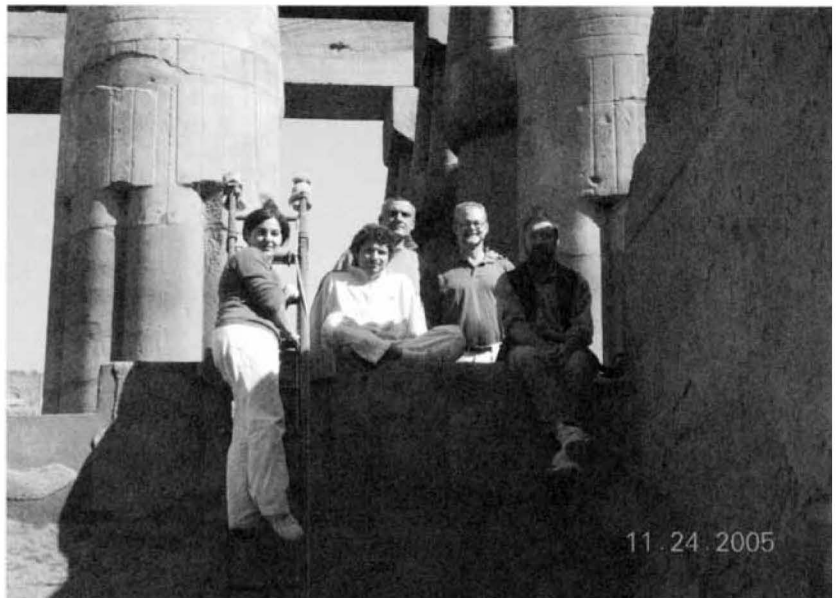
built on millions of inscribed wall fragments from the late 19th century excavations of Luxor Temple, all sealed by the modern road.

Chicago House has launched another exciting new chapter in its Luxor Temple preservation work, in collaboration with the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) and the Egyptian Antiquities Conservation project (EAC). In late October we set up four stories of aluminum scaffolding in the Roman Vestibule at Luxor Temple, and Yarko started the systematic photography of the southern and eastern walls in 4x5 color transparency film and black & white. This is the area with the highest concentration of preserved 3rd century AD imperial Roman wall paintings from around the time of Emperor Diocletian. Once the preliminary photography was finished, from November 18th – 25th project director Michael Jones, his wife Angela, and three Italian conservators, Luigi De Cesaris, Alberto Sucato, and Maria Cristina Tomassetti joined us at Chicago House. These conservators specialize in Roman fresco cleaning and have worked with ARCE in the Coptic Museum, Cairo; the monasteries of St. Anthony and St. Paul on the Red Sea coast; and now in Sohag at the Red Monastery. The week they were with us they studied the condition of the Roman wall paintings in the vestibule, and did test cleaning of four small squares in the southeast corner to see if more extensive cleaning might be worthwhile. The results were quite spectacular, and the answer is a firm 'yes.' The plan is for a larger conservation team to come next year to start the wholesale cleaning and protection of this precious painting. The end result of the project will be cleaned and protected paintings, and a publication of the material incorporating before and after photographs taken by Chicago House, plus facsimile watercolors of the paintings done by Sir Gardiner Wilkinson shortly after the walls were exposed in the mid-19th century.

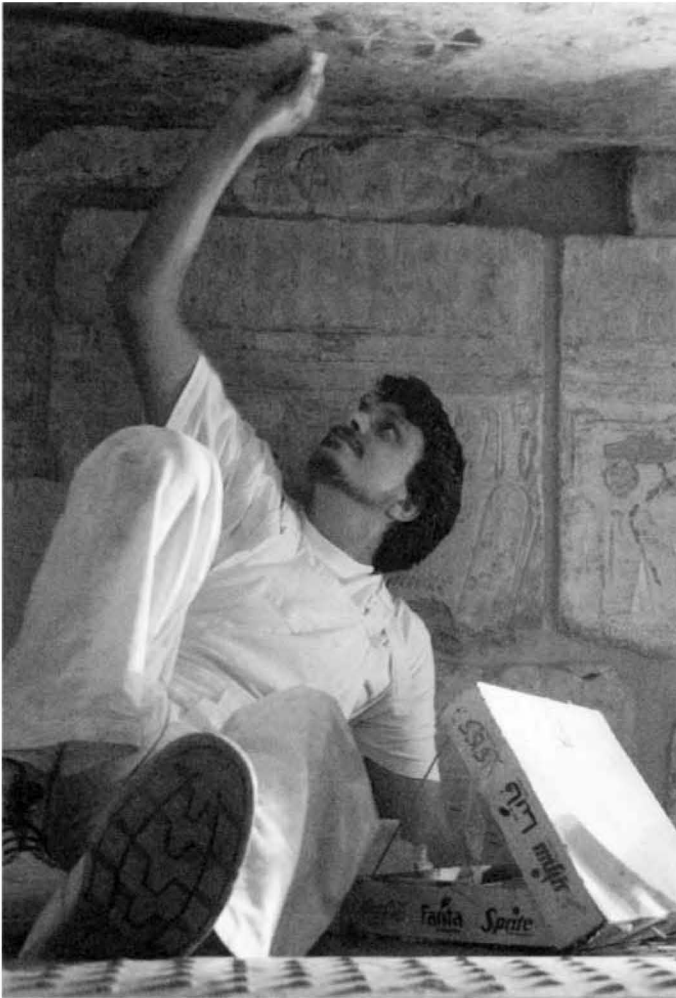
Wilkinson's documentation is a great boon, as far less of the paintings survive today; this timely project will allow the preservation of what is left.

After the paintings crew had left Luxor I prepared a sign with text in English and Arabic explaining the history of the Roman Vestibule and the cleaning and documentation project, with illustrations, which we set up in the vestibule; you wouldn't believe how many guides (and guidebooks) refer to that area as a church (I have listened to guide after guide explaining how the wall paintings depict the last supper!). I also prepared and set up illustrated signage for the blockyard, and for the Colonnade Hall buttress project, in Arabic as well as English, and we are preparing signage for Medinet Habu as well. The signs have been immensely popular, as absolutely everyone loves to see archaeology in action, and passers-by are eager to learn details of what is going on. Informative signage also nips many questions in the bud and allows us to carry on our work uninterrupted, or less so anyway!

Visitors and groups have been nonstop since we arrived; tourism in Luxor is WAY up, and there are almost as many Egyptologists in town working as there are tourists. We had a warm and joyous Thanksgiving celebration; the guest list read like a multi-national Who's Who of Egyptology: Geoffrey Martin (England), Kent and Susan Weeks (American University in Cairo), Ted and Lyla Brock (USA and Canada), Daniel and Ute Polz (Germany), Francesco Tiradritti (Italy), Renée Friedman (USA), Janosz Karkowski (Poland), and Don Ryan (USA). And many others. Presently Christian Loeben, former CH administrator and now Curator of the Egyptian Department of the Kestner Museum in Hanover, Germany is with us for a week researching an exhibition dedicated to the memory of Uvo Hölscher, who



*Cristina, Alberto, Luigi, Ray, and Michael, Roman Vestibule.
Photo by Hiroko Kariya.*



*Lotfi cleaning the ceiling at Medinet Habu.
Photo by Krisztián Vértés.*

excavated Medinet Habu and the mortuary temple of Ay and Horemheb for the Oriental Institute in the 1920s and 1930s. The weather in Luxor has been unseasonably warm for November, but I suspect you don't want to hear much about that!

DECEMBER - MARCH

Our Christmas and New Year holidays were full and joyous as always, and we launched the new year 2006 in excellent form, dancing under the stars in the Chicago House residence courtyard. During the holidays we had the pleasure of hosting many friends and colleagues passing through Luxor, but a special guest was our financial liaison with the University of Chicago Comptroller's Office, Lisa Güynn and her family: Todd, Alexandra, Elizabeth, Kathryn, and MacKenzie. Lisa has acted as go-between for years between the Chicago House finance office headed by Safi Ouri and the University of Chicago, so it was important for her to see the preservation work which her efforts - and those of many of our other friends back at the University - support. It was a great pleasure to introduce her to the Chicago House facility and staff, and show her firsthand the

epigraphic, conservation, and restoration work at both Medinet Habu and Luxor Temples. We encourage all of our readers and friends to come and see us as well; let us know when you are coming, and we will be happy to show you our preservation work, too.

The epigraphic work at Medinet Habu went into high gear in November and has been holding steady ever since. Epigraphers Brett, Jen, Frankie, and Vanessa and artists Margaret, Sue, and Krisztián have been pumping out facsimile drawings and collations for the second, third, and fourth volumes in the small Amun temple series. In March Photo Archivist Sue Lezon, Brett, and I reviewed all of the color and b&w negatives and prints earmarked for publication in the first volume of the series, *Medinet Habu IX: The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple Part 1: the Sanctuary*, after which photographer Yarko Kobylecky assisted by Ellie Smith filled a few gaps and shot some more details in color and black and white. I had never seen all of the photography brought together before this, and I was tremendously moved by the quality of the color transparency photos of the freshly cleaned walls; truly sensational, and a real credit to both the conservation and photographic teams. Stone cutter Dany Roy and his workmen have been erecting scaffolding to the height of the MH Ptolemaic north Pylon this week for the photography of the frontispiece plate, a bird's eye view of the Eighteenth Dynasty temple complex from on high, which Yarko will shoot next week. That should be exciting!

Conservators Lotfi, Adel, and Nahed have been cleaning the star-painted ceilings in the sanctuaries, and are now working on the

ceiling of the dyad room sanctuary. In March they finished consolidating the outer walls of the Eighteenth Dynasty sanctuary at ground level on the south and west sides, where ground water salts have seriously weakened and destroyed the stone. Lotfi and Nahed have



Epigraphers Frankie, Vanessa, and Jen (above) and artist Krisztián.

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Lotfi and Nahed cleaning the Shepenwepet offering table.

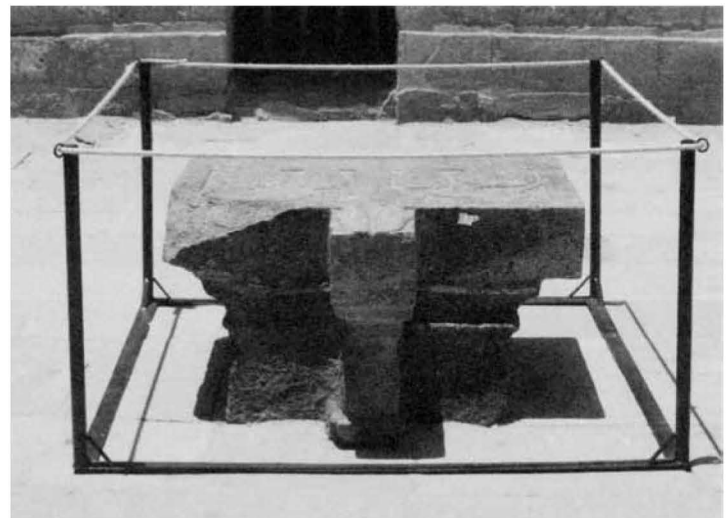
also finished the consolidation of the Shepenwepet II black granite offering table which we found in the flooring of the naos room several years ago. After consulting with West Bank SCA Director Ali Asfar, we received permission to move the table to the small court of Shepenwepet II's funerary chapel across the way, where it was undoubtedly set up originally. Dany Roy has created a sandstone foundation emplacement for the offering table, and as I write this he is sealing it against the ground water with a damp-course lead sheet layer. Once in place it will complement the offering table of Amenirdis I which was set up by Georges Daressy in front of the Amenirdis chapel. At Ali's suggestion, we are creating roped off areas for both offering tables.

At the Luxor Temple blockyard conservator Hiroko Kariya condition-surveyed several hundred deteriorating blocks stored within our five covered 'hospital' mastaba platforms, and did emergency consolidation with synthetic resin on 270 of them in March. She continued the treatment with Wacker OH 100 ethyl silicate on ten large blocks in the southern blockyard and 30 small block fragments in the main treatment area. Over the last few months Hiroko has also coordinated the moving and protective storage of hundreds of block and sculpture fragments which have been recovered this season from the ground water lowering project trenching east of Luxor Temple, and which is now 2/3 finished. The blocks and fragments complement what is already stored in the blockyard, including pieces



Shepenwepet offering table moving. Photo by Dany Roy.

quarried from every part of Luxor Temple (some of which are reconstructable), plus dozens of new talatat blocks of Akhenaten as well as other material from Karnak. One of the more interesting finds is a mysterious limestone block inscribed in raised relief on three sides, on one side with beautifully preserved cartouches of Thutmosis IV; on another with his face and beautifully detailed curled, Nubian wig; and on another an architectural detail which thus far defies analysis. It was found nine meters below ground level, upside down, so is definitely out of context, and is



Shepenwepet II offering table restored in her sanctuary.

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Yarko (upper left) photographing on the Medinet Habu

probably another Karnak block brought to Luxor for reuse in the post-pharaonic period. While we have been working to integrate this material into our blockyard protection program - our contribution to the ground water lowering program - we have also been working with our SCA friends to document, conserve, and store material removed from two storerooms in the sanctuary area of Luxor Temple (the bark sanctuaries of Mut and Khonsu) which were emptied by the SCA in February and March. It has been very interesting to see what was actually stored there (in the past access was forbidden), and it has turned out to be a great mix of material. There are blocks and sculpture fragments from early excavations at Luxor Temple; Christian-period pottery from Adaima (near Esna) excavated by Serge Sauneron in 1974 (assisted by Helen and Jean Jacquet!) near Esna (the publication of which the Jacquets, in one of those weird coincidences, had just finished and sent off to the French Archaeological Institute in Cairo the day before the material was found in the storeroom); and a tremendous amount of

diverse material from confiscated antiquities dealers' collections. Much of it is being taken to the antiquities magazine at Abu Jude on the Airport Road, but many of the relief blocks and some sculpture fragments - from excavations around the temple - have been moved to our blockyard, where we will be processing them for a long time to come. There are some wonderful bits and pieces of things, about which you will hear more in future Bulletins.

One of the more significant pieces found in the storerooms was a lifesize, hitherto unknown granodiorite statue of Queen Nefertari which I suspected originally stood alongside one of the colossal Ramesses II sculptures in front of the Luxor Temple pylons. She was propped against the corner of the chamber, completely covered with pigeon droppings like everything else in the chamber. She

was so heavy our workmen had to use wooden rollers on planks to move her out of the room and out into the blockyard. While her eyes are sadly hacked - undoubtedly from the time the statue was quarried for reuse in the medieval period - she is otherwise complete from the top of her beautiful plumed crown to a break just above her knees, and is now up on a mastaba platform where Hiroko assisted



Hiroko cleaning Nefertari statue, Luxor Temple.



Ellie cleaning sculpture fragments, Luxor Temple.

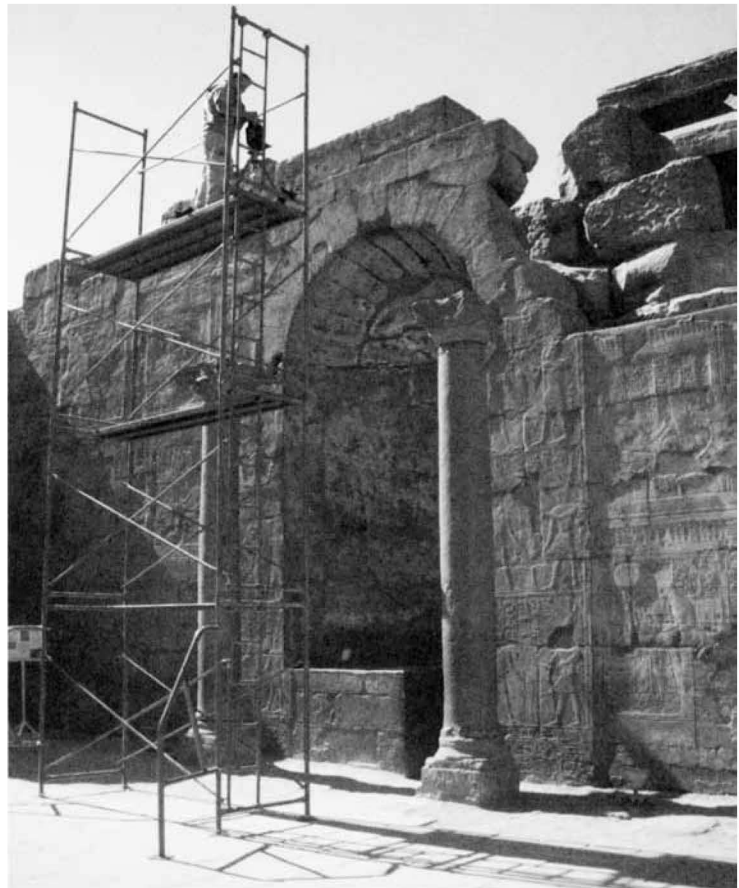
by Ellie have given her a thorough cleaning. The colossal statue of Ramesses II beside which she stood is in pieces in the blockyard storage area west of the Luxor Temple pylons, but the base with her lower legs still attached was restored to its original position in the 1960s. In late March Hiroko made a cast of the leg break which we tested against the statue base, and it is a direct join. Our colleague Hourig Sourouzian has long wanted to reassemble and restore the colossal king, so we invited her to the blockyard last month to see the queen and discuss strategy. She is very happy to have us to restore the queen next season as a preamble to the restoration of the entire colossus. This will make our local SCA friends very happy as they had made the same suggestion for the long-term protection of the queen. We will add her restoration to our program for next season, and Nefertari will rise again at Luxor Temple!

In the Roman Vestibule, Yarko finished the photography of the entire chamber in March, including the apse, for the ARCE/EAC funded Roman wall painting cleaning and documentation project. This now plugs a major hole in our documentation of Luxor Temple, and completes the first phase of this collaborative project. The conservators are scheduled to return in the fall to continue the cleaning of the frescos, and once they are finished Yarko will do complete, post-conservation photography of the cleaned surfaces for the final publication and our archives.

Finally, in another groundbreaking moment for the Epigraphic Survey, Dany and his workmen finished the restoration of the Khonsu barge fragment group

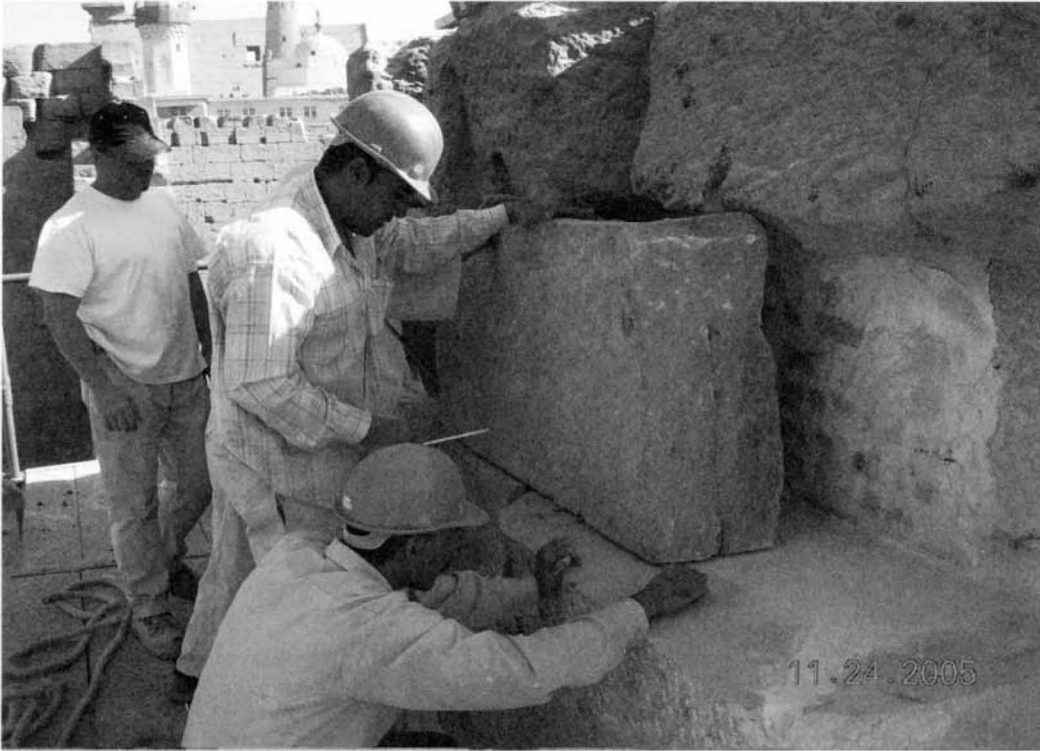
on the Colonnade Hall east wall during the first week of February. (See the special "Colonnade Hall Portfolio" pp. 10-13.) After Hiroko had consolidated the edges of each block fragment, Dany, the workmen, and I carefully placed each block fragment in its original position on the wall and mortared it into a brick matrix backing. This support - which forms the bottom of the stabilizing buttress for the outer wall - is strong and light, and when new fragments are found which join the group, the brick can be removed for easy insertion of the new material. When the entire group was back on the wall, Dany and the guys plastered over the brick which fills the spaces between the joined fragments, and I am presently putting the finishing touches on a simple reconstruction drawing connecting the fragments and wall. The overall effect from the ground

is very good, and the drawing (similar to the published reconstruction drawing of the wall in the Epigraphic Survey's *RILT 1, The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall*, plate 68) makes the whole wall comprehensible in all light conditions. I will admit that it



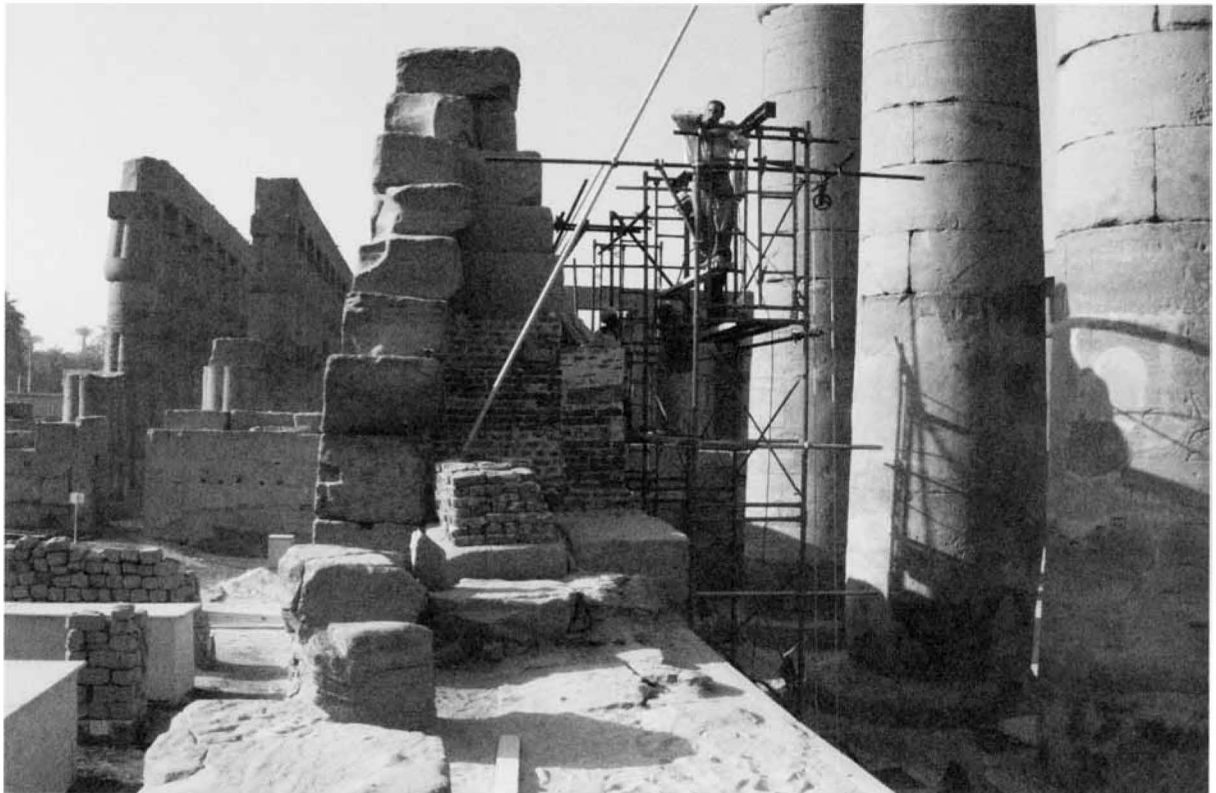
Yarko photographing the apse of the Roman Vestibule, Luxor Temple.

Colonnade Hall Portfolio



Dany, Mustafa, and Saber placing uppermost layer of veneer stones, looking north.

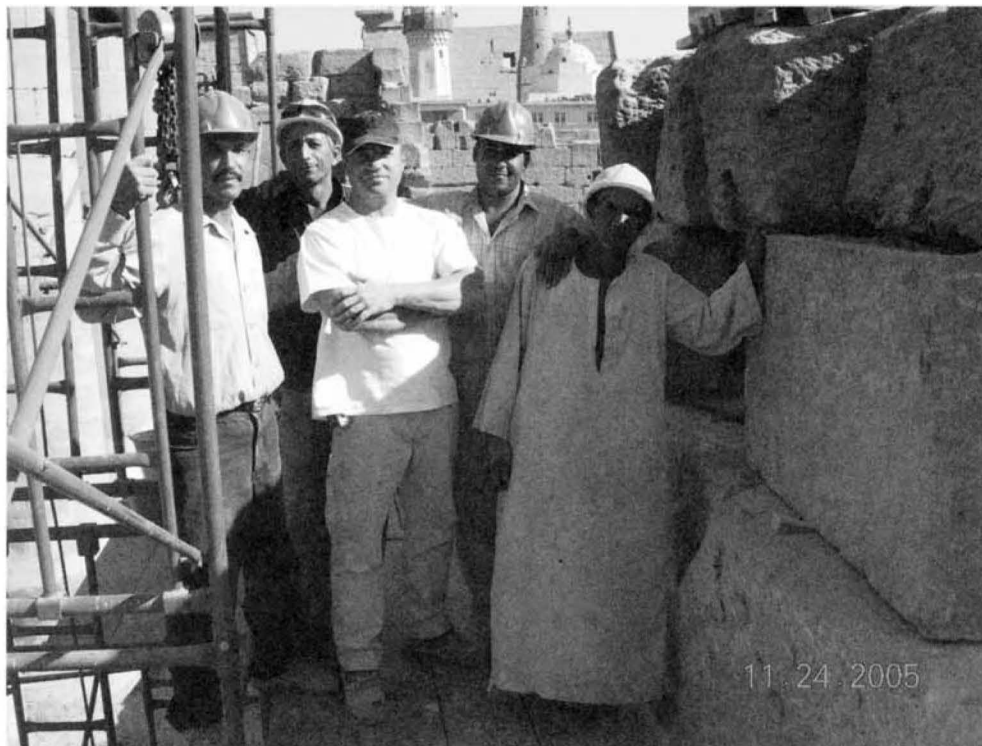
Eastern wall and buttress from north.



*Brick buttress with upper
vener blocks in place, from
the south. Dany, Mustafa,
Saber, and Sayid (below).*

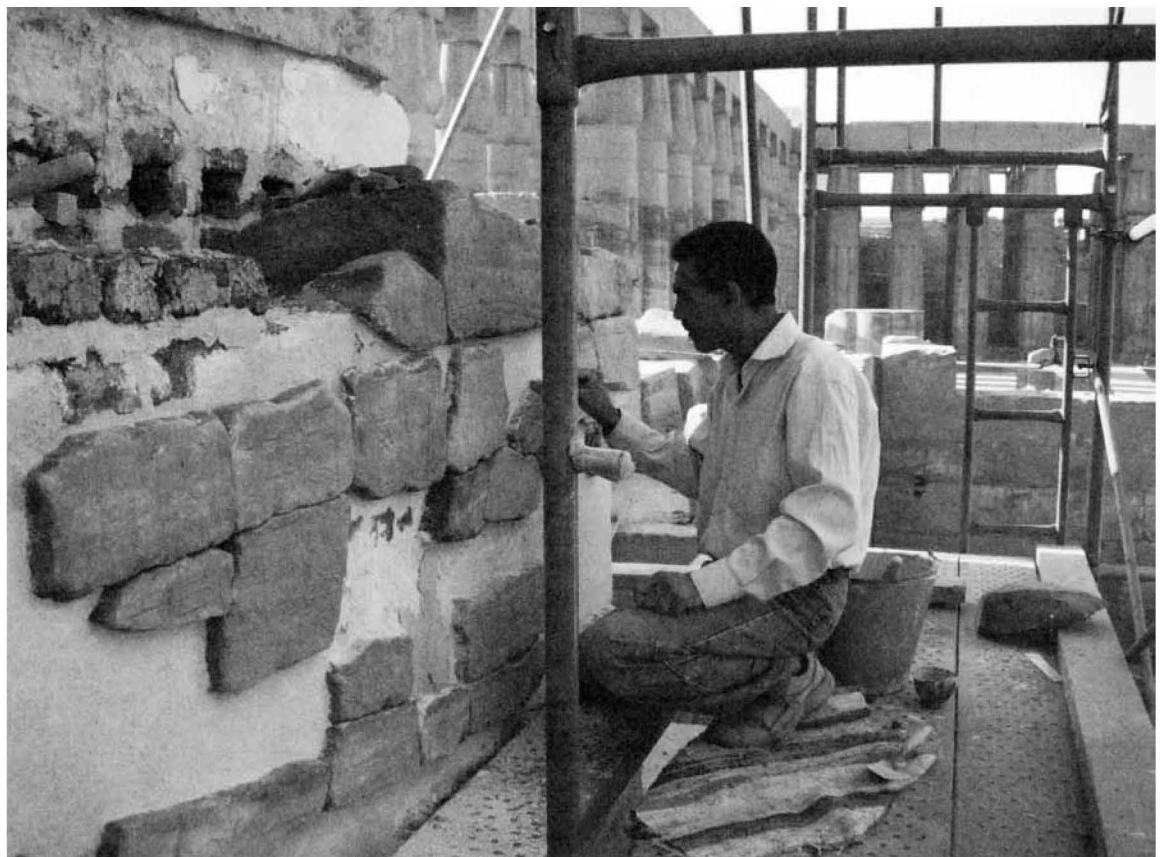


*Saber, Ali, Dany,
Mustafa, and
Hassan.*

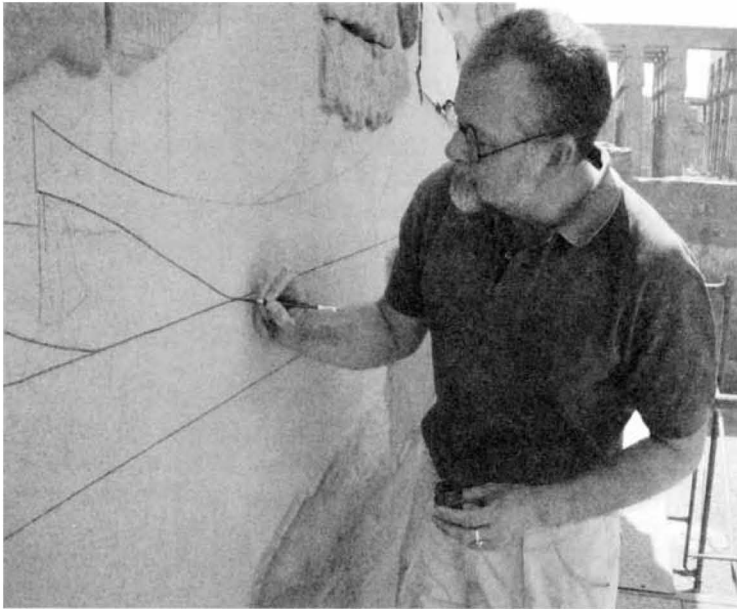




Saber, Dany, and Ali leveling the fragment group.

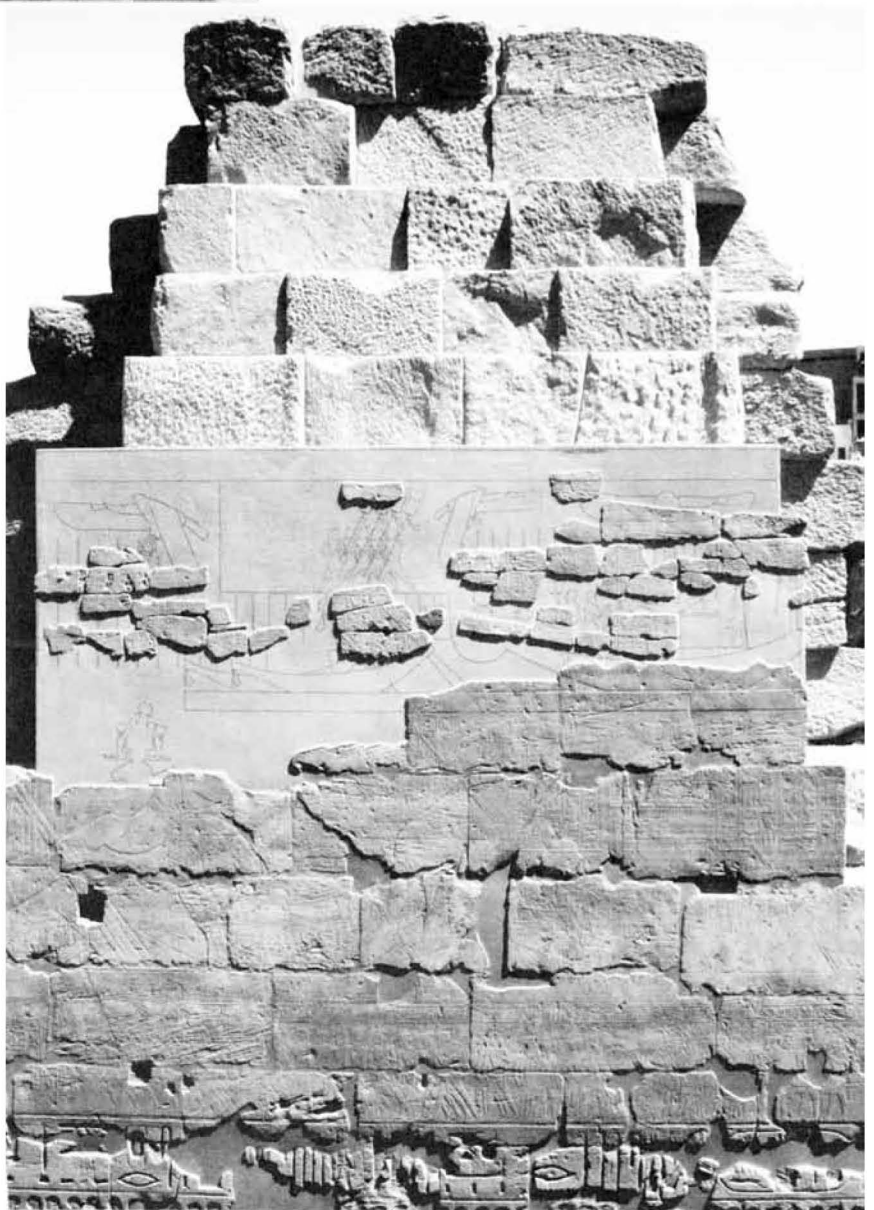


Saber gap-filling the Khonsu fragment group after reassembly.



*Ray Johnson painting missing details between the joined fragments of the Khonsu barge group and the wall.
Photo by Krisztián Vértés.*

Finished east wall, Colonnade Hall with sandstone-sheathed buttress and restored Khonsu barge fragment group.



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Krisztián drawing at Medinet Habu.

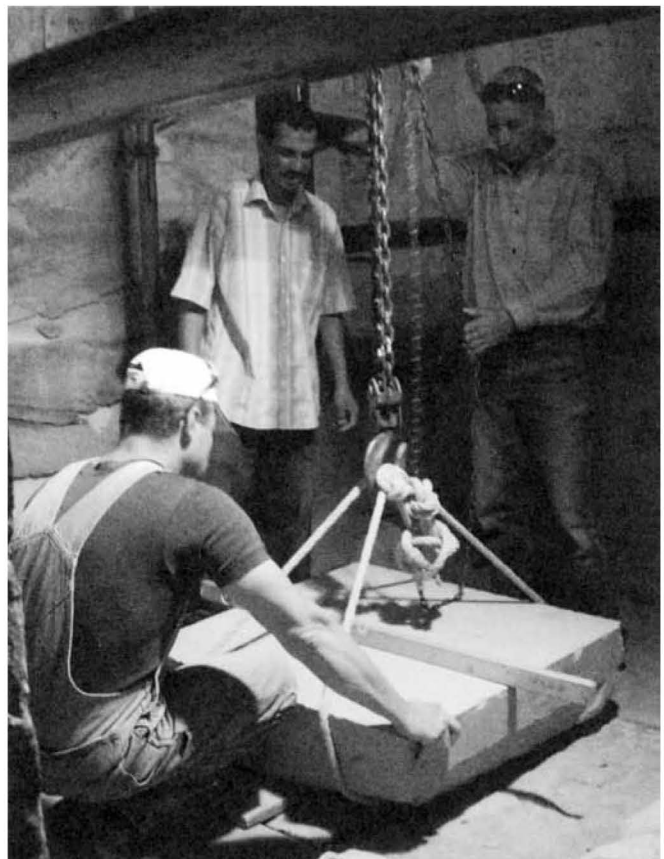
has been an extraordinary experience doing these 1:1 drawings on the actual plastered wall surface between the fragments. I start with a charcoal sketch which I then correct, and I paint the final line with a dark brown (raw umber) acrylic paint. It is very hard not to think of the original team of outline draftsmen who worked during the reign of Tutankhamun to prepare the wall surface in a similar way for the carving of the beautiful Opet festival scenes.

We continue to assist our University of Memphis friends in their new Valley of the Kings tomb - KV 63 - with logistical support and sharing of our staff expertise. Yarko has helped process their film in our darkroom, and we are donating the services of conservator Hiroko a couple of days a week to help them plan conservation strategy and assist with the conservation and moving of objects (seven coffins and 28 large, sealed storage jars). Conservator Adel Azziz has been working with the SCA conservators there as well this past month, and we have also loaned artist Sue Osgood for a few days a week to do careful drawings of the coffins before they are moved, most of which are in terrible shape due to incursions of termites in the Ramesside Period. Chicago House is pleased to uphold the spirit of collaboration fostered by the previous major discovery in the Valley of the Kings, Tutankhamun's tomb (KV 62), 84 years ago, when Breasted himself assisted with the translations of the texts which were first encountered. We are also assisting Geoffrey Martin - who is clearing debris from the well shaft

in Horemheb's royal tomb - with the loan of a two-story ladder for the duration of his work. These are interesting days in the Valley of the Kings.

It is hard to believe that as I write this we are in the final two weeks of our 2005-2006 season in Luxor. Why do I always feel that we have just arrived? In addition to the normal, somewhat intensive tying up of loose ends of the season, we are also preparing for the visit of US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone to Luxor on Thursday, April 6. This is his first visit to Luxor since taking the post last summer, and the day-long event will include site briefings on both sides of the river and a luncheon at Chicago House. The theme of the trip is the importance of conserving Luxor's antiquities and other cultural heritage sites through cooperation and collaboration. We will show him our epigraphic and conservation work at Luxor and Medinet Habu temples, and he will also visit the restored Castle Carter - now the offices of the ARCE site management training program; projects of ARCE and the University of Memphis in the Valley of the Kings; and Karnak.

It's been an eventful season, and 'change' is definitely in the wind. On April 1st our antiquities colleagues and I were invited to attend a briefing at the Luxor Museum sponsored by the Ministry of Housing on plans for the development of



Dany, Saber, and Ali laying a foundation stone in the naos room.

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Luxor. The proposed plan (ten years in the making) is an attempt to address the needs of modern Luxor and the enormous growth of tourism, and it tries very hard to be sensitive to the antiquities sites in the area. Some of the points were very good: moving 200 tour boats to a new mooring area beyond the bridge WAY south of Luxor, and creating new suburbs of Luxor, also to the south. But some of the projects were surprising, such as the clearance and creation of a gigantic plaza in front of Karnak Temple (which involves the wholesale demolition of the Franco-Egyptian Center offices and their beautiful, Hassan-Fahty style residence along the Nile), and the proposed excavation of the entire Sphinx Road between Luxor Temple and Karnak to open it up to tourism (it's almost four kilometers long!). The President of the Luxor City Council, Dr. Samir Farag (soon to be Governor, when Luxor is made its own Governorate) arrived toward the end of the meeting to continue the briefing. A lively discussion ensued about the preservation of non-Pharaonic historic sites in Luxor, particularly those located over the Sphinx Road which are slated to be demolished: a medieval mosque; two churches, a neo-Egyptian style police station, and several 19th century public buildings, which are also part of the historic landscape of Luxor. The fact that the city is encouraging any kind of dialogue at all is a very positive thing, and this gives us some hope. But I suspect that there is a lot of talking ahead.

There is much more going on, but time and my need to return to the temple forbid more, for now. But before I close, I have some sad news. Our beloved Dr. Henri passed



Ellie pruning the roses at Chicago House.

away in Cairo at his home on February 25; he was 90. His family has donated his small library, with its concentration on the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt, to Chicago House. It arrived last week, and we will do a complete inventory and



Henri Riad holding the Maat Award presented to him by Suzanne Mubarak in 2002 for his service as Director of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

catalogue next season. We have decided to keep the collection together as the Henri Riad Memorial Library Collection near the alcove where he did most of his work. Henri was a beloved part of Chicago House since 1984, and he spent the better part of his time with us helping to organize and identify the extensive holdings of the Labib Habachi photographic archives housed in the Chicago House Photo Archives. Since Henri and Labib spent much of their careers working together, Henri was perfectly suited to this task, luckily for us, since Labib - who had a photographic memory - never labeled a single photograph! We are greatly saddened by Henri's passing, but those of us who knew and loved him will remember his dignity, generosity, and humor, and will forever hear his wonderful, throaty laugh echoing through the library and tea room. He was very happy at Chicago House, and referred to us as his 'second family.' Many of us will remember with particular pleasure the wonderful stories he used to tell about his adventures - and colleagues - in times long past. We will miss you, Henri.

But I also have some happy news. After a very long courtship, Medinet Habu conservators Adel Azziz and Nahed Samir were married on February 20 in a church ceremony in Luxor. We had a celebratory dinner in their honor at Chicago House last night where we wished the couple millions of years of happiness. We recently learned that there is a little conservator on the way, due next November, insha'allah! Alf mabruk to them all.

APRIL-MAY 2006



Medinet Habu from the Ptolemaic pylon. Same view as the frontispiece of the Medinet Habu IX publication.

APRIL - MAY

Chicago House closed its doors for the 2005-2006 season on April 15, and by April 16 the staff had all dispersed for home. Tina Di Cerbo finished the cleaning and mothballing of the Chicago House facility (for which we are, as always, eternally grateful) and departed on May 1, but she initiated the second phase of a major maintenance project before she left, the replacement of our crumbling concrete driveway. This project started last summer with the replacement of the front section of driveway as far as the Photo Archives around the corner from the artists' studios. This summer the rest of it will be done, and the present work involves breaking up and removal of the old, decayed surface under the watchful eyes of engineer Nashet and Safi's assistant, Samir Al-Guindy. When Tina returns next September the new concrete will be laid section by section under her watchful eye. This should take care of us for quite a while. During the field season most Epigraphic Survey staff members prepare work that they take back home for the summer months. For the artists, this is usually penciled drawings which can be inked anywhere or collated drawings for correcting; for the epigraphers, texts to be translated or researched, or publication work, which we are doing now. Brett McClain, who lives with his wife Karyn in Irvine, California when he is not at Chicago House, was with us in Chicago for a week (April 30 - May 5) working on the plate design and production of *Medinet Habu IX, The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple*

Part 1: the Sanctuary. We are very grateful to the OI Publications Office, in particular to Tom Urban, Leslie Schramer, and Lindsay DeCarlo for their invaluable assistance and guidance during this hair-raising process. Every time we do a publication, the technology has totally changed since we did the last one. Now everything is done digitally, which obliges us to learn totally new habits. Luckily the Publications Office crew is up to the challenge, and is making the whole process an enjoyable one. The OI is VERY LUCKY.

We had an excellent closing in Luxor, and got everything done we needed to (work tied up, reports generated and turned in, etc), but the last two weeks of the season were pretty full. I mentioned in my last month's report that the US Ambassador to Egypt Francis Ricciardone and his wife Dr. Marie Ricciardone were about to visit, his

first official visit since he took office. On April 6 they spent a whole day with us in Luxor being briefed on local preservation activities sponsored by USAID, Chicago House, and the American Research Center in Egypt. The Ambassador turned the trip into a press trip whose theme was antiquities preservation and it was most successful. We showed them our epigraphic and conservation work at Medinet Habu and Luxor Temples, the USAID-supported ground water lowering trenching at Luxor Temple, and we discussed a similar project USAID is considering for the west bank (not a moment too soon, I might add). Chicago House hosted a luncheon that day for the entire party (85 total!) at which the



Lotfi Hassan, Luxor Governor Dr. Samir Farag, US Ambassador Frank Ricciardone, Hany al-Miniawy, Michael Jones, Ray Johnson, Chicago House Residence Courtyard. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky.

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Governor of Luxor Dr. Samir Farag was also present, his first visit to Chicago House as well. He arrived a little early and suddenly appeared at my side while I was giving a library briefing to the Ambassador and the press, giving me quite a start! But the timing was perfect. We all had a good chat in the library about our preservation work, and then proceeded into the residence for lunch together.

During the Ambassador's visit he was briefed by the governor on plans for the huge new development initiative for Luxor designed to modernize the town and adjust to the increasing numbers of tourists. As I mentioned in my last report, the antiquities community was invited to a review of these plans by the Ministry of Housing at a special meeting in the Luxor Museum on April 1, and Dr. Samir kindly briefed me personally about the plans in more detail before I left. The archaeological community has urged him to include archaeological monitoring by the SCA in all areas of the development, and to move slowly, since the whole town is archaeologically sensitive and their plans are ambitious to say the least. On May 16th I returned to Egypt to continue the dialogue, and to meet with the ARCE site management training program group in Luxor which is formulating guidelines for all future site management throughout Egypt, including a thoughtful plan for improvements to the Medinet Habu site. I feel strongly that we need to support and encourage such efforts in any way we can. While in Luxor I learned that compromises had been made regarding some of the plans; the Karnak plan was modified to include a smaller area, and an attempt will be made to excavate and restore the ancient canal and pool in front of the temple, and the beautiful

gardens which originally lined the entire approach. The next Chicago House Bulletin will update you on many more of the changes taking place, and the compromises being made. It's always a balancing act, but change happens, even in Luxor now. The challenge is to ensure that those changes will benefit both the ancient cultural heritage sites of Luxor, and the modern population.

Once again let me thank all of you who have supported our preservation work in Luxor; we couldn't do any of it without you. If you would like to stop by and see our work first hand, please contact us in advance to determine the best time for all. Chicago House is open from October 15 until April 15 each year, and is closed Saturday afternoons and Sundays. To arrange a visit during the season, please contact the Oriental Institute Membership Office at 773-702-9513, or contact Epigraphic Survey Director Ray Johnson directly at: wr-johnson@uchicago.edu. Please see the back cover for our contact information in Egypt and Chicago.

All photographs, except where otherwise noted, are digital images taken by Ray Johnson.



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