
CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN

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THE CHICAGO HOUSE SEASON OCTOBER 2008 TO APRIL 2009: A SEASON DIARY

By W. Raymond Johnson, Field Director

The events of the Chicago House 2008–2009 season in Luxor are by now well known to our readers through our updates during the course of last winter. You all know that one of the challenges we faced was the Government of Egypt's expansion of the Corniche Boulevard into the Chicago House front property, and that after months of discussions the decision was made to reduce what was originally requested by almost half. By March the new wall dividing our front garden in half was finished, with our security and other concerns satisfied. I can tell you that the bougainvillea vines that we planted along the inside of the new wall are very happy in their new home.

Despite the distraction of the Corniche expansion, the archaeological work of last season was literally groundbreaking in every way. We returned to Khonsu Temple at Karnak to collaborate with the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) and the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) in a floor-restoration project designed to improve the accessibility of the temple. We knew that this project would be interesting. It has long been known that Ramesses III wanted his Khonsu Temple erected quickly, so his workers dismantled several temple complexes on the west bank — parts of Amenhotep III's mortuary temple, the mortuary temples of Horemheb and Amenhotep Son of Hapu, among others — and reused their blocks in the new construction. Our job was to do the epigraphic recording of the reused blocks in the foundations and flooring that would be made inaccessible later by the new sandstone-slab floor blocks. This was coordinated by senior epigrapher Brett McClain, assisted by epigraphers Jen Kimpton and Ginger Emery, epigraphic artist extraordinaire Krisztián Vértés, and photographer Yarko Kobylecky. Imagine our surprise when we found that the reused material was from another temple altogether! The evidence is still coming in, but it looks like we have an earlier Khonsu Temple dating to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. So far we have cartouches of Thutmose III, Thutmose IV, Ay, Horemheb, Sety I, Ramesses II, and Sety II. We will have much more to say about this work in our later reports, so stay tuned. Thanks to ARCE and in particular to ARCE director Gerry

Scott for supporting this extremely important documentation. No one had any idea how truly extraordinary the material would be.

The Medinet Habu work, supported by a grant from USAID, also broke new ground with the completion of the new blockyard storage area on the southern side of the precinct. Julia Schmied and Christian Greco supervised the tracking, cataloging, and moving with our workmen of 760 fragments from around the precinct into the new blockyard onto specially built damp-coursed platforms. There they were sorted by category and condition, and treated by the Medinet Habu conservation crew directed by Lotfi Hassan when necessary. The epigraphic art staff — Margaret De Jong, Sue Osgood, and (very welcome) new girl Keli Alberts — continued the recording of the bark sanctuary and ambulatory of the small Amun temple, but also started the drawing of the Twenty-first Dynasty Pinudjem marginal inscription that wraps around the outside of the temple, in an area of increasing salt decay; decidedly challenging.

At Luxor Temple the Italian conservators finished the cleaning of the painted frescos in the king's/emperor's chamber, after which Yarko finished the post-conservation photography. Thus was completed the Roman Wall Painting Conservation Project directed by Michael Jones and conservators Luigi Di Caesaris, Alberto Sucato, and Maria Cristina Tomassetti. A publication is now in the works. The blockyard open-air museum construction and chronological display of designated fragment groups — supported by the World Monuments Fund (a Robert Wilson Challenge to Conserve our Heritage grant) — was coordinated by Luxor Temple conservator Hiroko Kariya assisted by Tina Di Cerbo, Nan Ray, and our trusty workmen. New display platforms were constructed, educational signage composed, sandstone paving laid, and fragment groups assembled in their new locations. The first section of the chronological display of fragments and groups — from the Middle Kingdom through the Twentieth Dynasty — was mounted and set up with temporary signage... a taste of what is to come when it is finished in 2010. A section of Amenhotep III sun court eastern wall, northern end, in 109 fragments, was

2008–2009 CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN

partially rebuilt by Frank Helmholz and our workmen, and is also scheduled to be finished in 2010.

Finally, in July photo archivist Sue Lezon, Brett McClain, Ginger Emery, and I reviewed the final plate proofs for Medinet Habu IX, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part I: The Inner Sanctuaries* with Oriental Institute Publications Managing Editor Tom Urban and digital consultant Waseem Jafar. We all then spent most of August at Chicago Press printing the plate section, with results beyond our wildest expectations. Words cannot express how deeply satisfying it is to get to this point in our publication program, and how much we appreciate all of the assistance we have had with this project. As a result, Medinet Habu IX not only upholds our standards of excellence, but raises the bar considerably higher. Sincerest thanks to Tom Urban and Leslie Schramer for their patience and guidance through the production phase, to Sue Lezon and Waseem Jafar, whose efforts have insured the highest quality reproduction of the color and black-and-white photographs, and especially to Brett McClain, who coordinated every aspect of the publication production. Special thanks must also go to the gang at Chicago Press who allowed us to realize the excellence for which we have all aspired over the years, and to Margie Fisher who helped make it all happen. This publication is a monument to everyone who was involved in its production, and a testament to what is now possible.

I am particularly pleased that this volume, and everything that we have ever published, is now also available for free PDF download from the Oriental Institute Publications Web site:

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/>

(Click “Egypt” and all our titles will appear, for either purchase or free download). Bravo to the Oriental Institute — and to donors Lewis and Misty Gruber — for this generous, and again, groundbreaking program that now allows free and instantaneous access to all the data we have ever recorded. This has to be one of the most exiting chapters in the history of the Oriental Institute, and I have a feeling that James Henry Breasted would greatly approve.

Now ... in past Chicago House Bulletins we have occasionally featured portfolios of images in the center of the bulletin, to supplement the reports. This issue will be almost ALL illustrations. Our work in Luxor is rich with visual imagery, and it is always frustrating for me to be limited by what we can present in reports and bulletins. So this time I am presenting a rich feast of images that will, I believe, communicate to you, the reader, much better than words can describe, some of the richness and complexity of what we are experiencing here. Enjoy!



2008–2009 Chicago House Staff

CHICAGO HOUSE



Chicago House garden, new wall going up, December 12, 2008



The completed wall from outside



The completed wall from inside



The completed wall from above



Thank-you dinner for the workmen in the residence courtyard



Chicago House librarian Marie and library students



Anait Helmholz working in the Chicago House library

MEDINET HABU



The blockyard crew. Photo by Ellie Smith



Moving blocks in the blockyard: Said, Ahmed, Christian, Hassan, and Julia



The blockyard with roofing

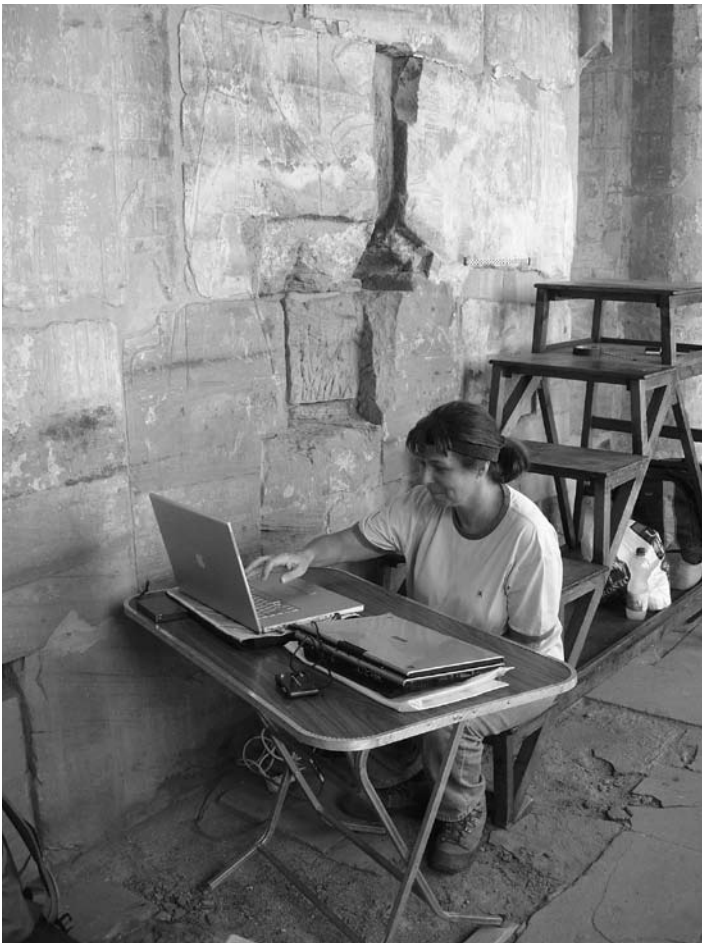


Julia taking measurements for the Medinet Habu blockyard database

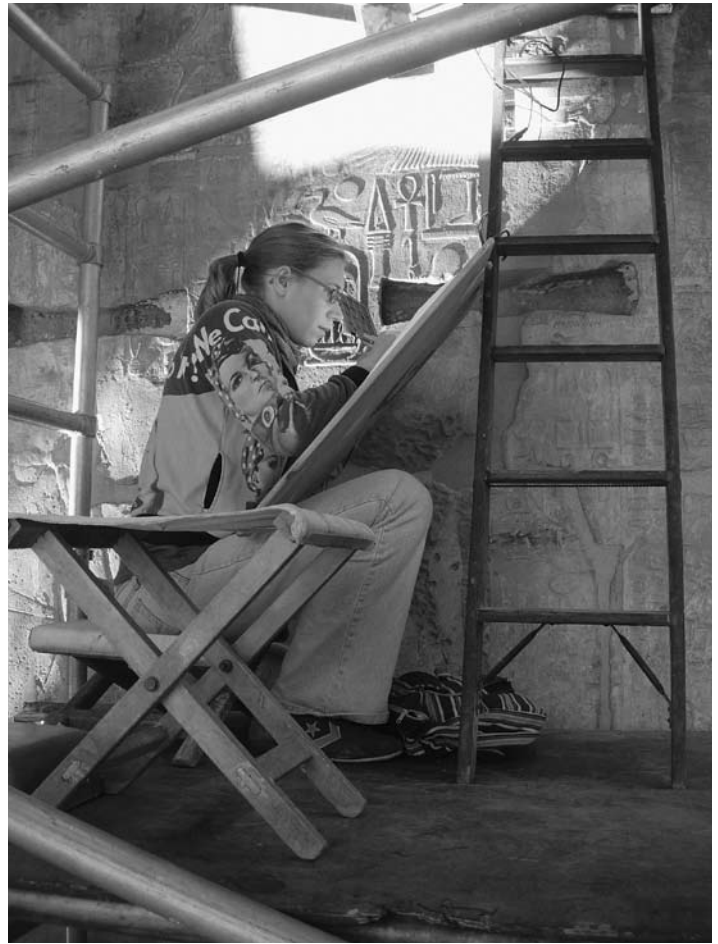


Blocks in the blockyard

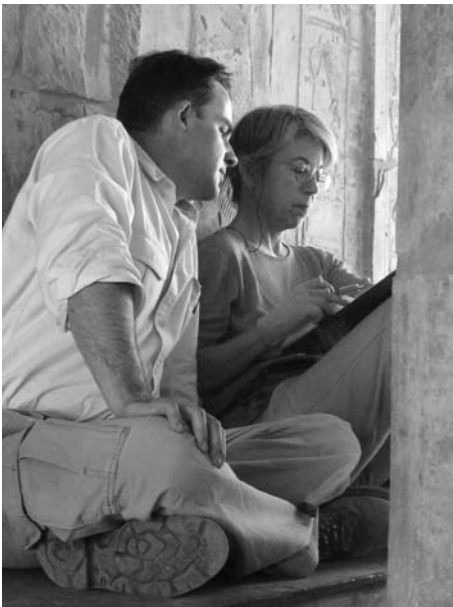
MEDINET HABU



Tina Di Cerbo documenting graffiti on her laptop



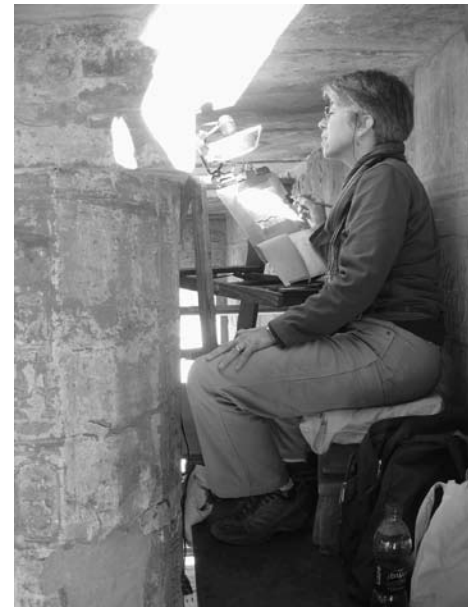
Keli Alberts at work



Brett McClain and Sue Osgood collating at an Akoris column. Photo by Margaret De Jong

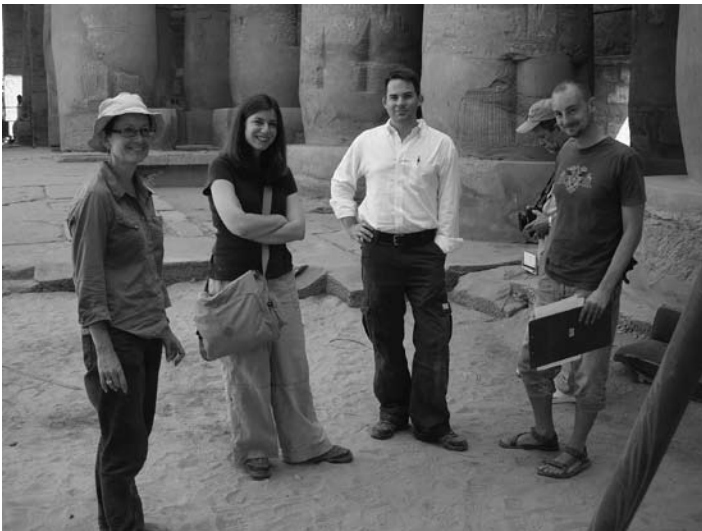


Margaret penciling the Pinudjem inscription at the small Amun temple

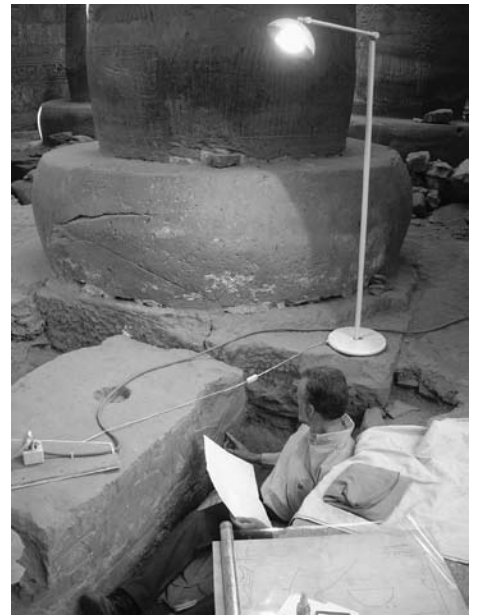


Sue penciling an Akoris column at the small Amun temple

KHONSU TEMPLE, KARNAK



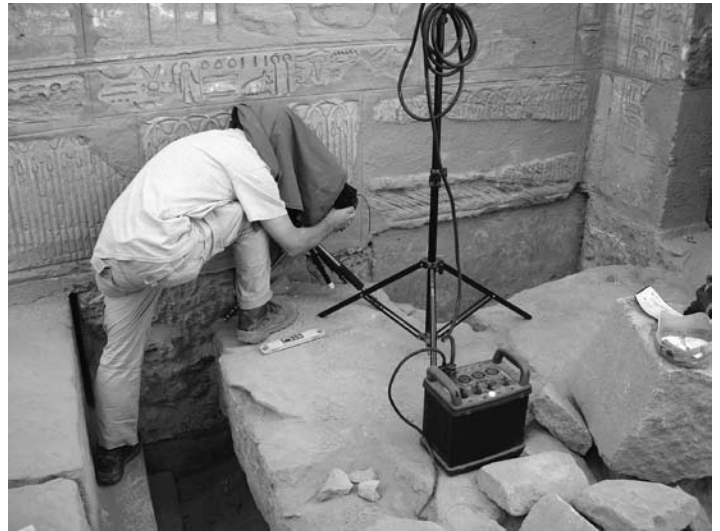
Khonsu Temple team members Pam, Jen, Brett, Yarko, and Krisztián



*Ray doing a director's check of collated tracing.
Photo by Krisztián Vértés*



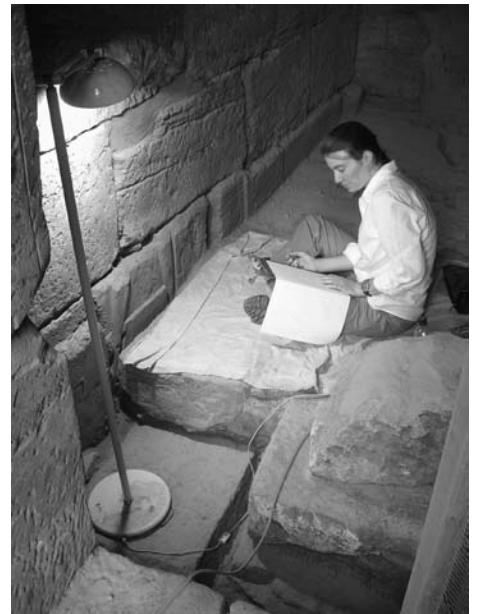
Inspector Ghada Ibrahim Fouad tracing a section of wall



Yarko photographing a wall



Krisztián Vértés tracing a block in the flooring of Khonsu Temple



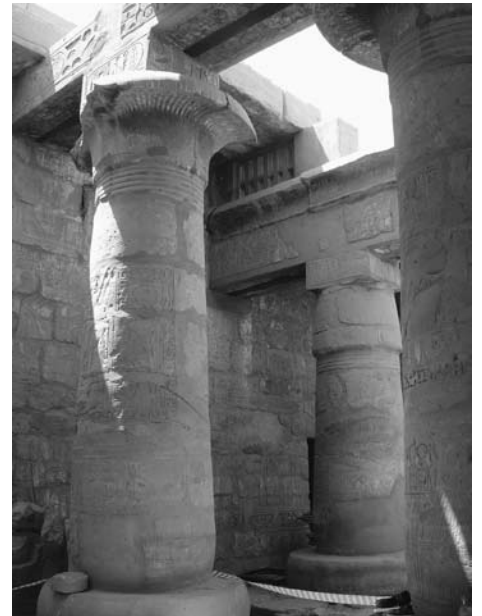
Ginger Emery collating

KHONSU TEMPLE, KARNAK



Brett, Jen, and Krisztián collating a reused threshold block

Brett collating a floor block



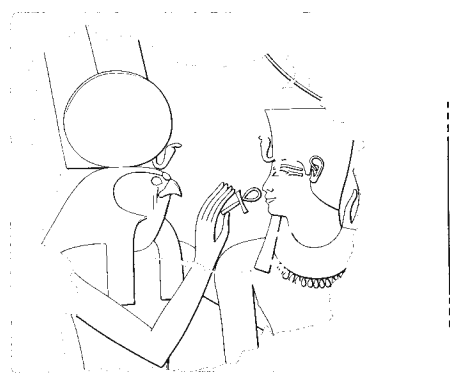
Karnak Temple Hypostyle Hall



Karnak Temple facade



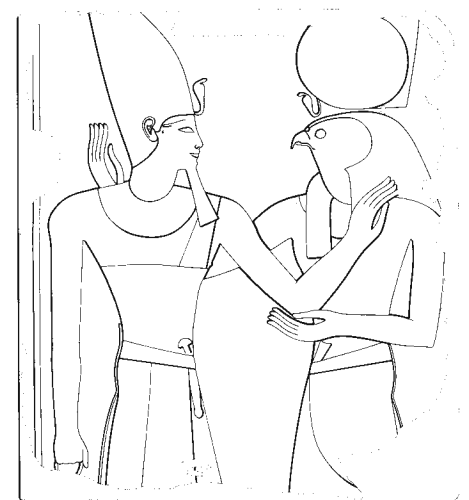
King offering to Khonsu



Khonsu Block 10, drawn by Krisztián Vértés



Krisztián's rolled drawing of Block 10



Khonsu Block 11, drawn by Krisztián Vértés

LUXOR TEMPLE, OPEN-AIR MUSEUM



The open-air museum, view to the south



The open-air museum, view to the north



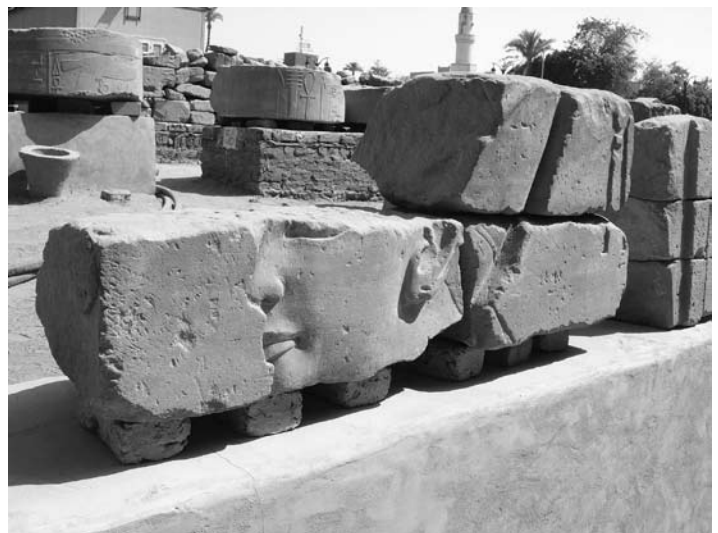
Hiroko preparing signage in the open-air museum



Amenhotep III block



Ptolemy II group



Ramesses III

LUXOR TEMPLE, OPEN-AIR MUSEUM



Hathor wall



Twenty-fifth Dynasty lioness group



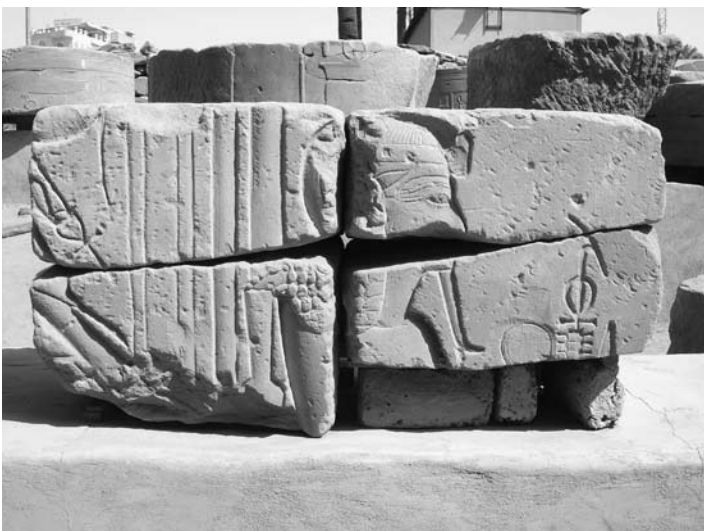
Detail of Nectanebo group



Cartouche of Ptolemy VI



Block of Sety I from the Colonnade Hall



Ramesses II



Akhenaten talatat block

LUXOR TEMPLE



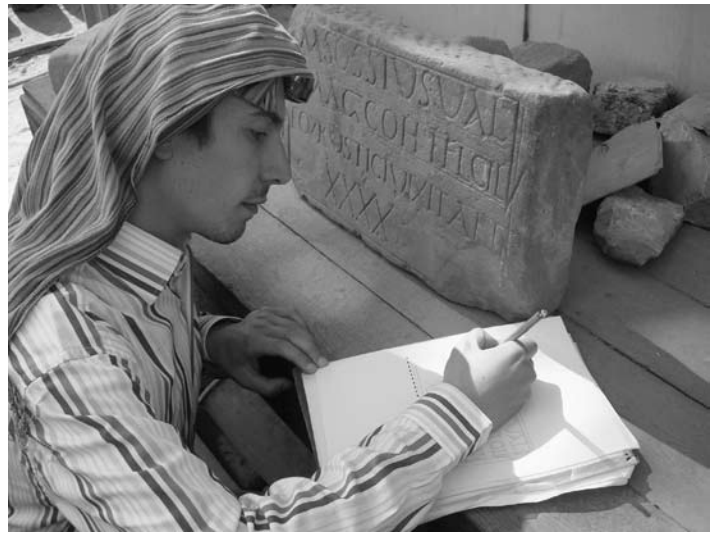
Luxor Temple and the Sphinx Road from the roof of the Emilio Hotel



Luxor Temple from the roof of the (now-demolished) New Winter Palace hotel



The Amenhotep III wall, looking north



Christian Greco collating a Roman grave marker



Frank, Hiroko, Mustafa, and Ali consulting at the Amenhotep III wall



Frank reviewing the new stone backing of the Amenhotep III wall

CHICAGO PRESS CORPORATION



The Chicago Press Corporation. Photo by Sue Lezon



Tom Urban, Oriental Institute Publications Managing Editor; Mitchell Harrison, President of Chicago Press; and Sue



Sue checking color plates at a lightbox



Ray checking a tritone photo plate. Photo by Sue Lezon



Brett and Sue at the lightbox



Brett, Sue, and Ginger ... What are they doing?!

CHICAGO PRESS CORPORATION



The press machine



Tritones coming off the press



Pressman William T. Chromzack



Lead Pressman Ronald A. Orr



Andy Renner of Chicago Press and the completed, packaged OIP 136



Brett, Ray, Ginger, Tom Urban, and the Chicago Press crew, August 19, 2009. Photo by Sue Lezon



Stacks of Medinet Habu IX plates



Karnak, December 21, 2008

Let me once again express my sincerest appreciation and thanks to the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities — and particularly to SCA Chairman and Deputy Minister of Culture, Dr. Zahi Hawass — for another extraordinarily productive collaboration this year. For all of you who support our preservation work in Luxor, please accept our heartfelt thanks. You are the best! Chicago House is open from October 15 to April 15 each year, closed Saturday afternoons and Sundays. If you are going to be in Luxor and would like to visit, please contact us ahead of time by calling the Oriental Institute Membership Office (773)-834-9777 or dropping me a line via my e-mail address: wr-johnson@uchicago.edu. Please see our contact information for Egypt and Chicago on the last page of this bulletin. Best, and once again, thanks to all!

*All photos by Ray Johnson
unless otherwise indicated*

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The Epigraphic Survey home page is located at:
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