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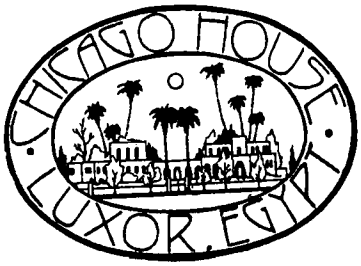

CHICAGO HOUSE BULLETIN

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THE 1989-1990 SEASON AT CHICAGO HOUSE

By Peter F. Dorman, Field Director

After precisely six months in the field, on April 15, 1990, the Epigraphic Survey completed its sixty-sixth season in Luxor. Much of our effort focused on the final corrections to the drawings of the great riverine procession of Opet, to which artists Carol Meyer and Sue Osgood devoted much of their time. One of the challenges presented by the Colonnade Hall has been the recording of the huge offering scenes on the colossal columns, which stand 20m high. Corrected collations were penciled this year on four of the offering scenes, particularly by Vivienne Groves, perched high on the aluminum scaffold that many of our *Bulletin* readers saw this year in the temple. Other portions of the Hall were documented by Tina Di Cerbo: the north jamb of the Ptolemaic gateway leading into the Hall from the Ramesside court; the west thickness of the north portal; and two of the three statues still in situ at the north end of the Hall. In the course of the season, epigraphers Richard Jasnow and John Darnell and I undertook collations on forty-one drawings, conferring with the artists at the wall for points in disagreement. Of all the Colonnade Hall drawings, sixty-three were penciled, inked, or collated this season; and nineteen were given final director's approval.

In a continuing study of the shattered Luxor Temple blocks recovered in recent excavations, senior artist Ray Johnson registered an additional 152 fragments of decorated relief that belong to the Colonnade Hall, the sun court of Amenhotep III, or the talatat groups reused by Tutankhamun and Ay. All of these were photographed by Danny Lanka in the three blockyards around Luxor Temple, in addition to 275 other fragments identified in previous years, for a total of 427. The reconstruction of the missing upper registers of the Colonnade Hall will remain one of our major commitments.

Planning for forthcoming years of work involved a hard look at our next project: the small temple of Amun, built by Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III at Medinet Habu. At the beginning of the season, photographers Sue Lezon and Danny Lanka completed the final transparencies required for the forthcoming color publication of the painted chapels in the temple, to be produced as a generous gift to Chicago House by Walter Tower of Nimrod Press in Boston. We also discovered that much of the old existing photography of the exterior of the small temple is either inappropriate for artists' enlargements, poorly lighted, or incomplete in its coverage—and these views will have to be retaken next season.

Under the direction of Richard Jasnow, the library acquired 253 new books and offprints, bringing the accession registry to 15,773. Ellie Smith spent six weeks taking a complete inventory of our major shelf holdings, updating and verifying the shelf list, and xeroxing the result. This will

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THE TUTANKHAMUN TALATAT

By Raymond Johnson, Senior Artist

Back in 1985 I honestly thought we were in the final stages of the Luxor Temple Fragment Project. For years the Survey had been identifying stone fragments that belonged originally to the great Hall. All of these stones had been quarried from the Colonnade Hall in the medieval period for house foundations and excavated by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of these fragments were now waiting to be moved to our holding area at the back of the temple for photography and eventual drawing, but the task of recognizing them by style and content was essentially over. In all, we could securely identify over two thousand fragments as belonging to the Colonnade Hall, and a thousand of them joined together to form sections of over two dozen recognizable scenes, adding significantly to our understanding of the Hall's missing upper register decoration. All that remained was to tie up a few loose ends and the fragment analysis would be complete.

Among the "loose ends" in our blockyard was a group of small decorated blocks that were identical in style to those from the Colonnade Hall, some even inscribed with Tutankhamun's name, but that simply did not want to fit into the decorative scheme we had established. Some had details of great river processions depicting royal and divine barges on the Nile, some showed parts of offering scenes, others depicted groups of shaven headed priests carrying on their shoulders the model boats in which the god Amun and his divine family traveled in and out of their temples. A few even seemed to contain elements of an elaborate battle scene. The Survey had collected almost thirty of these blocks in years past, and now we were going to have to make sense of them.

You can imagine my surprise when I suddenly realized that the blocks were all roughly the same small dimensions, very similar in size to the blocks—called *talatat*—Akhenaton had used earlier at Karnak for the construction of his Aton temples. But fully a quarter of them had additional decoration in sunk relief, often upside down, on other sides. This decoration, containing Aton rays, piles of offerings, and parts of the names of the Aton and Akhenaton's family, was unquestionably from the time of Akhenaton, which meant that these blocks were indeed talatat. What was Tutankhamun decoration doing on the backs and sides of upside-down Akhenaton blocks?

It was obvious that we had inadvertently collected fragments of another temple of Tutankhamun's altogether, built of blocks quarried from one of Akhenaton's Aton temples at Karnak. The later pharaoh Horemhab is generally credited with that act, since his pylons at Karnak are filled with blocks from Akhenaton's dismantled temples—and Tutankhamun's as well. Suddenly the history of this period didn't seem quite so clearcut, and I knew we were in for an interesting time.

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BALLOON OVER LUXOR

Carol Meyer, Artist

When the first hot air balloon drifted over Chicago House in the fall of 1988, it created a sensation. Dogs barked, children waved, artists and epigraphers dropped their pens, dashed for cameras, and raced to the roof to shoot the balloon as it sailed over the gardens towards town. *How* did they get security clearance for *that*? Obviously they did it somehow, and now two balloons regularly grace the morning skies.

A double accident permitted two of the Chicago House staff to take a balloon ride. First, Celia and Rudy von Bernuth, who won a balloon ride as a door prize on the Friends of Chicago House tour, were prevented from flying as scheduled due to bad winds, and they donated their trips to Chicago House. Second, an in-house drawing of names gave the rides (and a fair amount of chaff) to Sue Osgood and myself. After that it was something of an anti-climax as we stood, cameras in hand, out at the gate at 5 A.M.—every morning until weather conditions were favorable.

Finally one morning the trip is not cancelled, and passengers, crew, and balloon captains are shuttled to the West Bank and the new rest house at the entrance to the Valley of the Kings. Sipping orange juice and munching croissants, we can watch the balloons literally unfolding. The crews spread great pastel sheets on the asphalt parking lot and then unroll the blue balloon bags. Wicker gondolas something like laundry baskets are unloaded from the trucks and clipped to the balloon bags. Over the baskets are the steel burners for the flames that will blast hot air into the balloons. First, however, large fans are directed at the mouth of a balloon to blow it open. Then a balloon captain turns on the burners, directing two roaring flames into the bag, crews pull lines aside, adjust fans, and rapidly the bag fills. The golden face of Tutankhamun rises sideways from the ground. The balloon rounds out and the basket and burner—up to now lying perforce on their sides—tilt towards vertical, the captain rolling back with the basket rim and blasting the flames upwards now. The second balloon fills and the passengers are distributed, four to one basket, five in ours. The balloon captain gives us basic instructions, hold on to the ropes on landing, DON'T leave the basket until he says it's all right, and don't drop your cameras. He seems to be serious when he says he's seen a quarter of a million dollars lost in cameras.

One minute we are on the ground with the crews tugging at the lines, and the next we are airborne. Double blasts of flame carry us up, the second balloon already distant towards the cliffs. The burners cut off, and it is suddenly quiet, still early morning over the West Bank. A little haze softens the mountains on the horizon, the Nile glitters, and shadows throw the wadis below into relief. The Western Valley with the tomb of Amenhotep III lies just over there, and ahead the Valley of the Kings opens up.

Something there is that says balloons must be gaudy, and our blue and gold ones are sedate by comparison to some. These balloons definitely use high-tech materials. The plastic-coated bags are very tough, and the fabric near the mouth of the balloon has to be non-inflammable as well. A series of vents on the side of the bag and lines control the release of hot air for ascent or descent and also help to keep the balloon from spinning. The light, strong steel gas burner is a far cry from Mongolfier's cast iron wood-burning stove under a papier mâché balloon.

The winds are not cooperating. Our captain, Bill Spreadbury, tries raising the balloon to catch a wind that will carry us south over the row of mortuary temples and other ruins. He allows the balloon to sink, in hopes of finding a lower current blowing south, but without luck. We drift over the Valley of the Kings and can just see the workmen's camp on the far ridge; Deir el-Medina is hidden. Clearing the rim of the valley, the Asasif

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1989-1990 Season *(continued from p. 1)*

allow us to computerize the library, both to make our research collection far more accessible to scholars, and to integrate our holdings with that of the Oriental Institute.

Rita Joyce and Peter Piccione handled the daunting administrative tasks of Chicago House, from making local shopping trips and greeting daily visitors (1,066 signed our guest book this year) to handling the monthly payroll and dispensing medication to our workmen. Kathy Dorman skillfully handled the daily kitchen and household routine at Chicago House, in addition to coordinating special events such as tour receptions and meals for the March FOCH tour.

The award from the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust to preserve and catalogue our extensive photographic archives has already borne fruit. Sue Lezon initiated the project this season with the assistance of Di Grodzins and Ellie Smith. Di completed a survey of all 15,000 negatives, noted their condition, and pulled those in need of immediate duplication, while Ellie transferred hundreds of negatives into archival envelopes and boxes for safe storage.

Jill Carlotta Maher continued to spearhead our fundraising efforts, and we completed a most satisfactory year. In addition to the Getty and Xerox grants, British Petroleum gave a generous sum of money as well as some badly needed office furniture, and British Airways kindly offered the Survey staff inexpensive tickets to Egypt. Our photographers took great pleasure in modernizing the photo studio with new equipment given by the Amoco Foundation, including a new print enlarger and an archival print washer, which will save hours of toilsome darkroom time.

Visitors to Chicago House kept streaming in: this season thirty-one library tours were given to organized groups, and seven of these were followed by courtyard receptions to meet the entire Chicago House staff. Forty-seven other tours were given to individuals, often Oriental Institute members interested in seeing our headquarters and stopping by for afternoon tea. Among the eminent visitors we hosted in Luxor this year were Prime Minister Zaid el-Rifai of Jordan and, at the very end of our season, a Congressional party of five U.S. Senators and their wives, headed by Sen. and Mrs. Robert Dole. For those of our readers who have never visited Chicago House: please come, but do let us know in advance; for those of you who have already seen where we work and live, we look forward to having you all back some day—but not all at once! **END**

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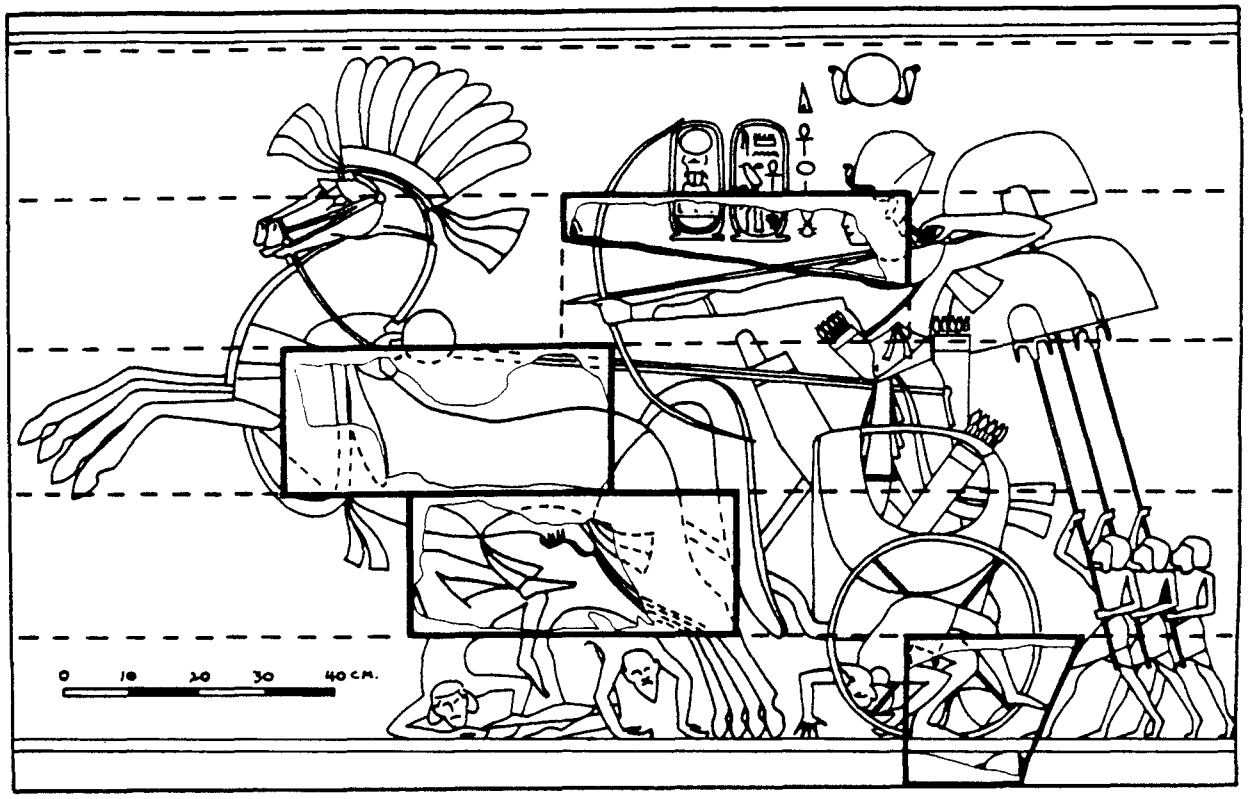

Reconstruction of Tutankhamun Battle Relief

Tut Talatat *(continued from p. 1)*

Since then, we have identified fifty more of these blocks in the piles around Luxor Temple, and over a hundred more in talatat magazines at Karnak, making a total of more than two hundred altogether. We now know that the small blocks originally came from a temple of Tutankhamun and his successor Ay which was called the "Mansion of Nebkheprura (Tutankhamun) in Thebes." They join large blocks excavated years ago in Horemhab's Second Pylon at Karnak, currently being recorded for publication by our colleague Marc Gabolde from the Karnak Franco-Egyptian Center. Marc had already identified one reused talatat from the monument, and was as surprised as we were (and as delighted) to find out there were over two hundred more. The reused talatat will now be included in his publication of this monument in a collaborative effort between the Epigraphic Survey and the Franco-Egyptian Center.

The decoration of some of the Tutankhamun talatat turned out to be as unexpected and interesting as the monument itself. The Asiatic battle scenc blocks in particular, almost forty small blocks combined with three large blocks, were especially intriguing to me, since they displayed features that were supposed to have originated much later, during the Ramesside period. Preserved were clusters of blocks from four episodes of an elaborate battle narrative: the main battle; the presentation of prisoners, booty, and severed hands to the king after the battle; the return trip home by royal barge (with a captive Syrian actually suspended in a cage from the sailyard); and the presentation of prisoners and booty to Amun by the king.

Episodic storytelling is very common in the battle reliefs of Seti I, Ramesses II, and Ramesses III, which the Epigraphic Survey has helped to record in the past. It has always been the assumption that this type of narrative was "invented" during the reign of Seti I, reflecting the state of unrest in Egypt's border territories at that time. But the Tutankhamun battle blocks tell us that the great battle narrative tradition began much earlier than we thought.

One of the most exciting groups to come together was from the main battle scene. Four blocks provided major details of the central figure of the king in his battle chariot, preserving even part of the face and name of Tutankhamun (see illustration). Tutankhamun's presence in the midst of this very elaborate narrative (and in a corresponding scene depicting a Nubian campaign) leads one to suspect that the young man may have been a more active and energetic pharaoh than has previously been assumed. It is even well within the realm of probability that the campaign depicted in the battle reliefs was an historical event which marked the first tentative clash between Egypt and the Hittite empire, as some contemporary written records suggest. Perhaps we'll know for sure someday.

So instead of finishing up the Tutankhamun fragment work, I quite unintentionally doubled it, and the task will continue for some years. But for an Egyptologist, unexpected material like this is a gold mine for the information it can impart. Combined with the Epigraphic Survey's work with the Tutankhamun reliefs in the Colonnade Hall, which deals with the religious role o f the king, the information we are gleaning from the Tutankhamun talatat is allowing us a broader, and richer view of this king and the complex time in which he lived. **END**

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Balloon *(continued from p. 2)*
valley comes into view and the approaches to Deir el-Bahri, but not Hatshepsut's temple itself. Hazily we can pick out the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu, but there is no chance of aerial shots over Malkata, Amenhotep III's palace, stretching far to the south. Square mud brick blocks of houses are stacked up on the hillsides and down into the green cultivated land. The Seti I temple at Gurna is so big I have to point it out with a whole series of reference points.

Then we give up on antiquities and just drift north in the morning sunshine, over the Nile, over dense palm groves, low over farmers, stolid water buffalo, and racing children. We are flying over inner courtyards and women making bread, but they don't seem to mind. Catching a drift of wind, we skim the islands in the river, thick and reedy now after several years of low Niles. Water birds are dense, and grudgingly flap aside to let us pass. We skim grass tops and dip a corner of the basket into the Nile, and then with a roar ascend again. Once, however, we don't lift. The water sieves through the basket, rises an inch at Sue's end, rises and keeps rising until we're all bracing against the sides of the basket and calculating the distance to the closest island. We're too deep, but some strong blasts with both burners lift us at last, trailing sparkling drops long after.

The winds are still shifty, so we miss our first landing on the West Bank. Radios crackle and we watch the van and truck drive off. We circle the scenery for another half hour or so and brush a couple of palm trees to land in a cut sugar cane field, much to the entertainment of the cane-cutters. Captain Bill is right: it does take a while for the balloon and basket to settle to earth again and deflate sufficiently to make the basket unruly enough to clamber out of. The crew is there, grabbing ropes, unhooking the basket and burners, methodically pushing the remaining air out of the balloon.

Across some burned-over fields, under palm trees and near a road, breakfast is ready for us. Yes, there is smoked salmon, but no, no champagne. Who needs it after flying high in a beautiful blue balloon? **END**

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