THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

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MEDINET HABU—VOLUME III

THE CALENDAR, THE “SLAUGHTER-HOUSE,” AND MINOR RECORDS OF RAMSES III
THE VULTURE GODDESS
DETAILS FROM SCENE SHOWN ON PLATE 175
THE CALENDAR, THE "SLAUGHTERHOUSE," AND MINOR RECORDS OF RAMSES III

BY

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Internet publication of this work was made possible with the generous support of Misty and Lewis Gruber

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO · ILLINOIS
The great calendar inscription of Ramses III occupies most of the outer face of the south wall of his mortuary temple at Medinet Habu. Measured in number of lines, it is the longest Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription extant. It is at the same time the most complete surviving temple calendar and furnishes a large variety of interesting problems to the student of ancient Egyptian life and institutions. It is therefore strange that so little attention has been paid to the document and that no one, since Duenmichen's day, has made it the subject of special study. The material of the Calendar is carefully organized and arranged and, in the present form, is obviously an inheritance of the Twentieth Dynasty from earlier days. We know that it was drawn in large part verbatim from the similar calendar that was once inscribed on the south wall of Ramses II's temple near by, numerous fragments of which have survived on building material from the Rameseum re-used in late structures at Medinet Habu.

When Champollion gathered the material for his publications in 1829, the Medinet Habu Calendar was only partly exposed to view. The lower half or two-thirds of the wall was completely covered with débris from the mud-brick buildings of the Coptic town of Jeme. The rear of the temple was entirely buried, and the wall between the pylons was heaped high with earth. Champollion did nothing in the way of clearing the wall, but he copied almost all the perpendicular lines of inscription, beginning with line 553, the Coronation Feast, as far eastward as the second pylon. His copies cover the upper portions of the lines as far as about half the height of the wall, or, rather, of that portion occupied by the Calendar. Below that everything was hidden from him. The same circumstances account for his not having copied anything before line 553.

In 1855 Greene cleared the inscription completely, beginning his excavation at the second pylon and continuing westward for a distance of 83.60 meters. He too published the perpendicular lines of inscription, beginning with lines 559–60, the Feast of the Valley, but omitting the monthly feasts, as far eastward as the second pylon. His copies are remarkably accurate. Apparently he did not realize exactly what was the nature of the omitted sections, for he states on his page 6: "Nous trouvons d’abord un texte dédicatoire, malheureusement incomplet, se rapportant à certains dons faits par le roi pour la célébration des fêtes, dons auxquels l’inscription établit un droit en faveur des prêtres du temple." He goes on to say that these feasts were founded to celebrate Ramses III's victories.

In 1864 Duenmichen copied all of the Calendar then exposed to view—the lists of offerings which had been omitted by his predecessors, as well as the perpendicular lines with the names and dates of feasts. His copy begins with List 6, line 219, and ends with List 58, line 1329. He thus includes not quite all the area laid bare by Greene. His work was followed by a number of studies of special parts of the document or of points raised by it. His copy is remarkably accurate on the whole, though he seems to have made some restorations without indicating that the original had been too greatly injured at such points to be read.

In 1896/97 Daressy cleared the western extremity of the temple and laid bare the beginning of the Calendar with the long inscription containing the address of Ramses III to Amon. This address and selections from Sections 3–8 he published. Sections 37–40, which lie between the pylons, have not herefore been published.

A glance at Figure 2 of this volume will show the arrangement of the Calendar on the temple wall. This latter is considerably higher at its eastern end, by the second pylon, than it is at the western extremity. This difference in height, characteristic of the temples along the edge of the cultivation in the Theban necropolis, arises from the fact that the structure is built on slanting ground, so that, while the base of the wall sinks to a succession of lower levels as it approaches the front of the building, the top of the wall correspondingly rises toward the same direction. On this wall surface the Egyptian draftsman carried forward from the rear (western) end as far eastward as the second pylon a long rectangle, the height of which was approximately the maximum obtainable at the western, or lower, extremity after the inevitable line of inscription in large hieroglyphs had been allowed for at the top just below the cornice. As this arrangement left much empty space above and below the rectangle, increasing in amount as the latter approached the second pylon, the artist filled in this vacant area by other inscriptions or reliefs until the entire wall above the socle was covered with his work, in conformity with true Egyptian usage. The long rectangle thus obtained and neatly set off upon the wall was devoted to the Calendar throughout its entire length. Two sections were later added between the two pylons in areas determined as to size and location by the relation of the " palace" to the wall of the temple at this point. The Calendar is organized simply and logically. It is composed of a series of lists of temple offerings, each prefaced by a statement of the occasion on which the offerings were to be employed, the recipient or recipients of the offerings, and, in the case of either individual lists or groups of lists, the sources from which they were derived. The lists fall into two main groups: (1) new endowments instituted by Ramses III himself, (2) old endowments established by former kings and merely renewed by the Pharaoh. This same distinction between

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1 Durenriet in Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes XIX (1897) 15-17.
2 Other writers have at times discussed special points connected with the Calendar. References to their works will be found in the text volume to follow this folio.
3 The area occupied by the Calendar is not a true rectangle, but is slightly wider at the eastern end than at the western. Accordingly, while the early lines (toward the west end) contain an average of 31 horizontal lines per section, the later sections run to 41 lines, although, as these lines are closer together, the west end of the rectangle is more than three-fourths as high as the east end.
tween old and new endowments is made in the great Papyrus Harris, although the feasts and offerings designated in the papyrus as the king's new creations are different from those that are so designated at Medinet Habu. The two divisions are separated by a relief representing Ramses III addressing the Theban Triad, doubtless on the subject of his renewal of the old endowments.

In laying out the long rectangle for the reception of his material, the Egyptian draftsman first subdivided it into some thirty-six smaller rectangles, set off from each other in most instances by two parallel lines running from top to bottom of the area. These subdivisions we have denominated "sections" and have so designated them on the plates. The two additional areas of calendar inscription located between the pylons were each similarly subdivided into two sections, making a total of forty sections for the entire Calendar. Section 1 is devoted to an introductory relief showing the Pharaoh offering to the Theban Triad and Maat, while at the same time he addresses Amon on the subject of his benefactions to the god. This address occupies Section 2. Sections 3-8 are then devoted to Ramses III's new endowments, Section 9 to the relief introducing the renewal of former offerings, and Sections 10-40 to the old endowments provided by former kings and now confirmed by Ramses III.

With the exception of Sections 1, 2, and 9—those that are devoted to the two reliefs and the king's address to Amon—the sections of the Calendar are arranged on the same general plan. They contain the lists of feasts to be celebrated in the temple and of the offerings provided for each occasion. These lists we have numbered consecutively on the plates from 1 to 67. In certain cases, as, for instance, in that of the Feast of Opet, the Egyptian scribe gave in detail the offerings for only the first five days of the feast, omitting in large part the detailed list of offerings for the remaining nineteen days. Under these circumstances we have numbered each of the lists of the first five days separately, have grouped the sixth to the eighth day in one list (for reasons which will be apparent on consideration of Plate 156), and have included the remaining sixteen days of the feast under a single list number. Lists 60, 61, and 67 also contain the records of more than one actual feast day each, though in every instance where there has been a grouping of more than one day under a single list number, the provision for only one feast has been included. Our object has been to furnish a means of ready reference rather than to number each separate feast day. There are thus sixty-seven lists on the plates.

While there are sixty-seven lists numbered, there are only thirty-five annual feasts mentioned by name; and, if the ten Sokar feasts (Lists 42-51), which extend from the 21st to the 30th of the fourth month, be regarded as really constituting only one feast, of ten days' duration, the number of annual feasts listed in the Calendar is reduced to twenty-six. The actual number of days occupied by these annual feasts, exclusive of special feasts of victory, is, according to the Calendar, sixty-nine, the earliest being the Feast of the Rising of Sothis on the first day of the first month of the year, New Year's Day, and the last being the Feast of the Valley, which occurred in the second month of the third season, the tenth month of the year, "whenever the new moon brings it," that is, on the day of the appearance of the new moon.

The number of days included between these termini is therefore two hundred and seventy plus, according to the day of the month on which the Feast of the Valley occurred. If we include among the annual feasts that which Ramses III established in celebration of his victory over some unidentified foe on the 16th day of the third month of the third season, the eleventh month of the year (List 5), the actual period covered by the annual feasts of the Calendar is three hundred and sixteen days. Dr. Schott has called my attention to a record, now destroyed, which Champollion copied from a Theban tomb, in which the Theban feasts are given as fifty-nine in number. Moreover, relatively few feasts seem to be mentioned elsewhere that are not included in the Calendar. It would seem that, in spite of the absence of any mention of an annual feast other than that of the unidentified victory, falling within the last two months of the year, the Medinet Habu Calendar as it now stands is fairly complete.

The actual number of feasts is about the same for the first two seasons of the year, the first eight months. There are nine annual feasts listed for each season, exclusive of the Feast of Victory over the Meshwesh which was newly inserted in the Calendar by Ramses III. For the next two months there are six feasts, again exclusive of a feast of victory created by the Pharaoh. For the last two months of the year there are no feasts other than the feast of victory over an unnamed foe. There seems, then, a strange hiatus of two months in the annual feasts, although, as indicated above, there seem to be practically no feasts mentioned elsewhere that fall within this period.

The Calendar provided not only for the annual feasts, but, in Lists 7–15, for the regular monthly feasts, the "Feasts of the Sky" as the Egyptian termed them. Each of these is introduced by the same formula: "Every feast day of the 29th of the month which shall occur," "Every feast day of the Coming Forth of Min (the 30th of the month) which shall occur," etc. There are eight of these monthly feasts listed in the Calendar. The supplies provided for the offerings for two of the eight are twice as large as those for any of the remaining six feast days, indicating, apparently, a greater regard for these two particular days, the first and the sixth of the month.

In addition to the supplies for the monthly and the annual feasts, the Calendar provided for the regular daily offerings (List 6). This list included supplies for the five intercalary days, the "days upon the year." In Lists 1 and 2 we have further new endowments of the Pharaoh for the regular daily evening and morning offerings, there apparently being no new endowments for the monthly and annual feasts other than the Feast of the Valley (Lists 3 and 4) and the special feasts of victory. Lists 16-18 provide for miscellaneous daily or monthly supplies to be furnished the temple throughout the year, partly for the offerings to the Amon-standards of the king and partly for the general use of the temple.

Each of the regular lists of the Calendar falls into four parts. First is the "title," a column or two of text giving the date and name of the feast, the recipient of the offerings, and the source of supply from which the offerings were to be drawn. This last information may be given for a group of feasts, in which case it is omitted from the individual titles of the group. After the title come some lines written horizontally. These contain first a list of foods prepared by

* Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt IV (Chicago, 1906) §§ 236-37.
* Champollion, op. cit. I 512.
cooking and in which grain is used in the preparation. As the items in this portion of the list are measured by the number that are to be prepared by cooking from a given quantity of grain, the Egyptian word *pfrw*, "cooked (food)," has been taken as the keyword, and this part of each list will be spoken of as the "*pfrw* items." Next follow two or more lines giving the totals, both of units of cooked food and of units of grain used in the preparation of the food, as found in the *pfrw* items. This portion of each list we have denominated the "*pfrw* totals." After the *pfrw* totals comes a list of miscellaneous offerings: food, drink, incense, charcoal, and other objects. Some of these were undoubtedly cooked before being presented to the god, but in their preparation grain was not used. Other objects in this list were used without cooking. This portion of each list we have termed the "miscellaneous items." Each list therefore contains the following:

1. title
2. *pfrw* items
3. *pfrw* totals
4. miscellaneous items.

In future editorial discussions of the Calendar the terms here given will be used.

The most difficult section of the Calendar was that containing the palmseeds reproduced on Plate 162. The results of our efforts to disentangle the two inscriptions, especially in the case of the numbers in the second and fifth columns of the *pfrw* items, have been unsatisfactory. In the case of List 52, the first one carved, the latter part of the *pfrw* items and all of the remainder of the list were erased from the wall by rubbing down the surface of the stone. The earlier part of the *pfrw* items was obliterated by the use of plaster. At this particular part of the wall some later, probably Coptic, plaster and other substances have intruded into the problem, and it is almost impossible to determine in some cases which signs belong entirely to either the earlier or the later list and which signs belong to both lists. Probably no altogether satisfactory conclusion can be reached.

The Medinet Habu Calendar is certainly in large part a copy of the calendar that once occupied a part or all of the south wall of the Ramesseum, just north of Ramses III's temple. In Ptolemaic days the Ramesseum was a ruin and was used extensively as a source of building material. The late additions to the little Eighteenth Dynasty temple at Medinet Habu are largely built from stone derived from Ramses II's temple. These blocks were turned face inward, or at least the Ramesiid inscriptions were covered by brick walls. These brick walls have long since disappeared, and today the fragments of the reliefs and inscriptions of Ramses II are plainly to be seen. In 1881 Duemichen published thirty of these Ramesseum fragments. The Medinet Habu version reached the second pylon. Yet a glance at Plate 190, where the Ramesseum blocks have been outlined on a drawing of the Medinet Habu Calendar, will show that between Sections 10 and 27 the arrangement of the two inscriptions on the walls of their respective temples was identical, with the same number of lines in each section, corresponding lines containing the same items, belonging to the same lists. With Section 28, however, we begin to find fewer lines per section in the Medinet Habu inscription than in that of the Ramesseum. This difference is due to the fact that the doorway into the second court of Ramses III's temple intrudes into the area devoted to the Calendar and thus forced a slight readjustment of the remainder of the lists. The Ramesseum blocks extend only through Section 34, so that we cannot determine whether the two inscriptions again coincided before the Medinet Habu version reached the second pylon.

While the Medinet Habu scribes copied the earlier calendar, even to its arrangement on the wall of the temple, they modified the forms of the signs in accordance with the calligraphy of their own day. Ramses III's inscription is distinctly of the Twentieth Dynasty, with all the deterioration of the signs characteristic of the period. This later copy is slovenly and unpleasing in comparison to the Ramesseum style. The lines seem to be more uneven in the spacing of the signs, are frequently oblique instead of horizontal, and are spaced unequally with reference to one another. In some places the Ramesseum blocks have enabled us to restore missing words or signs in the Medinet Habu inscription with certainty. Such restorations are indicated on the plates by the letter R.

Besides the Calendar we have included in this volume the two rooms, Nos. 5 and 6 of the plan reproduced in Volume I, which have been denominated the "Slaughterhouse." Whether the animals provided for the daily and periodic offerings were actually slaughtered in these rooms we cannot say. The scene reproduced on Plate 173 would suggest that such was the case. However, even Room 5, though it is much the larger of the two, is relatively small, and one can hardly believe that the live animals—the stall-fed oxen, orixes, ibexes, and other animals—were led through the temple to what would have been a relatively inconvenient place and there dispatched." Is it not more likely that the carcasses were here cut up for the offering-tables and prepared by the temple attendants to be handed over to the priests for presentation to the gods? Room 5 seems to have been roofed only in part, which fact might be taken to support the idea that the actual slaughtering was done here, in which case both light and ventilation would be much needed. The reliefs giving the preparation of the meat offerings, as well as the conversation of the characters who take part in the scenes, are in the traditional style of such representations, going back into the Old Kingdom.

The remaining scenes in these two rooms depict the Pharaoh presenting offerings, chiefly to Amon. In most cases they are meat offerings, slaughtered animals with their severed heads laid beside the bodies and described as forming a "great side" or hecatomb. Plate 176 B, which reproduces...
duces the side of the passage that leads into Room 5, indicates the general purpose of the room as destined for the “pure offering,” consisting of various kinds of cattle. There seems little doubt that these two rooms were devoted to the preparation of the meat offerings.

It is an interesting fact that the figures of Amon depicted on the walls of Rooms 5 and 6 are all painted with white flesh, on which the details of hair, beard, eyes, etc., are rendered in black. Elsewhere Amon is generally shown in the conventional blue color.

The preparation of the drawings of the Calendar reproduced on the plates of this volume has occupied considerable time and required much revision. Not only is the wall badly injured in parts, but the signs themselves are generally poorly carved. Moreover, the text is corrupt with what are plainly the accumulated errors of several successive ancient copyings. Much of the unsatisfactory quality that has been at times attributed to earlier modern copies is due not to the poor work of the modern draftsman but to the errors of the ancient scribes. In a large number of such instances it is possible to reconstruct the correct text with practical certainty. Such reconstructions are feasible since confirmation is obtainable from the mathematical calculations of the lists, partly because the lists repeat whole groups of items or whole lists verbatim. Other errors, for example in the number of months or days in a given date, may be corrected by considering the position of the list in the Calendar and emending to conform thereto. Some lists are too corrupt to permit of justifiable emendation. Where in broken passages we have felt that the evidence has permitted a reasonable degree of certainty, we have restored the text in dotted lines as assistance to the user of the volume. In the laborious task of revision and correction, not only did the drudgery fall to the lot of some of the draftsmen who drew the original plates, but much of it was cheerfully borne by Mr. Leslie Greener, who joined the staff of the Expedition after the first drawings were completed.
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RAMSES III OFFERING TO AMON (Drawing by Bollacher)

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192. DETAILS FROM THE MEDINET HABU CALENDAR (Photographs)

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4. EXTERIOR, SOUTH WALL, BETWEEN PYLONS
5. INTERIOR, WEST OF SECOND COURT. ROOMS 5 AND 6 CONSTITUTE THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

*Grouped on the page preceding Plate 132.*
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A. TEMPLE ATTENDANTS BRINGING IN SUPPLIES FOR THE CALENDAR OFFERINGS, CONCLUDED
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B. SCENE FROM RAMSES II'S TEMPLE AT ABYDOS CORRESPONDING TO THAT SHOWN ON PLATES 168 AND 169 A
THE REAR HALLS OF THE GREAT TEMPLE, SEEN FROM THE SOUTHWEST CORNER

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B. ROOM 5, NORTH WALL
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RAMSESES III OFFERING TO AMON
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A. RAMSES III OFFERING TO THE THEBAN TRIAD
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B. RAMSES III MAKING A "PURE OFFERING" OF CATTLE TO AMON
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A. RAMSES III BEFORE AMON-RE
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B. EXTERIOR, WEST WALL, NORTH HALF, ABOVE RELIEFS
C. EXTERIOR, NORTH WALL, BETWEEN PYLONS, ABOVE RELIEFS
D. EXTERIOR, NORTH WALL, IMMEDIATELY WEST OF SECOND PYLON, ABOVE RELIEFS
MARGINAL INSCRIPTIONS IN LARGE HIEROGLYPHS

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B. EXTERIOR, FIRST PYLON, NORTH TOWER, WEST FACE, BELOW RELIEFS
C. EXTERIOR, NORTH WALL, BETWEEN PYLONS, BELOW RELIEFS
D. EXTERIOR, NORTH WALL, BETWEEN PYLONS, IMMEDIATELY BELOW C
E. EXTERIOR, NORTH WALL, WEST OF SECOND PYLON, BELOW RELIEFS
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E. (CONTINUED FROM PLATE 182)
A. EXTERIOR, NORTH WALL, BETWEEN PYLONS, ON SOCLE
B. EXTERIOR, NORTH WALL, WEST OF SECOND PYLON, ON SOCLE
C. EXTERIOR, SOUTH WALL, BETWEEN PYLONS, ABOVE RELIEFS
D. EXTERIOR, SOUTH WALL, IMMEDIATELY WEST OF SECOND PYLON, BELOW CORNICE
MARGINAL INSCRIPTIONS IN LARGE HIEROGLYPHS

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A. EXTERIOR, SOUTH WALL, WEST END, ABOVE CALENDAR
B. EXTERIOR, SOUTH WALL, IMMEDIATELY WEST OF SECOND PYLON, BELOW CALENDAR
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A. NORTH END  B. SOUTH END
INSCRIPTIONS ON ENDS OF SECOND PYLON

A. NORTH END  B. SOUTH END
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3. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 294, 301, 337
5. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 427-29, 464-66
7. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 500-502, 530 (After copy by Duemichen in his Die kalendarischen Opferfest-Listen im Tempel von Medinet-Habu, Tafel I 4, destroyed since his time by action of salts)
8. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 566-68, 601, 604-6
9. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 587-89
10. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 725, 734-33
11. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 734-36, 742, 772-75
12. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 740-42, 763, 779-80
13. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 749-51, 782, 788-90
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20. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 869-72
21. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 891-93
22. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 906-8, 943, 947-49
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30. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 1016-18
31. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 1019-21, 1025, 1060-62
32. Compare Medinet Habu Calendar, Lines 1027-30, 1068-71
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B. MEDINET HABU CALENDAR, LINES 344-900, RAMESSEUM FRAGMENTS NOS. 8-21
C. MEDINET HABU CALENDAR, LINES 901-1090, RAMESSEUM FRAGMENTS NOS. 22-38
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B. DATE AT BEGINNING OF DECREE IN LINE 53
C. PORTION OF LINE 58
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A. PORTION OF LINE 1445
B-C. OFFERING-BEARERS FROM SCENE SHOWN ON PLATE 168
D. SECTION OF CALENDAR INSCRIPTION APPARENTLY FROM MEDINET HABU, BUT UNASSIGNABLE TO ANY PLACE IN THE MISSING LINES
E. PORTIONS OF LINES 307-41
F. PORTIONS OF LINES 423-57
G. PORTIONS OF LINES 726-84
H. PORTIONS OF LINES 764-75
I. PORTIONS OF LINES 1374-83
K. PORTIONS OF LINES 1440-44