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MEDINET HABU REPORTS

I

THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

1928-31

II

THE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

1929/30

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MEDINET HABU REPORTS

I THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1928-31

By HAROLD H. NELSON

II THE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY 1929/30

THIRD PRELIMINARY REPORT

By UVO HÖLSCHER



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FIG. 1.—THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE FIRST COURT AT MEDINET HABU

This wall constitutes also the façade of the palace which abuts upon the first court. Between the fourth and fifth columns is the "window of (royal) appearances" before which the courtiers and foreign ambassadors assembled when the king held court. When the temple was occupied as a place of residence in Coptic days, the space within the colonnade (cf. Fig. 29) was filled to the roof with private dwellings of unburned brick, while other structures were built above on the roof itself.

I

THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

1928-31

By HAROLD H. NELSON

INTRODUCTION

The work of recording the reliefs and inscriptions at Medinet Habu has continued steadily since our last report¹ and has resulted in the completion of the more secular portions of the material on the walls of the Great Temple. The content of our first volume of plates, published last year,² extends through Ramses III's eighth regnal year and includes the records of three campaigns, those against the Nubians, the Libyans, and the Sea Peoples. The remaining historical subjects now copied deal with a second campaign against the Libyans, dated in the year 11, and one or more expeditions into Syria-Palestine. There is also a considerable body of reliefs which are either purely conventional in form, such as are found on every Egyptian temple of the period, depicting the king slaughtering representative enemies before the god, or which have to do with non-military activities, the hunting of game or the reviewing of the royal stud. In addition, there are numerous inscriptions of a very general character that narrate in vague terms those achievements of the monarch that he regarded as most worthy of record, either because of the glory they would cast upon himself or because they would increase his claim upon the favorable consideration of the gods. Our second volume of plates, now on the press, includes practically all of this material.

The content of this second volume is drawn from the walls inclosing the first court of the Great Temple. This portion of the building is not merely the forecourt of the temple proper, but also serves as the courtyard of the royal palace, the façade of which forms its southern wall (Fig. 1). Just as the king adorned the western side of this inclosure with a relief and a long inscription recording his triumph

¹ "Oriental Institute Communications," No. 5.

² "Oriental Institute Publications," Vol. VIII: *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I.

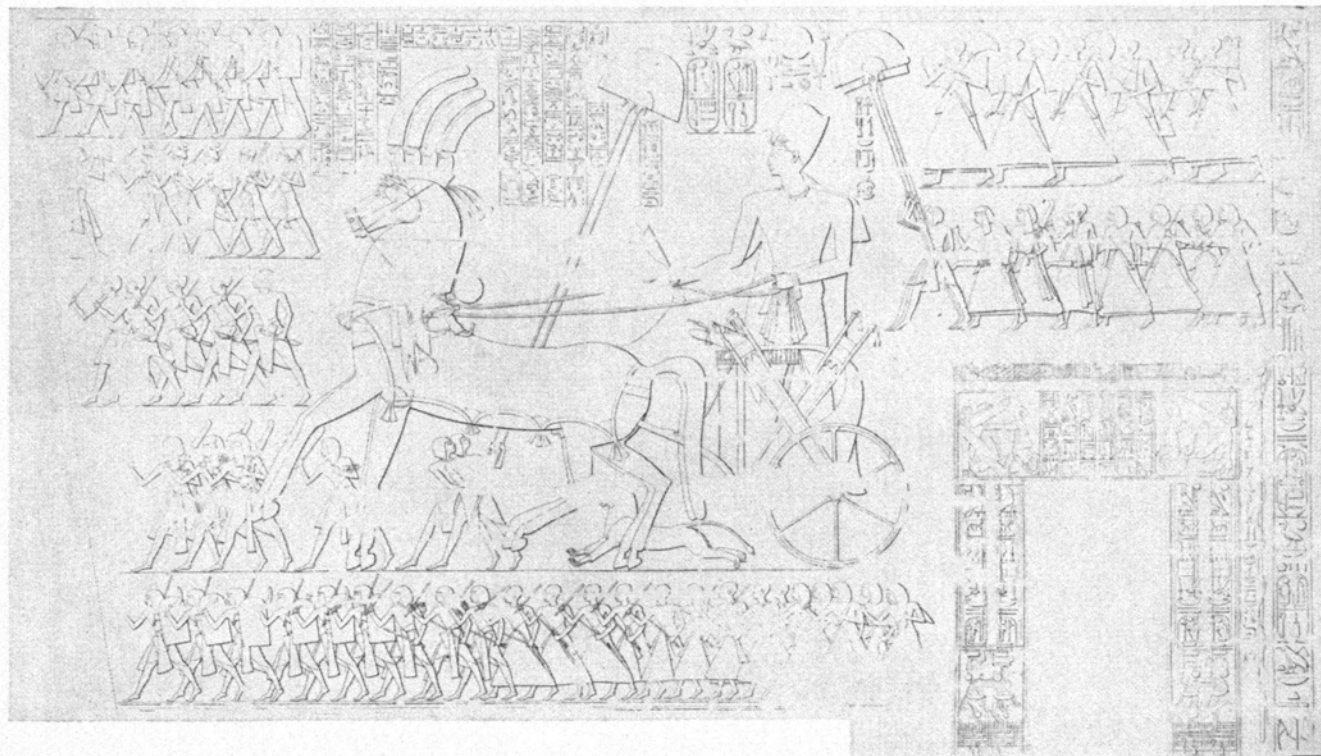


FIG. 2.—RAMSES III AND HIS SUITE ON PARADE

over the Sea Peoples,¹ so he decorated its eastern side with two reliefs and two inscriptions celebrating his victory over the Meshwesh-Libyans, thus giving pride of place to his two greatest military achievements. The north wall commemorates his conquests in Syria-Palestine, while the "window of (royal) appearances" in the center of the palace façade on the south side is flanked by scenes from the monarch's more peaceful activities. The decoration of this forecourt shows a pleasing and well-balanced arrangement of relief and inscription appropriate to the approach to both palace and temple.

THE PHAROAH AND HIS
ATTENDANTS

In the new volume of plates a striking relief from the palace front shows Ramses III on parade, attended by representatives from the army and the court (Fig. 2). The scene is strongly reminiscent of Amarna reliefs that depict Ikhнатon and his queen out for a drive.² But whereas at Amarna the impression conveyed is one of undignified haste, at Medinet Habu it is that of a stately procession. In the midst rises the towering figure of the king in his chariot drawn by prancing horses. The long flowing mantle falling below the level of the Pharaoh's feet hangs in more restrained lines than does that of Ikhнатon driving at breathless speed (Fig. 3), but the cloak and its treatment are the same. Moreover, the chariot displays to the beholder not only its side, as elsewhere at Medinet Habu, but the front as well, like its prototype at Amarna, this being the sole instance of such treatment of the subject at our temple. The city of the Aton was but a crumbling ruin in Ramses III's day, and his artists had probably never seen its

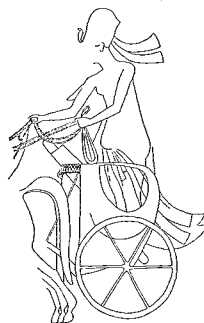


FIG. 3.—IKHNATON DRIVING IN PUBLIC

(After N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, Part II, Pl. XIII.) Compare the treatment of this figure with that of Ramses III in Fig. 2. Though the Amarna artist has been much freer in his lines, the fact that the two compositions belong to the same traditional scene is quite evident.

¹ *Ibid.*, Plates 44 and 46.

² N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, Part II, Pl. XIII.

desolation; but the figure of the Pharaoh before us here certainly belongs in the line of tradition that had long since stereotyped many of the elements of Egyptian monumental art—elements that trace their ancestry back to Amarna days or, more probably, to still older origins.

Before the king march the usual selected groups of the military (Fig. 4), Egyptians and foreigners, the latter including Sherden, Bedouins, and other peoples from Asia, together with a group of negroes, two clad in their native costume and armed with the Nubian club, the other three garbed like Egyptians and carrying the whip used by officers and other functionaries in the Pharaoh's service (Fig. 5). These five figures are of special interest, as they show a careful distinction between the two types. At Medinet Habu, of all the foreign peoples in the royal army, only the negroes are brigaded with the Pharaoh's subjects. This association is seen in two instances already published,¹ in which the Nubians are uniformed and equipped like their immediate companions. In Figure 4, however, no Egyptians are associated with the negroes, but the latter are differentiated into two kinds, one purely Nubian and the other Egyptianized. It is possible that the artist has here distinguished between the natives from the provinces up the river and the negroes who had already long since settled in Egypt. Earlier representatives of such a class are referred to in some of the royal decrees of the Old Kingdom as the "peaceful" or "settled" negroes.² Here each of the Egyptianized negroes carries a whip without a lash. The whip seems to serve as a symbol of authority, much as the modern foreman of a gang of Egyptian laborers always carries a stick. Figure 5 shows several figures from Medinet Habu, all of whom are so equipped. Numbers 1 and 2 are each a *sais* or runner before the royal chariot. Number 3 is an officer in charge of recruits mobilized for the northern war. Number 4 is an officer herding a gang of Syrian prisoners. Number 5 is an officer of the guard in attendance upon the king during the celebration of the victory over the Sea Peoples. It may be that we have in Figure 4 negro officers of the Mazoi or gendarmes in attendance upon the monarch as he rides forth in public through the streets. The whip was certainly not a

¹ *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pls. 16 and 31.

² *Zeitschrift für äg. Sprache*, XLII (1905), 7.

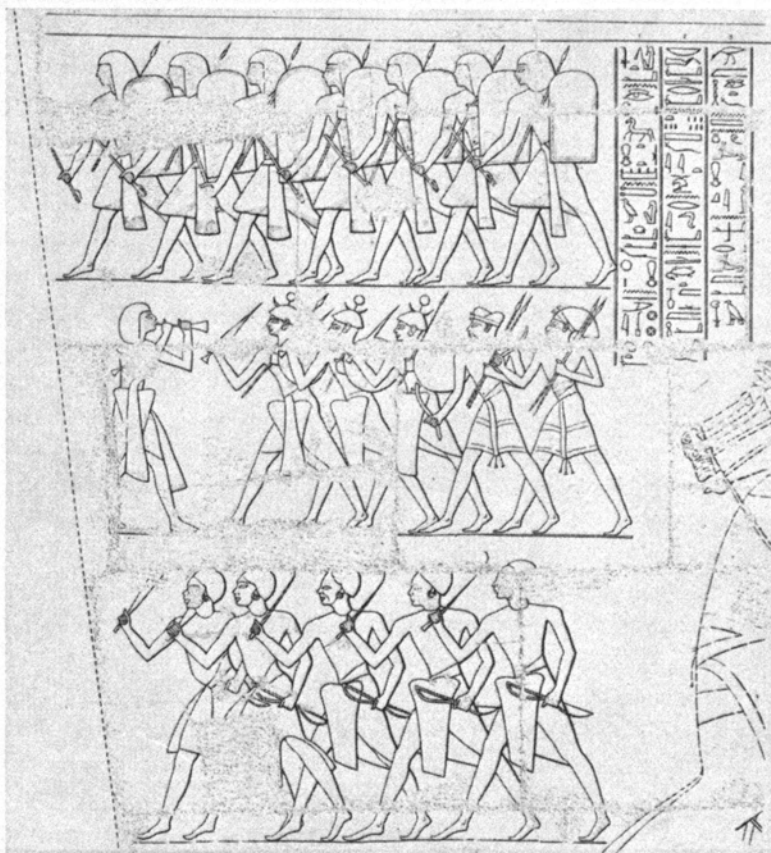


FIG. 4.—NATIVE AND FOREIGN TROOPS IN THE SERVICE OF EGYPT

(Enlarged detail of scene shown in Fig. 2.) The upper register shows native Egyptian troops in the conventional military garb of the period. The details of dress and shields are partly preserved in paint. The points of the lances are yellow, possibly representing gilded bronze. As these figures presumably stand for the royal bodyguard, their accoutrement would naturally be more sumptuous than that of ordinary troops. The skirts of the uniforms are apparently semitransparent, as the artist has indicated in paint (a light pink) the backs of the thighs appearing through the cloth. In the second register, besides the trumpeter, come first three Sherden in Egyptian military garb but with the round shields of their native equipment (cf. Fig. 10). The Sherden certainly, and possibly the other foreigners in this register, are represented with short black beards. Their helmets are gold with copper (green) horns. The body color of the Sherden is the vermilion usual for peoples from the farther North, but that of the South Palestinians to the right is salmon. These latter carry the throw stick of the Asiatic and two lances apiece. Only once at Medinet Habu do Egyptians carry two lances (*Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 42); but the Palestinians from the South wherever represented at the temple carry two (*ibid.*, Pls. 17, 31, and 35), the Sherden do so once (*ibid.*, Pl. 35), and the Philistines once (*ibid.*, Pl. 34). In the lowest register it is interesting to note how the artist has avoided obscuring the face of the foremost negro by tucking his companion's club under his chin.

weapon of offense, but probably corresponded to the cane of a modern army officer.

Returning to Figure 2, directly before the king's horses march three of the princes of the royal house, each with the plume and crook of highest court rank. In the lowest register comes first a contingent of the bodyguard, followed by a group of men each of whom has a coil of rope around his shoulders. Only officers seem to carry such ropes at Medinet Habu.¹ From the artist's arrangement of these figures it is difficult to decide whether they belong with the group preceding

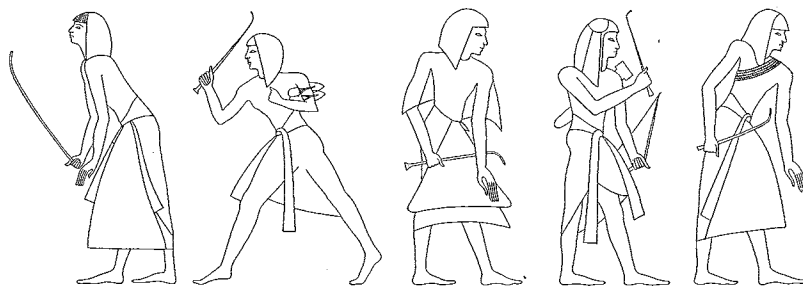


FIG. 5.—FIGURES AT MEDINET HABU WHO CARRY THE WHIP

For a clear example of officers so equipped, see Figure 26

or that following, though it is more probably the former than the latter. After the officers come the court bailiffs, shaven-headed, in long robes, and holding the short club or stick which they regularly carry.² These are the leaders of the civil functionaries who go to make up the remaining characters of the scene. Behind the bailiffs come the inevitable scribes, without whom all but the battle pieces seem

¹ Cf. Fig. 26 and *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pls. 17, 37, and 42.

² These members of the Pharaoh's personal suite, the *wb³w*, appear frequently at Medinet Habu. Cf. *ibid.*, Pls. 38 and 42, and this article, Figs. 15 and 24. They carry a stick, sometimes two—not the club with the peculiar bent guard at the handle which was used in battle (cf. Carter and Mace, *The Tomb of Tut ankh Amen*, Vol. I, Pl. LXXI, A). They head the group of royal attendants (cf. Figs. 2, 15, and 24). In the Kadesh reliefs of Ramses II (Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, II. Teil, Taf. 92) at the Ramesseum the *wb³w* are shown defending the royal tent against those of the Hittites who have advanced so far into the Egyptian camp. Most of those so engaged in the Kadesh battle are such *wb³w* as carry the king's quivers and generally bring up the rear of the group at Medinet Habu. Cf. also Champollion, *Monuments de l'Égypte et de la Nubie* (Paris, 1835–45), Tome I, Pl. XXIX (Abu Simbel).

incomplete. Over the doorway in two registers appear the personal attendants of the monarch and the highest officers of state—the eldest of the princes, the two viziers, a royal scribe, a court herald, and two other functionaries of uncertain office.

On this portion of the wall the color is, in places, fairly well preserved, especially where the king's personal attendants are placed, so

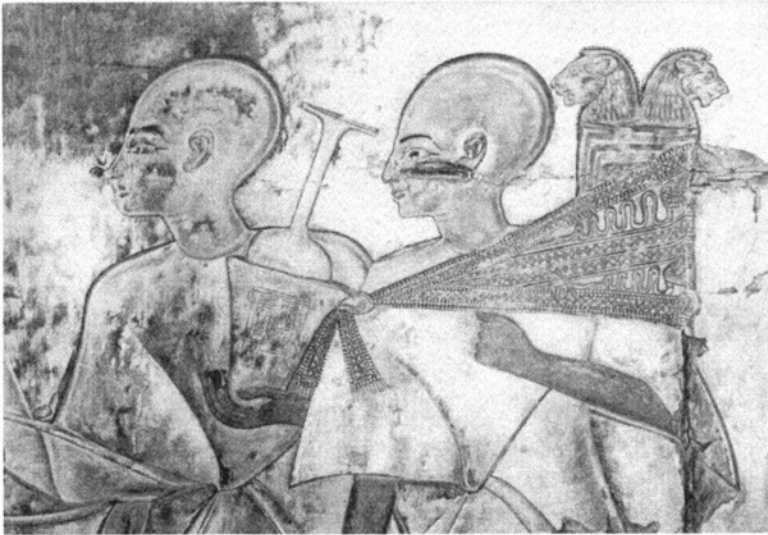


FIG. 6.—TWO OF RAMSES III'S PERSONAL ATTENDANTS

The man on the left carries the royal washbasin and ewer for the Pharaoh's ablutions. In the lower left corner of Figure 8 is a similar individual carrying basin and ewer, but with a towel tied around the neck of the latter. The second man carries what seems to be a quiver surmounted by two lions' heads or possibly a sheath with two daggers. The gaily colored cloth by which it is tied to his back is a fine example of ancient woven patterns.

that the details of their accouterments are plainly visible (Fig. 6). The royal sunshades, green and blue and red, are still vividly painted. The details of the military in the upper registers before the Pharaoh present certain interesting points. The Sherden and other northerners are each adorned with a short, black beard shown entirely in paint and not protruding beyond the outline of the face. The earlier copyists, in their rendering of such figures as they saw them a hundred years ago at Abu Simbel, seem thus fully justified.¹ In only one or

¹ Cf. *ibid.*, Pl. XXVIII; Rosellini, *Monumenti storici*, Pl. CI.

two instances at Medinet Habu are the non-Semitic northerners visibly represented as wearing beards. The traces of this colored detail surviving at this spot suggest that elsewhere, while not showing heavy facial hair, these strangers were not clean shaven. This is another instance of the interesting items lost from the reliefs with the vanished color.

THE SECOND LIBYAN WAR

Some time between year 5 and year 11 of Ramses III's reign a change took place upon Egypt's western frontier that was destined to have far reaching effects upon the country's future. From time immemorial the Libyan tribes known to the Egyptians as the Tehenu and the Temehu, with certain subsidiary groups, had filled the western horizon of the Nile-dwellers with the constant menace of invasion. From the days of the Old Kingdom down, we have records of a long series of wars with these peoples. Apparently there never was any serious attempt on Egypt's part to conquer the Libyans and to hold their territory. Their country was probably too poor to offer much inducement to conquest, while the tribes were politically so scattered and disunited as to make a decisive victory followed by annexation out of the question, contrary to the possibilities offered by an Asiatic campaign. Egypt's wars with the Libyans seem always to have been defensive, devoted to guarding the frontier against invasion or to driving back to their desert homes such bands as successfully broke through the line of border fortresses.

The reigns of Merneptah and Ramses III, with the disturbed period between, witnessed a most determined effort on the part of the Libyans to penetrate into the Delta. At about that time the old hereditary enemies of Egypt, the Tehenu and Temehu, were reinforced by kindred tribes from farther west, the Meshwesh, who thenceforth played an increasingly important rôle in the constant border wars. At first the Meshwesh seem to have been merely a part of the invading hordes, and perhaps much the least important. The campaign of the year 5 of Ramses III led to a severe defeat of the Tehenu and Temehu at the hands of the Egyptians. Though not so utterly devastating as the Pharaoh would have us believe, it was probably sufficiently severe to leave them thoroughly weakened and unable successfully to maintain their dominance among the Libyan peoples. At any rate, the position of chief opponent of the Egyptians seems to have passed to the Mesh-

wesh. These latter fell upon the disorganized remnants of the Tehenu and devastated their land. Then at the head of a Libyan combination they attempted the invasion of the western Delta.

In the longest and perhaps the most difficult of the records from Medinet Habu, an inscription dated in the year 11 of his reign, Ramses III tells in a few brief sentences the story of this momentous series of events. Connected with this inscription and illustrating the story is a series of remarkable reliefs, among the finest at the temple. The record is supplemented by a poem of victory on the front of the pylon and by a passage in Papyrus Harris. The record runs:

As for the Meshwesh, not before known, he came together, his land with him, and fell upon the Tehenu, who were made ashes and their cities spoiled and desolated. Their seed is not, by the excellent commands of this god to slay the invader of Egypt. "We will settle in Egypt"—so spake they with one accord, and they continually entered the boundaries of Egypt.

The poem informs us that "they took counsel again to plot rebellion to spend their lives in the confines of Egypt. They mustered the hills and plains of their districts." Papyrus Harris, somewhat more specific, states:

The Libyans and the Meshwesh were dwelling in Egypt, having plundered the cities of the western shore from Memphis to Kerben. They had reached the great river on both its banks. . . . Behold, I destroyed them, slain at one time. . . . They were overthrown in their blood and made heaps. I turned them back from trampling the border of Egypt. I carried away those whom my sword spared, as numerous captives, pinioned like birds before my horses, their women and their children by ten-thousands, their cattle in number by hundred-thousands.¹

The series of reliefs of this Libyan war, unlike those illustrating the war of the year 5, shows none of the events leading up to the actual engagement with the enemy, but begins with the battle itself on the western edge of the Delta. This event is recorded in two places, on the outside of the north wall of the first court and also on the west face of the first pylon in the court itself. These reliefs show the pursuit of the defeated enemy back into the western desert whence he came (Figs. 7 and 8). Over each scene is a similarly worded title: "The slaughter which his majesty made in the land of the Meshwesh who came into Egypt, from the town of Ramses-Ruler-of-Heliopolis, which

¹ After Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Vol. IV (Chicago, 1906), § 405.

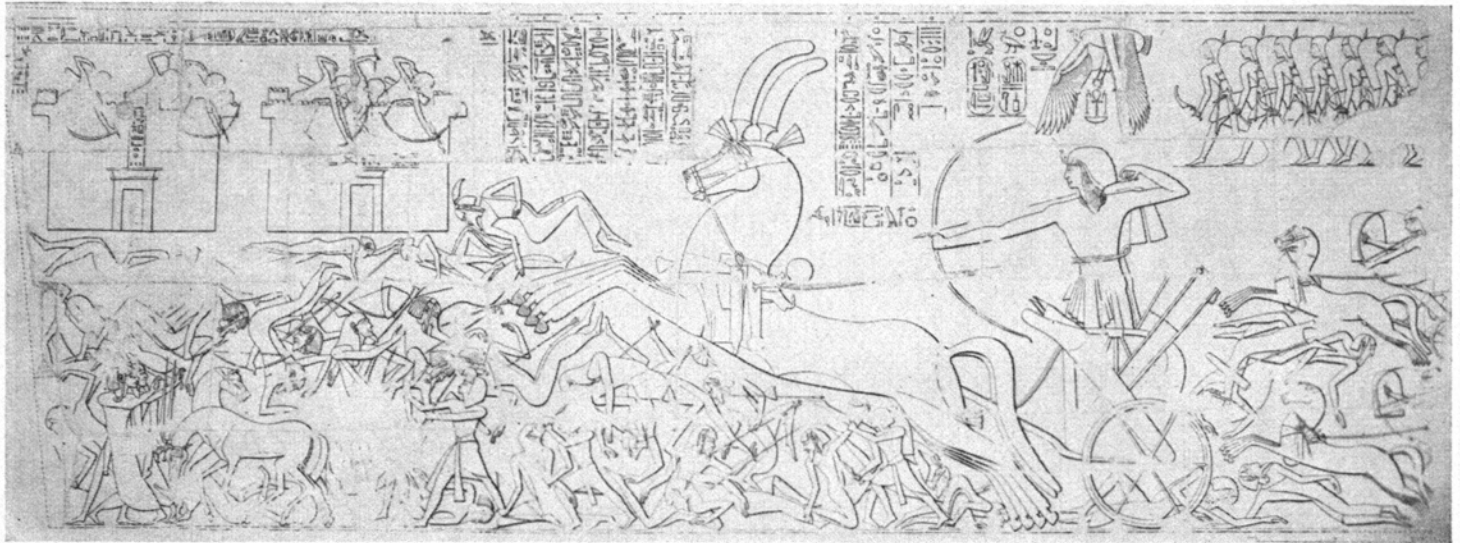


FIG. 7.—RAMSES III PURSUING THE FLEEING LIBYANS

The two fortresses manned by Egyptian archers were, according to the inscription, eight iters (about eleven miles) apart on the western edge of the Delta. The Meshwesh chieftain, with the plume and long hair of his rank and with his garment suspended from his shoulders by crossed bands in ancient Libyan style, is a striking figure though sadly defaced. The full-faced rendering of one of his horses—a position shown several times at Medinet Habu—is of interest. Note the long swords of the Libyans in contrast to those wielded by the Egyptians.

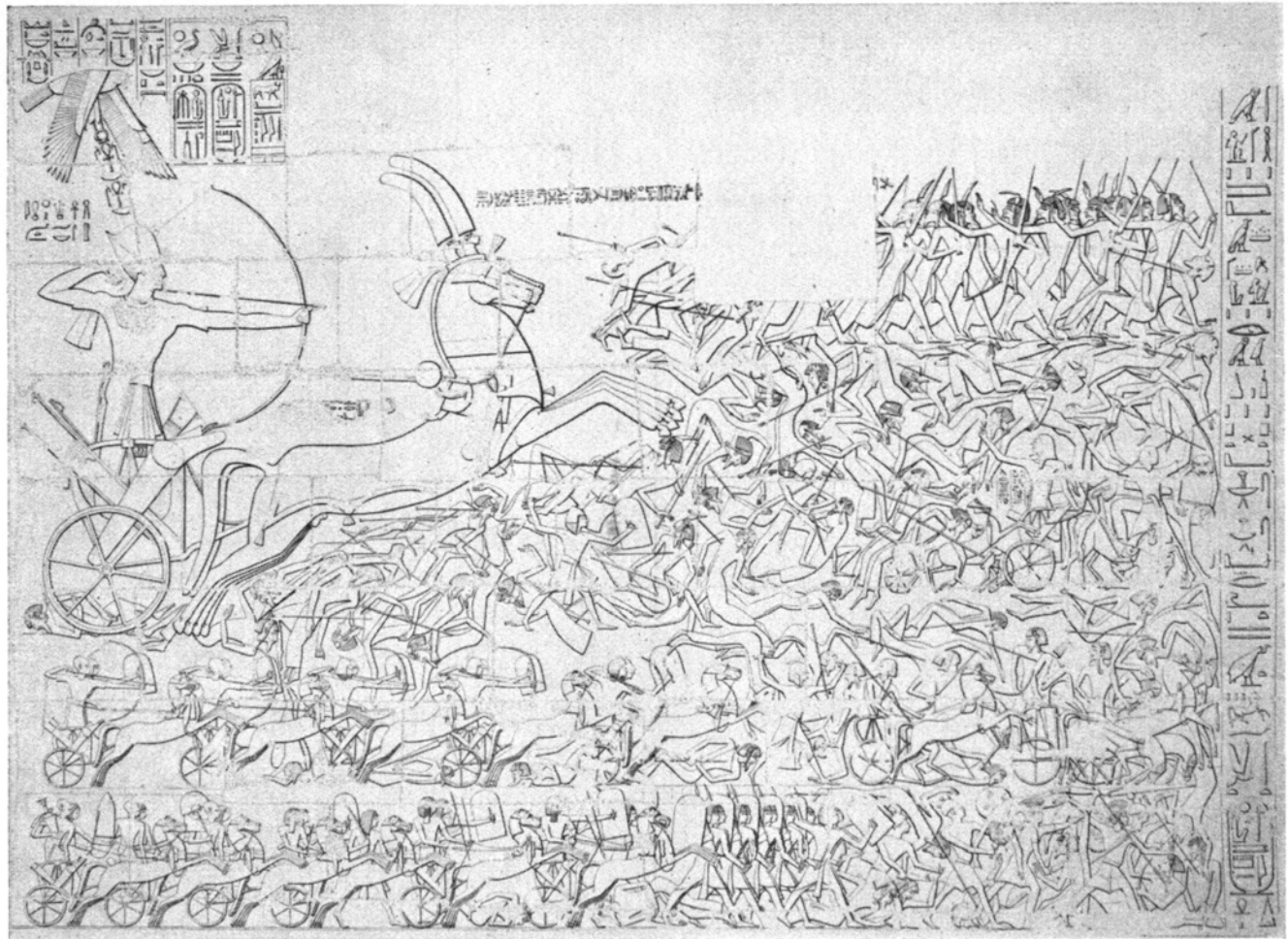


FIG. 8.—RAMSES III PURSUING THE FLEEING LIBYANS

This is a companion piece to Figure 7, more elaborate in detail but lacking the two fortresses. The lowest register is of special interest. To the right are Philistine and Sherden troops in the Egyptian service (cf. Fig. 10). In the center is a fine group of massed Egyptian infantry. The left half of the register shows six chariots, the first three occupied by royal princes, each with his shield-bearer beside him with shield extended to cover him; the last three containing noncombatant members of the king's personal following, not clad in mail shirts like the princes but in the usual civilian dress of their office. Such personal attendants were also present with Ramses II at the Hittite attack on his camp before Kadesh and received the commendation of the Pharaoh for their faithfulness in standing by him when his army fled. Below and in front of the forefeet of the king's horses is a group showing an Egyptian binding a Libyan which is repeated almost exactly as a hieroglyph for the word "bind" in the inscription in large characters on the front of the first pylon at the top of the south tower.

is at the mountain of Up-to, to the town of Hat-sho, making eight iters of slaughter among them."¹ The scene on the north wall (Fig. 7) shows us the two fortresses mentioned in the ancient title to the illustration, each manned by Egyptian archers, who discharge arrows at the foe fleeing before the Pharaoh's terrific onslaught. In the midst of the enemy is the Meshwesh chief, his hand raised in supplication with the peculiar gesture which seems to have been used when suing for mercy or to ward off evil, a gesture possibly intended to be of magic efficacy in preventing the operation of the evil eye or the like hostile power.² The scene in the first court (Fig. 8), depicting the same event, shows the Libyan enemy fleeing out of the Nile Valley up onto the heights of the desert plateau. This composition is clearly parallel in construction to that in *Medinet Habu*, Volume I, Plates 19 and 20. There we find the red background of the desert, the Red Land, with the contour of the valley side up which the defeated Libyans are retreating in confusion. Were the painted details here equally well preserved, we should most probably find the same red profile of the cliffs running upward in front of the Pharaoh's horses to the ground line of the topmost register of the fleeing Libyan chieftains. Many of the minor points of this composition are of considerable interest, while the execution of the figures is some of the best work at Medinet Habu (Figs. 9-11).

BATTLE SCENES

Of battle pieces representing engagements in the open, there are eight examples at Medinet Habu, besides four representing sieges of towns. The former are all arranged on the same general plan, though

¹ See Gardiner in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, V (1918), 134-35.

² On Figure 9 the two gestures usually made by the king's enemies in the presence of the Pharaoh can be plainly seen. One, made by raising the hand with all the fingers extended and the palm outward, is used by officers leading up captives before the king, though in the latter case, as compared with the position of the enemies' hands, the Egyptians' hands are raised above their heads in a sort of Fascist salute. The other, a peculiar gesture suggestive of some magical import, seems to have been made with the first finger and thumb extended upward and the other three fingers bent downward (cf. Fig. 9, last Libyan to right) or, more frequently, with the thumb and little finger extended and the first three fingers crooked (cf. *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 34, the Philistine in the chariot just to the left of the bottom of the inscription). This same gesture is still in use in Mediterranean lands as protection against the evil eye.

there is great variation in detail. They agree in organization with a tradition governing the subject since the 18th dynasty at least, though actual survivals from pre-Amarna days are very few. That the general scheme was well established by the end of the 18th dynasty the scenes on Tutenkhamon's painted casket clearly prove.¹ Before the time of Ikhnaton only Thutmose IV's chariot and the fragment of a stela of



FIG. 9.—LIBYAN CHIEFTAINS FLEEING BEFORE THE PHARAOH'S ONSLAUGHT
Detail from scene shown in Figure 8

Amenhotep III at Cairo have survived. The Amarna reliefs contain no battle pieces and are not organized in the same way, though their spaciousness and the comprehensiveness of their narrative quality clearly affected the development of the art of the next two dynasties. It has been pointed out² that it was the response of the Egyptian artists to the problem set them by a victorious ruling house obsessed by its own greatness and anxious to perpetuate it in monumental

¹ Carter and Mace, *op. cit.*, Pl. LIII.

² A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Allertum*, neu bearb. von H. Ranke (Tübingen, 1923), p. 490.

form, that led them to attempt things undreamed of by their predecessors and to break through the restraints of the traditional art. This new artistic development never reached its full fruition. It was still in the experimental stage in Ramses III's day when the last of the great war reliefs was carved for the glory of the last of the great mili-



FIG. 10.—SHERDEN WARRIORS IN ACTION

Detail from scene shown in Figure 8. One of the Sherden is shown cutting off a hand from a dead Libyan. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the foreign auxiliaries apparently had no part in the triumphal celebrations at which the hands taken from the slain were counted and credited to the holders of the trophies. Yet here and elsewhere they are shown in the act of removing hands from the dead. Notice that the Sherden grasps the hand by the thumb. This seems to have been the usual method of holding them; cf. Figure 15 here and *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pls. 22, 23, and 34 (left end). The artist has been careful to present the limpness of the dead hand.

tary pharaohs. With the reaction of the theocratic 21st dynasty the return to the traditions of the fathers was complete, and the new art died with the cessation of the victories on foreign soil that had called it into being.

The composition of these scenes is seemingly a development of the Old and Middle Kingdom reliefs.¹ There we see at one side of the field the figure of the person about whom the interest of the subject centers. It may be the lord of the estate as he inspects his fields, his flocks, his artisans; or it may be the high official superintending the



FIG. 11.—A DEAD LIBYAN

One of a number of fine heads from the scene shown in Figure 8

activities of his subordinates, issuing supplies from the government storehouse, or receiving petitions. In every case this figure in whose honor the work is produced is drawn on gigantic scale as compared to the lesser individuals, who are represented not for themselves but because they demonstrate by their presence and activities the importance of their superior. This explanatory section of the relief is divided into registers in which the minor characters are shown as mere pigmies in height in comparison to the dominant figure. Some, differentiated from the rest by reason of close association with the chief subject of the composition, may be drawn on a scale intermediate be-

¹ On the development of the Empire battle scenes see H. Schaefer's penetrating study in his *Von ägyptischer Kunst* (3d ed.; Leipzig, 1930), chap. iv.

tween the two extremes, thus introducing the principle of gradation according to relative importance to the end the artist had in view. Undoubtedly, also, the artist felt the incongruity in too great a difference of size between two figures represented in action together. Artistic feeling, as well as reasons of emphasis, influenced all such Egyptian compositions.

Before the close of the Middle Kingdom a further development from these earlier reliefs had taken place in the presentation of hunting scenes, where the rigid registration of the older art gave way to efforts to represent the irregularities of the desert waste. Both the older and the later arrangement of the figures in a scene showing many individuals in action over a wide area appear in the Empire battle pictures.

The great battle reliefs at Medinet Habu show clearly the influence of this earlier art. The Pharaoh is here the hero of the story, and the other characters derive their significance merely from their relation to him. The theme of the artist is the monarch's prowess, his greatness and glory, his godlike and invincible might. He must be singled out from both his enemies and his supporting army in such a way that there will be no doubt in the mind of the beholder as to where the full credit for the achievement is to be placed. He is therefore drawn in colossal proportions with all the splendor of calm and confident majesty. He is placed at one side of the scene, as was the dominant figure in the old reliefs, standing in his chariot drawn by a team of splendid horses but little less colossal than himself. Below his chariot or beneath its wheels lie one or more of his fallen enemies, who are also sometimes drawn on a larger scale than their comrades elsewhere, as though they too derived some special significance from the fact that it is the king's chariot that crushes them. This gradation of figures may be clearly discerned in such scenes as the naval battle,¹ where the enemy warriors, the subject second in importance to the king, rank in size between the monarch and the crews of the Egyptian ships. Only those of the Egyptians who come in close contact with the enemy, such as the individuals leaning over the side of the upper left Egyptian boat and engaged in pulling aboard certain of the enemy who are swimming toward them, are drawn on a scale commensurate with the figures of the Sea Peoples. Their size is apparently due to their rela-

¹ *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 39.

tion to the larger enemy figures. The artist did not wish to emphasize the part played in the victory by the Egyptian fleet. The glory must be diverted entirely to the Pharaoh. However, in the lower registers, where prisoners are led away by Egyptian officers, captors and captives are of practically the same size. Here the king has no part in the action; hence the necessity for gradation in size does not enter.

A clear example of the variations in size is shown in Figure 12. There the king is binding two Libyan captives. He has descended from his chariot and has therefore come into close contact with the other figures of the scene. Here the artist has arranged his figures in descending scale: first, the Pharaoh; next, the two enemies he is binding; and third, the common run of Libyans, who are not the immediate subject of the royal interest. This principle cannot be pushed too far, for other considerations than relative importance for the theme may govern the artist's treatment of the figures. Considerations of artistic effect, space to be filled, convenience of handling, will all play a part in determining the size of the various elements of the composition.

Immediately below the Pharaoh's horses (Fig. 7) is a confused mass of the enemy, their positions accommodated to the curves of the animals' legs and bellies, so that in but few instances are they ever obscured by the monarch's chargers, except where occasionally the hoofs and lower legs of the horses cut across some figure; nor, in turn, do the bodies of the fallen overlies the royal span. This heap of slain continues forward in front of the horses, to give way in turn to one or more groups of fleeing enemies who are the special target of the king's arrows. As they flee, some have their faces turned toward the pursuing Pharaoh and raise their hands in supplication to him (Fig. 9). The attention of the figures in that portion of the scene is entirely devoted to him and to their efforts to escape him. Thus the whole upper portion of the relief constitutes the special area of the king's activity. Only in the middle and lower parts do the Egyptian forces participate in the action. The eye is carried straight from the monarch to his personal achievement, he and his particular victims being separated from the more general conflict.

Below the section devoted especially to the king's prowess, the main battle is depicted. Both here and in that portion of the field

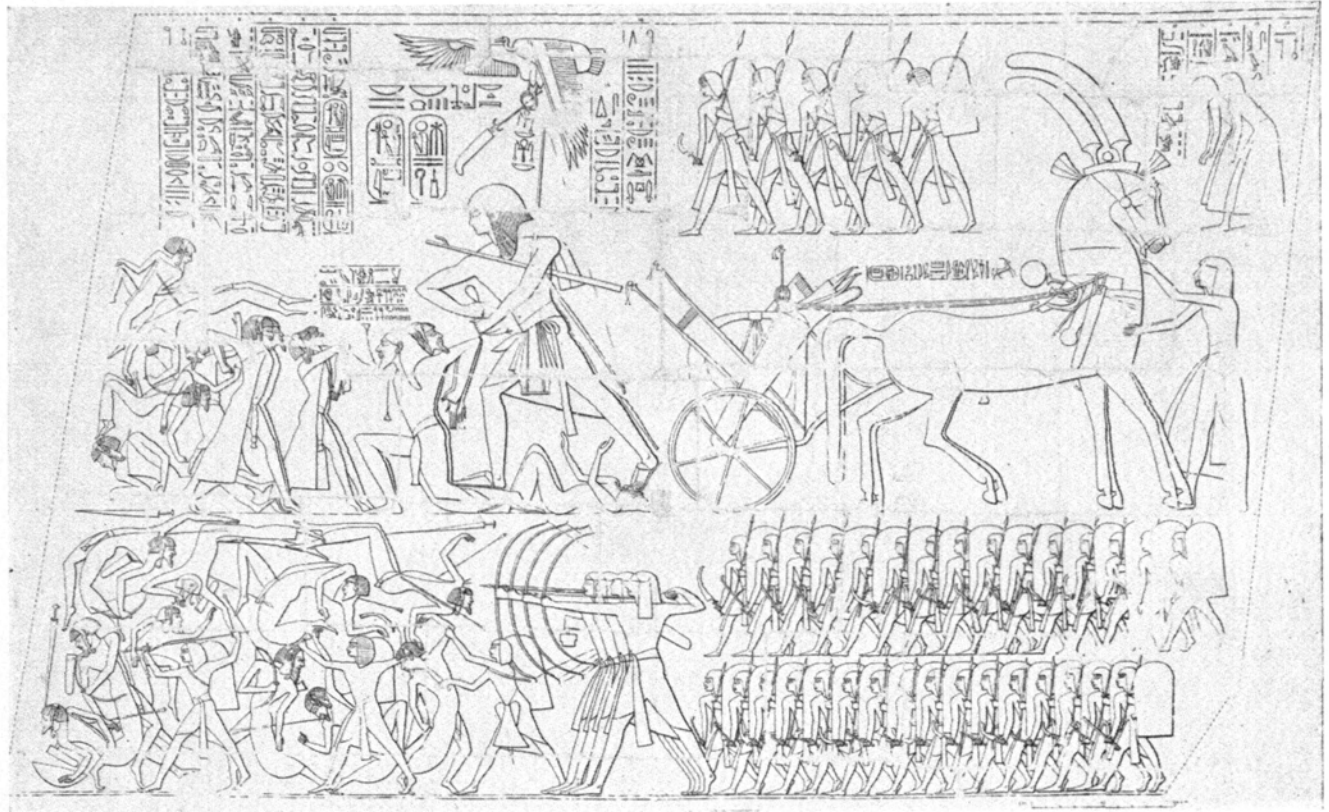


FIG. 12.—RAMSES III TAKING CAPTIVE THE LIBYAN CHIEF

This scene is interesting especially for the grouping of the figures, the accommodation of the bodies of the dead to the vacant areas, and the use of the Libyan swords as stop-gaps.

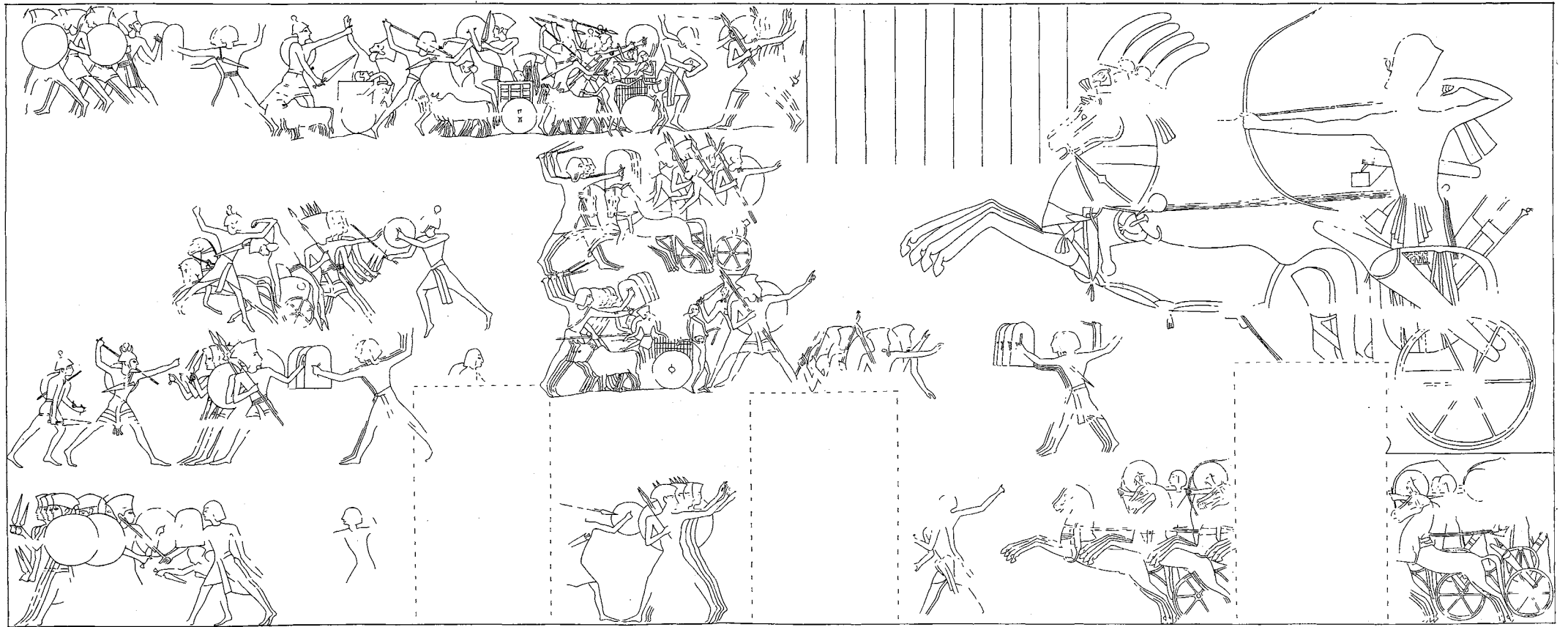


FIG. 13.—THE FIGURES OF THE LIVING FROM THE BATTLE WITH THE SEA PEOPLES

(Cf. *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 32.) This drawing, designed to bring out the mechanics of a battle piece at Medinet Habu, shows the traditional system of registration and the areas that were reserved for the bodies of the dead, which thus served to bind the whole composition into a unit.

above in which those of the enemy still capable of flight appear, the survival of the old system of registration can be plainly seen. This part of the picture corresponds to the secondary or explanatory portion in the earlier reliefs. Here are seen the minor characters, the Egyptian troops and their opponents. They are broken up into groups, a small unit of the former attacking a corresponding group of the latter, or a series of single combats. This area, as far as the figures of the living are concerned, is composed of a number of self-contained vignettes, each complete in itself and having practically no relation to its neighbors (cf. Fig. 13). They merely give a series of hand-to-hand combats, with no suggestion of any comprehensive strategy. They are selective, showing various elements of the army in various modes of action.

Although these battle pieces are so closely linked with the earlier reliefs in the mechanics of their construction, yet they differ in one essential respect. In the Old and Middle Kingdom reliefs there is no effort to establish any unity among the various registers, no attempt to arrange them in any order of place or subject which might indicate that the artist conceived of them as constituting a bird's-eye view. In the Medinet Habu battle pieces, on the other hand, the various parts of the picture are related closely to one another and are clearly arranged so as to conform to a certain unity. Though remnants of registers survive, their rigidity has been broken through. The ancient base lines have largely disappeared, probably because the artist felt that the disorder of the battlefield was inadequately represented thereby and that, by failing to observe this time-honored usage, a greater unity could be obtained. He was attempting a bird's-eye view, but in the absence of any perspective he still clung to the fundamentals of the older principles.¹ Figure 13² not only preserves the general system of registration but retains the use of ground lines below the royal chariot and the ox carts, perhaps in the case of the latter because their ponderous and lumbering character demanded some solid base on which to rest. Indeed, in other scenes such ground lines may have been

¹ *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 9, clearly shows the remnants of four registers, each about the height of one of the standing figures. Plate 18 has, at the left, five distinct registers, though registration is almost entirely lacking on the companion piece, Plate 19.

² Taken from *ibid.*, Pl. 32.

added in paint and thus been used more extensively than the naked sculpture would lead us to believe.¹

On the other hand, while in Figure 13 the older registration survives, the effort to break away from it which produced the landscape of the hunting scenes appears to have actuated the artist. Just as in the latter the irregularities of the desert supersede the conventional parallel base lines, so here in the battle with the migrating hordes of the Sea Peoples the artist seems to be trying to picture a conflict in hilly or rolling country such as the Egyptians encountered when defending their Asiatic frontier against the northern invaders. By substituting animals for human figures in this relief, a fair picture of a late Middle Kingdom hunting scene would be easily secured.

Figure 14 gives the scene drawn in full on Figure 8, but with only the living indicated and the dead eliminated. Its registration is apparent. The unity and orderly arrangement of the left side of the piece is in marked contrast to the isolated groups at the right. The elimination of the figures of the dead shows at once the device employed by the artist in the development of these Medinet Habu battle scenes. He has effected the transition between the remnants of the older registration not by a rearrangement of the figures of the living, which seldom overlap one another perpendicularly, but by the wounded and the dead, who lie upon the ground and seem to have, in general, no relation to the registration. They are often intertwined in the most extraordinary manner; but, though they frequently overlap one another, they almost never obscure more than the lower legs of the standing figures. They are bent and twisted to accommodate them to the available space and to fill the gaps in the composition. They extend without order over the whole area of the conflict and constitute the one unifying element of the sculptor's work. In that portion of the scene where there are no prostrate figures, as on the left in Figure 14, the customary rigid registration has been retained. The bird's-eye view was used only for the actual conflict. Where troops are on the march or drawn up at attention, there the older artistic principles still controlled, principles supremely suited to produce the rhythmic effect so dear to the Egyptian draftsman. On the actual battle ground, in respect to the dead and dying, rhythm was conspicuously absent. It

¹ Cf. Schaefer, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-7.

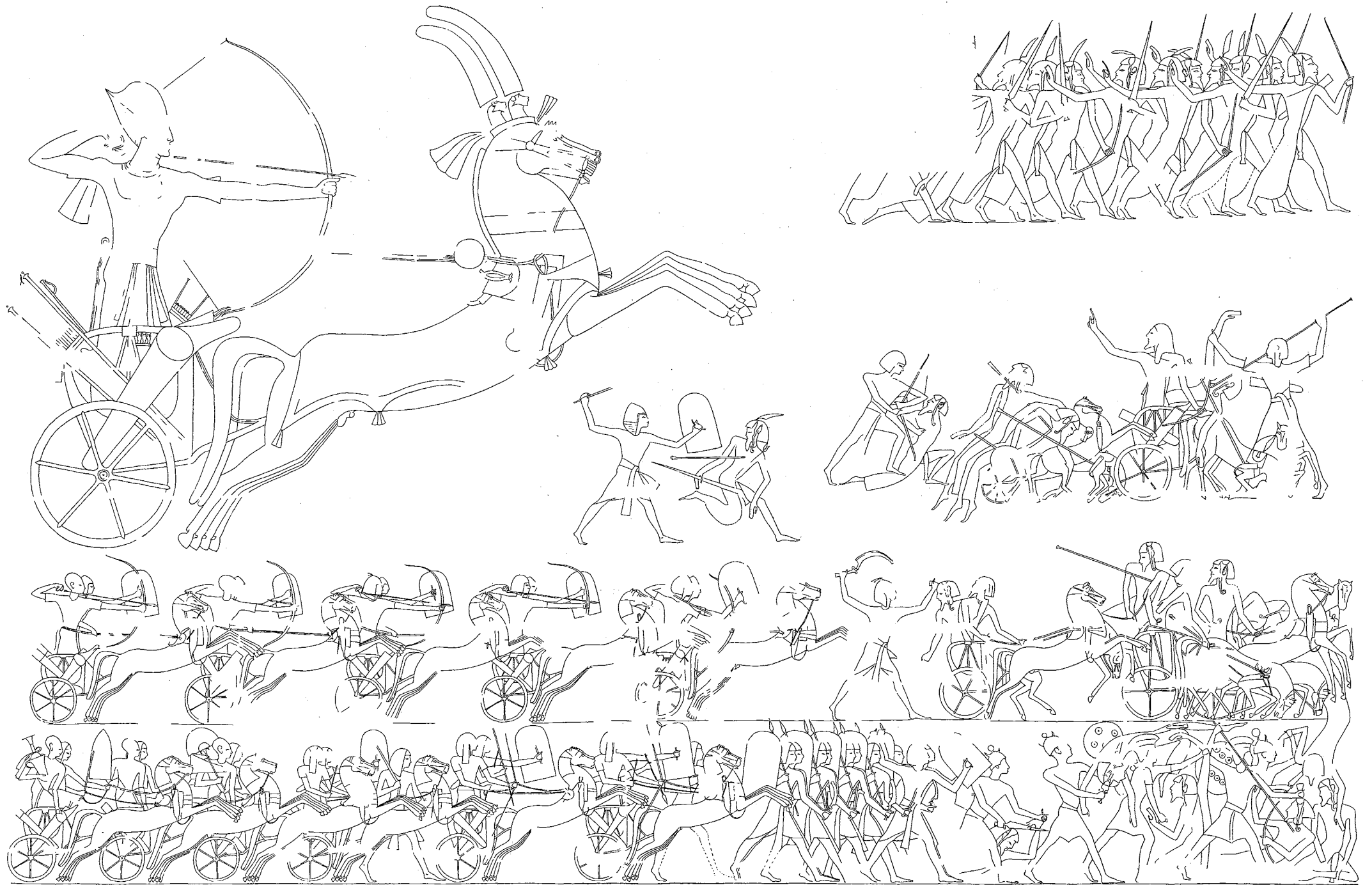


FIG. 14.—THE FIGURES OF THE LIVING FROM THE SCENE SHOWN IN FIGURE 8

might survive in the case of small units of the infantry on either side scattered about the field, but to convey the disorder of the corpses the old methods were abandoned and new ones were tried which were not allowed time to be further worked out before the sacerdotal conservatism of the 21st dynasty laid its dead hand upon Egyptian art.¹

TRIUMPHS AFTER BATTLE

The triumphal celebration of the second victory over the Libyans is twice recorded at Medinet Habu, once on the north wall outside and again as a companion piece to the battle scene on the west face of the first pylon. The former is a sketchy affair, but the latter is one of the finest reliefs at the temple and has been often reproduced (Fig. 15). The king towers aloft in his reviewing-stand or window of royal appearances—its nature is somewhat uncertain—and harangues his court, while prisoners, trophies, and spoil of the battle are brought before him and listed by the scribes according to the usual methodical Egyptian custom.² Behind the king are two sunshade-bearers, beside him the court bailiffs and the monarch's personal attendants, and before him his eldest son and the two viziers. The actual audience which the monarch addressed was, of course, much more numerous; but the artist has given only a selected representative group. The captive Meshwesh chief and some of his followers are led up handcuffed, apparently not very securely, for one has withdrawn his hand from his bonds to raise it in salutation to the victor. Before the Egyptian officers who lead the prisoners forward are recorded the words they utter—the usual formula of acclamation addressed to the Pharaoh on occasions of public congratulation. Samples of the booty taken

¹ Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 492-93.

² The British Museum possesses an ostrakon, No. 5620 (see its *Inscriptions in the Hieratic and Demotic Character* [London, 1868], Pl. I), which is probably a sketchy copy of a scene from the reign of Ramses II, not unlikely from the Ramesseum, from which original this relief of Ramses III is plainly derived. The ostrakon shows Ramses II in his window of royal appearances, while before him stand a prince and one of the viziers. Not only did Ramses III's artists copy the relief but, with the omission of a few lines, probably due to limitations of space, they repeated almost verbatim Ramses II's inscription accompanying the relief. In this instance the copying extended to such minutiae as the form of the determinative to the word for "vizier," a little squatting figure with a broad cape and no arms, which appears in column 2 of the ostrakon and in line 5 of the relief in Figure 15.

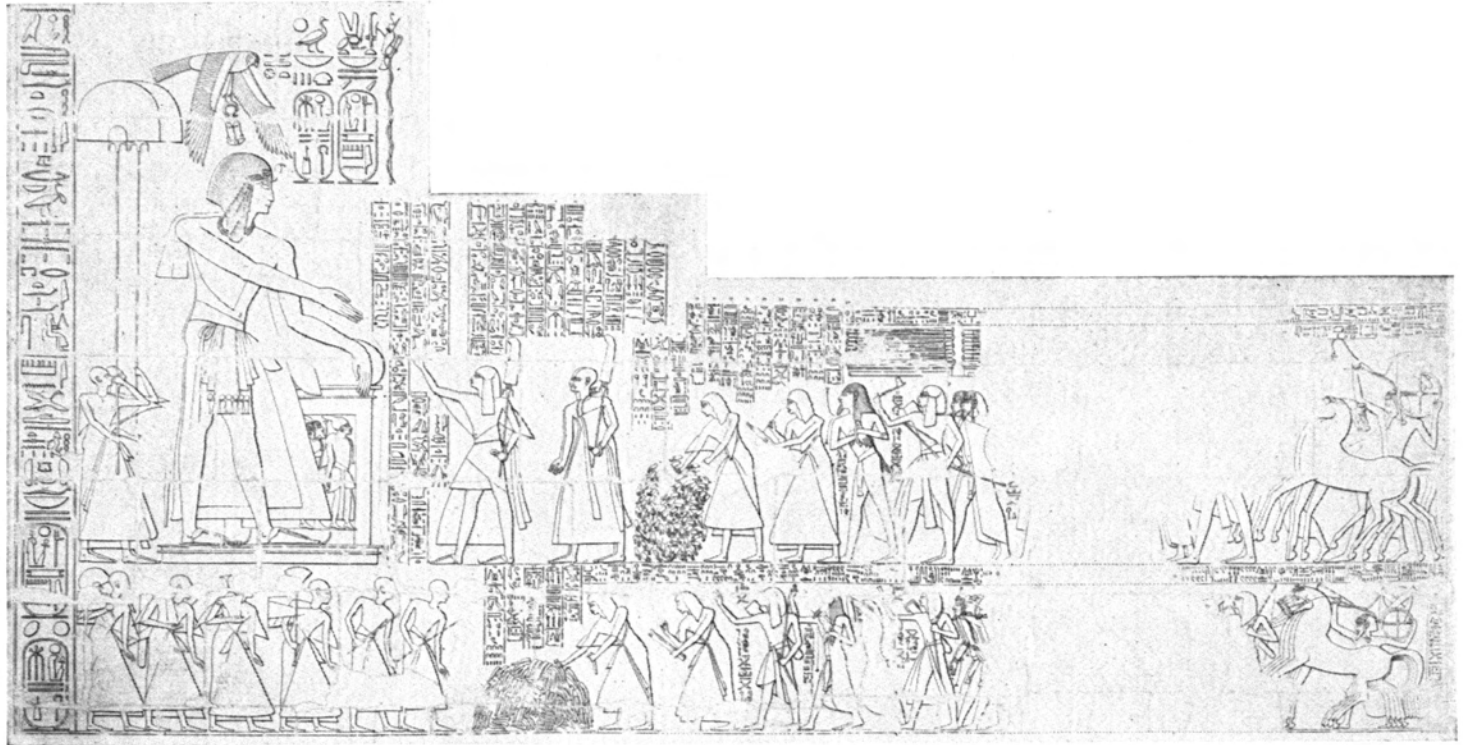


FIG. 15.—RAMSES III CELEBRATING HIS VICTORY OVER THE LIBYANS

This relief was sadly injured by fires built against it when the temple was a dwelling-place for the inhabitants of the Coptic town of Jēme. The figure of the captive Libyan chief in the upper register is one of the finest at Medinet Habu.

are shown in the form of horses and chariots and piles of swords, these last, if we are to believe the record, of the incredible length of three and four cubits. The latter figure is a modification of an original five which even the Egyptian's taste for tall statements could not induce him to swallow.

These triumphal reviews of the spoils of war were a regular part of every campaign. They might be held on the battlefield, as Thutmose III celebrated his victory after Megiddo. The annals of that king, after recounting the defeat of the enemy, go on to say: "They (the Egyptian army) brought up the booty which they had taken, consisting of hands, of living prisoners, of horses, (and of) chariots of gold and silver. . . . [Then his majesty com]manded his army, saying" ¹ Here plainly we have an account of just such a scene as those depicted at Medinet Habu, the review of the spoil and the harangue of the king. It might almost be a description of the relief shown in Figure 15. Plainly the celebration in Thutmose III's case was held on the field of battle, not in a building nor on the return to Egypt. In presiding at the ceremony Thutmose perhaps seated himself in his chariot, as did Ramses III after his first victory over the Libyans. ²

On the other hand, Merneptah's review of the spoil of his Libyan campaign was held at some royal palace, most likely at Memphis, in the forecourt of the great temple of Ptah, which was also the courtyard of the adjacent palace. In his Karnak inscription the king states: "[Then returned] the captains of archers, the infantry and chariotry, . . . [driving] before them asses laden with the uncircumcised phalli of the country of Libya, together with the hands of every country that was with them." After some breaks in the inscription come the words, "as tribute under the window (of royal appearances), to cause his majesty to see his conquests." A few lines farther on the inscription narrates that "their lord the king appeared in the 'broad hall' of the palace, while [the court acclaimed] his majesty, rejoicing at his appearance which he made. The servants [of his majesty] exulted to heaven; the suite on both sides. . . ." Merneptah, it seems, held his review in traditional style, after the manner of scenes so often shown in the reliefs, appearing in the great window, below which were

¹ Cf. *Urkunden des äg. Altertums*, IV, 659-60.

² Cf. *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 23.

piled the trophies and spoil, and before which were gathered the court and the more important prisoners, while the monarch addressed the assembly, frequently interrupted, no doubt, by shouts and acclamations from the crowd.

It is possible that such ceremonies of victory were held in more than one of the great cities, so as to impress the people with the royal power. The Empire rulers paid homage especially to Amon, and to Thebes ultimately came the larger share of the spoil. There too the chief celebration undoubtedly took place. In a paean of praise to Ramses II and his capital an ancient scribe writes: "How pleasant it is when thou goest to Thebes and thy chariot is weighed down with hands. The chieftains go bound in front of thee, and thou wilt present them to thy august father Amon."¹

These scenes in which the Pharaoh addresses his followers occur eight times at Medinet Habu. In one instance² the king sits in his chariot as he conducts the celebration. This is a stereotyped scene copied from earlier reliefs. On two occasions he is shown standing on a group of his enemies as he declaims on his own prowess. The presence of the captive foe beneath the king's feet may be pure symbolism, but it is quite within the range of possibility that they did so serve to grace the royal triumph. In most instances at Medinet Habu Ramses III stands on a platform surrounded by a balustrade on which rests a pillow or cushion. On the cushion the king leans with his left arm while he gesticulates with his right. Behind him sometimes appear his chariot and horses, while occasionally a crenelated fortress occupies the corner of the scene, serving to localize the event at some particular spot. But there are other instances in which the Pharaoh stands on the platform with no accessories that in any way indicate the circumstances of the action. Among these latter is the scene of Figure 15.³

¹ Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians* (transl. by A. M. Blackman), pp. 272-73 (from Papyrus Anastasi II).

² *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 23.

³ In the war reliefs of the 19th dynasty the Pharaoh is not represented as holding his review of spoils at such a window. Seti I has no scenes of victory, and Ramses II stands erect on his prostrate enemies (Luxor, in Wreszinski, *Atlas*. II. Teil, Taf. 73; Beit el-Wali, *ibid.*, Taf. 163a) or sits within a shrine as a god (Beit el-Wali, *ibid.*, Taf. 164a, 167) or sits in his chariot on the battlefield (Abu Simbel, *ibid.*, Taf. 171; Abydos, *ibid.*, Taf. 24). Have we at Medinet Habu a later custom

That these triumphs preceded the return to the capital is indicated by the sequence of the reliefs, for everywhere at Medinet Habu the homeward march follows immediately after the celebration of victory. It would seem, then, that the review might take place either directly after the battle and on the field itself, or at one or another of the royal residences and before the window of royal appearances. It might occur at some distance from Thebes; but the culmination of the campaign, which had been conducted with the blessing of Amon, would be the triumphal entry into Thebes and the presentation of the prisoners and spoil before the god. Undoubtedly another gathering before the window took place at Thebes also, and here the trophies from the bodies of the slain might again be in evidence.¹

It is interesting to note that, while the king is represented as drawing his bow with either hand according as he faces right or left, the Medinet Habu artists have been careful always to depict him in these triumphal scenes as leaning on his *left* arm and emphasizing his address with his *right* hand. In order, however, that his figure may not be obscured, the sculptor has presented the Pharaoh as if standing outside the nearer balustrade of the platform. To a modern eye this arrangement leads to extraordinary results. In Figure 16, for example, the left arm of the king, though bent in the position it would assume were it resting on the cushion, yet finds itself apparently resting merely on air, while the pillow, transferred to the right side of the royal figure along with the balustrade, seemingly interferes with the free movement of the right arm. To the modern this seems ludicrous, but the Egyptian regarded it as quite natural. He had given all the facts of the situation—the bent left arm, the extended right obviously in the act of reinforcing the royal words, the nearer side of the balus-

according to which the celebration was postponed till some royal residence with its window of appearances was reached; or has the Egyptian artist, who frequently saw his sovereign at the palace window and heard him address his court therefrom, merely drawn the king in this familiar situation without reference to the real facts of the case?

¹ What ultimately became of these gruesome trophies is not known. By the time they had been carried from the Delta or Asia to Thebes on the backs of donkeys or in chariots, they must, one would think, have been anything but the "pleasant" subject of poetic attention which the writer of Papyrus Anastasi II considered them to have been. Amenhotep II hung the severed hands from his Asiatic campaign on the walls of Thebes, a not unlikely destination for all such trophies.

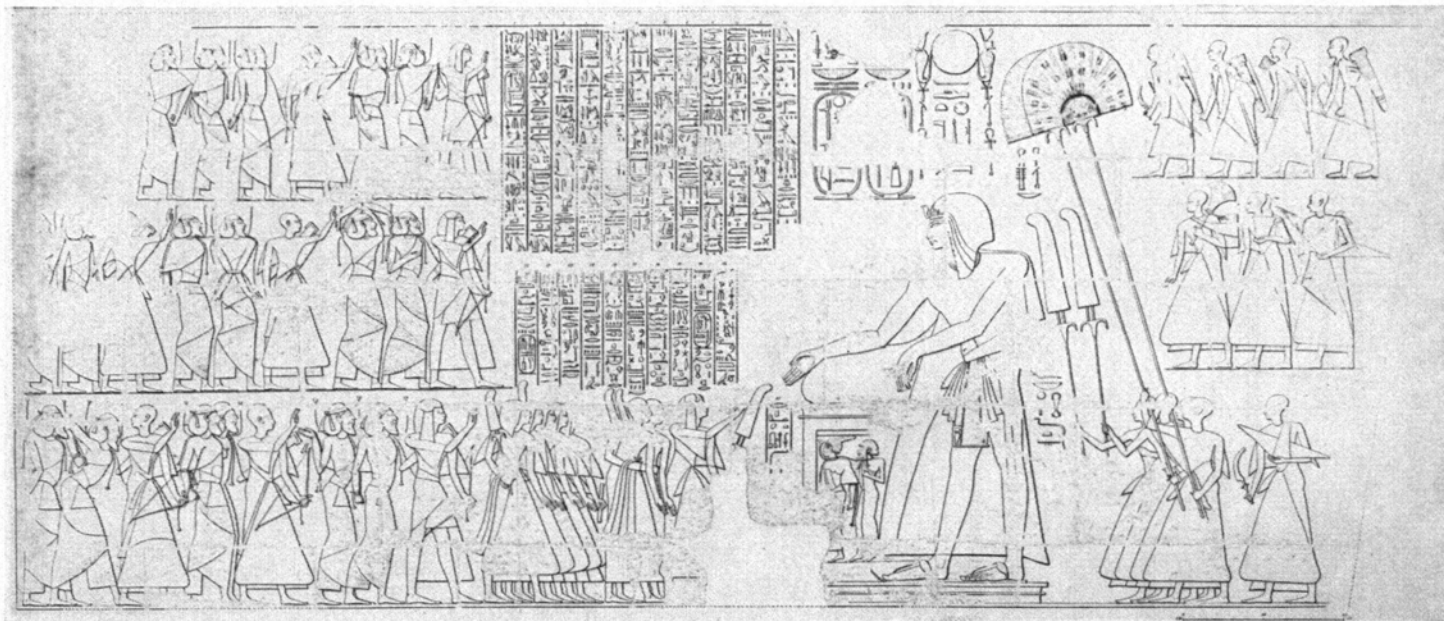


FIG. 16.—RAMSES III CELEBRATING HIS VICTORY OVER THE SYRIANS

The king, clad in the mantle worn on ceremonial occasions, stands in the window of royal appearances with his personal attendants behind him and the chief members of his court before him. The captains of the army lead up Syrian prisoners while the monarch harangues his followers (his words are recorded in the upper of the two inscriptions) and the courtiers reply with flattering eulogies (in the bottom inscription).

trade (or possibly its front) with the cushion upon it. What more could be needed? The exact relation of these facts had to be modified because of his reluctance to obscure the figure of the king by placing the balustrade between the Pharaoh and the beholder. But the artist's treatment of the subject satisfied all the demands of good Egyptian art, which was concerned not so much with things as they seem, that is, with a point of view, as with things as they are, that is, with what is known to be present in its proper relation to the artist's theme.

THE SYRIAN WARS

The wars in Asia are shown in two series of reliefs, one on the outside and one within on the north wall of the first court of the temple. Whether they have to do with the same campaign or with different wars it is impossible to say. Ramses III laid no particular emphasis on his undertakings in Asia other than his defeat of the Sea Peoples in the year 8. The inscription of the year 5¹ speaks of troubles in Syria apparently occasioned by the invasion of Syria-Palestine by the northerners. As a result of the disturbed conditions in their own land, many of the Syrians seem to have sought refuge in Egypt, where they hoped for a more peaceful existence, though one of exile. When the invaders had been beaten back from the borders of Egypt in the year 8, it is possible that Ramses III set about the reorganization of some of the provinces in Asia that had been disturbed by the presence of the invaders. These Syrian reliefs may be a vague record of this enterprise. But the inscriptions accompanying the reliefs are too general in content to give us any data upon which to build. That the Pharaoh campaigned in Asia seems certain; what he accomplished is unknown.

If we may trust the reliefs themselves, Ramses penetrated far into the north of Syria to the confines of the Hittite regions of Asia Minor, then desolated by the invasions from the north that had driven the Sea Peoples into Syria-Palestine. The series of reliefs on the outside of the north wall begins with the siege of two fortresses manned by unmistakably Hittite garrisons (Fig. 17). One of these structures still bears the name of Arzawa, but the name of the other is lost. The whole scene is in the approved traditional style, belonging plainly to the series that has survived from the 19th dynasty at Karnak. That

¹ *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pls. 27 and 28.

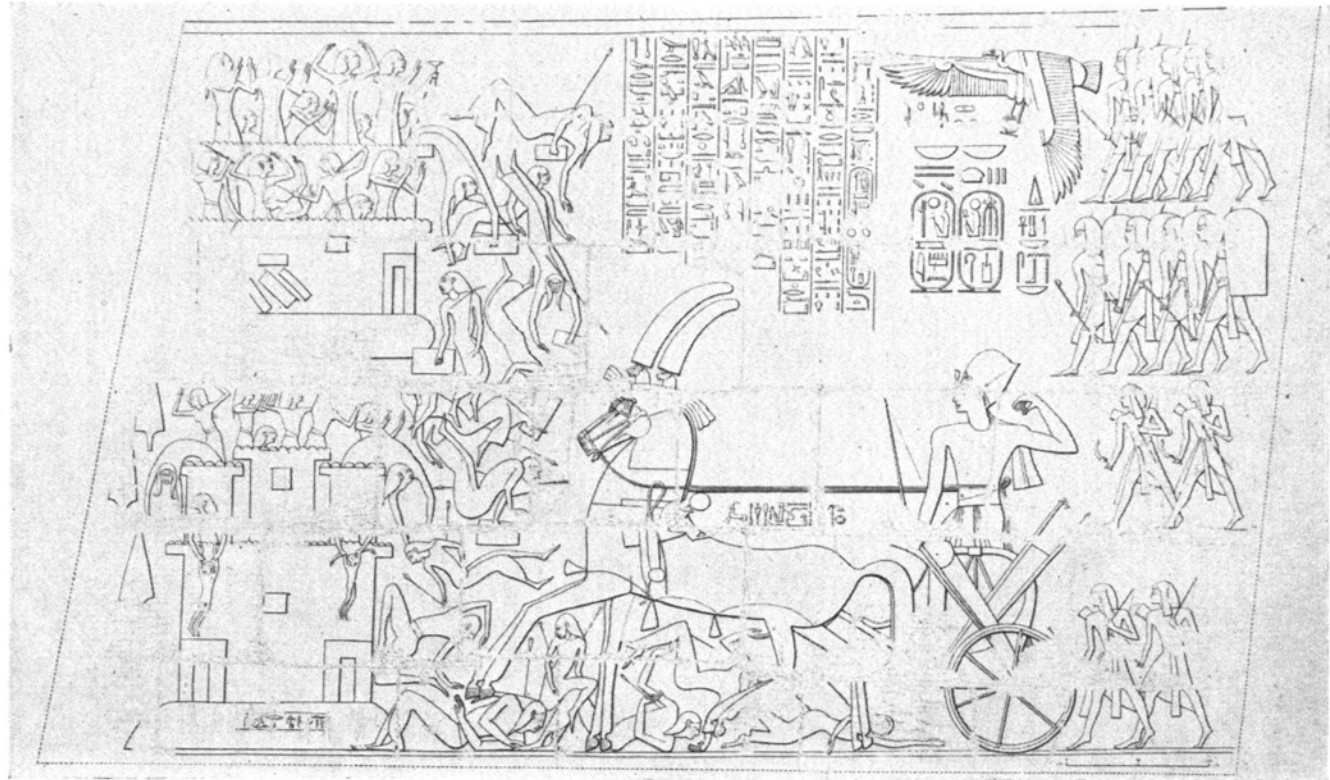


FIG. 17.—RAMSES III ATTACKING TWO HITTITE TOWNS

The king stands in his chariot, his horses advancing at a stately pace instead of in the headlong charge usual in battle scenes. The Pharaoh, having just discharged his arrow, has lowered his bow while he watches the flight of the missile. So absorbed is he that his left hand still remains in the position it assumed as he released the string. The Hittite fortresses are already in the hands of the Egyptians, who are engaged in completing the discomfiture of the garrisons. Dead Hittites appear to rain from the walls or pour themselves over the ramparts in the spineless manner in which Egyptian art seems to have depicted such attitudes. Some of the enemy hold aloft flaming braziers, probably as tokens of homage or surrender, or hand young children over the parapets as peace offerings, a regular practice under such circumstances if we may trust the reliefs. The doors of the upper fortress fall from their pivots. Altogether it is a scene of as complete demoralization as the Egyptian artist could well produce.

Ramses III ever reached the Hittite district of Arzawa and laid siege to the town of that name is difficult to believe. Other monarchs before him had done so and had recorded the achievement on their monuments. Ramses III also must include in his records such an event. The same conclusion is probably true of the next relief in the series, the siege and capture of "Tunip of the land of Kheta" (Fig. 18). This is an extremely interesting composition with some striking details. The king in his chariot, with uplifted sword, has grasped the Syrian chief by the hair and seems about to dispatch him. The Pharaoh's attitude, with one leg thrown over the front of his chariot and his foot resting on the tongue, thus giving him greater freedom of action, is not uncommon in battle and hunting scenes¹ and is probably drawn from life. The *mêlée* of battle before him is vigorous, not too confused, more successful as a composition than many such pieces. But the chief interest of the relief centers on the town and its besiegers.

According to the evidence here given, Tunip was a walled town protected by a moat or stream (Fig. 19). Before it the Sherden advance, apparently to prevent any attempt on the part of the inhabitants to escape. In scenes depicting the sieges of towns this was regularly the rôle of the Sherden. They do not seem to have been used for the more immediate attack on the walls. The scaling of the fortress, which must have been the more hazardous part of the operations, was, if we can trust the reliefs, always left for the native Egyptian troops. Was it that the Sherden were not skilled in the necessary methods of attack, or is their absence to be ascribed to the same reason that deprived them of a part in the representations of the triumphal celebrations of victory?² Perhaps in these records, which were to perpetuate for "millions of years" the story of the Pharaoh's triumph, the foreign contingents were intentionally omitted where the greatest honors were to be recorded. Perhaps in actual fact, just as in battle they seem regularly to have been sent forward in advance to clear the way for the Egyptian forces, so they would bear the brunt of the attack on the walled towns, while the Egyptian troops followed to reap the harvest of victory.

Before the town is a group of four figures, bowmen clad in pointed

¹ Cf. Fig. 26.

² See *Medinet Habu*, I, 4, n. 24.

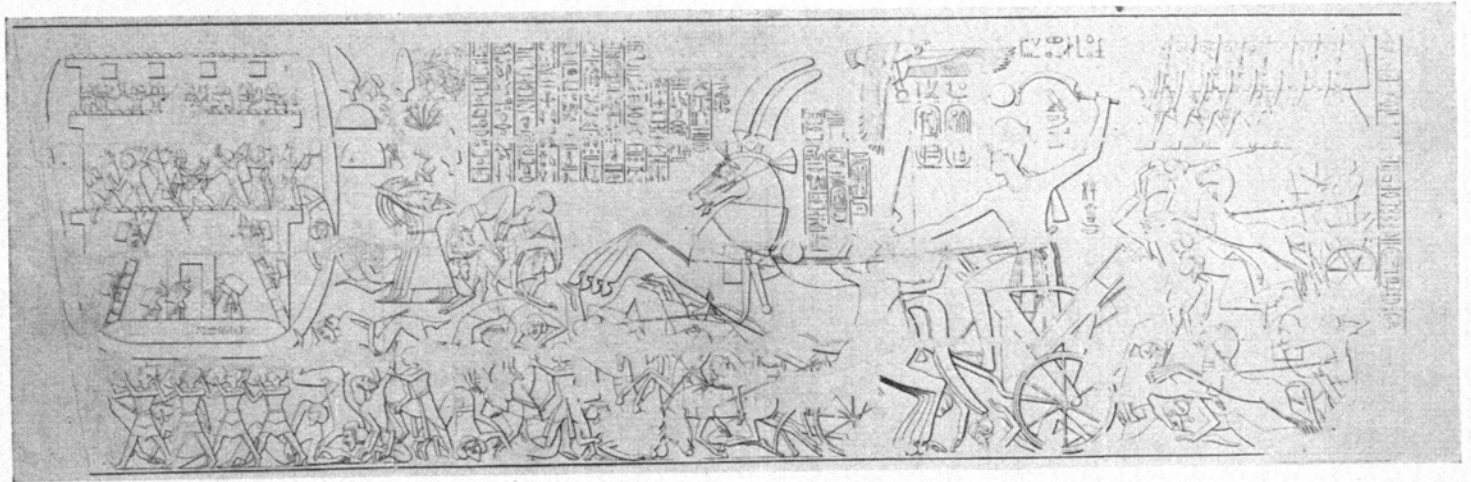


FIG. 18.—RAMSES III ATTACKING THE CITY OF TUNIP

helmets and long enveloping garments.¹ Three Egyptians are engaged in battering in the gates of the fortress, while others are scaling the walls by means of ladders. Here the artist has become a little involved, for not only has he placed two men one on either side of the same ladder, but he has so confused their positions that one of them has one arm and one leg on the front of the ladder and the other arm and other leg on the back. It is a good example of the Egyptian's carelessness in such matters. The town is already practically captured, for an Egyptian trumpeter blows a flourish from the walls, and a standard-bearer beside him has planted the regimental ensign on the captured fortress. Not the least interesting part of the scene is that depicting the besieging Egyptians destroying the groves of trees about the town. It reminds us of the passage in the annals of Thutmose III where, in recounting the siege of Megiddo, the record reads: "They measured [this] city, surrounded with an inclosure, walled about with green timber of all their pleasant trees." Or again: "Behold, his majesty overthrew the city of Arvad, with its grain, cutting down all its pleasant trees." Of Kadesh, Thutmose records that he "overthrew it, cut down its groves, harvested its grain." The destruction of the fruit groves surrounding the Syrian towns was a regular part of the attack upon one of their fortified places.

On the north wall of the first court is a scene giving the siege of an Amorite town the name of which is lost, if it was ever recorded. The fortress is drawn in greater detail than elsewhere at Medinet Habu (Fig. 20), but the details of attack present in the siege of Tunip are lacking. There are some very fine heads among the Syrian garrison, while they seem to be prepared for a stouter defense than is usual in

¹ These are probably the royal princes, who frequently occupy this position in the Medinet Habu reliefs. Cf. *ibid.*, Pl. 37; this article, Fig. 12; and Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Taf. 146 (= *M.H.*, Vol. II, Pl. 94). A group with apparently the same pointed helmets is shown *ibid.*, Vol. I, Pl. 18, just below the forelegs of the king's horses, and in one or two other places in the same relief. This is probably the usual Egyptian helmet, but drawn in these cases a little differently from the form in which it is elsewhere represented. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Taf. 62b, a Libyan battle relief of Ramses III's in his little temple in the Mut compound at Karnak, has several figures so clad. Rosellini, *op. cit.*, Pl. CVI, a Kadesh relief from Abu Simbel, contains several figures wearing such garments; but, in part at least, the drawing is misleading owing to faulty work by the copyist, who has mistaken the long shaven heads of some of the king's immediate companions for pointed helmets such as are shown in our Figure 18.

these 20th dynasty reliefs. Captives being brought back ostensibly from the Syrian wars are shown in Figure 21.

NON-MILITARY SCENES

Not the least interesting of the subjects recorded has been the façade of the palace on the south side of the first court. Something

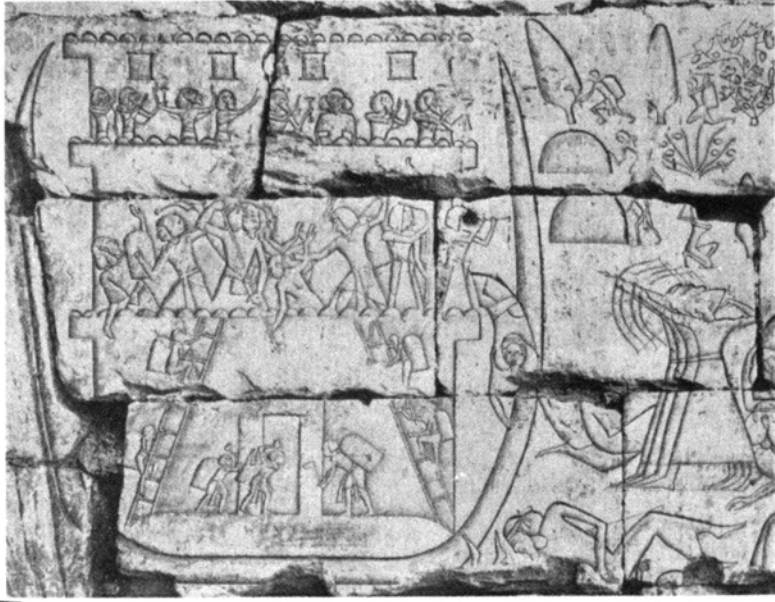


FIG. 19.—THE CITY OF TUNIP ATTACKED BY THE EGYPTIANS

A detail from the scene shown in Figure 18. Here, as in Figure 17, the Egyptians are already in practical possession of the town. Behind the Egyptian trumpeter is a standard-bearer. The pole of his standard still survives, but of the object itself only the top of the feather which surmounted it can now be seen on the stone above. A Syrian on the upper wall is suspending a child over the ramparts. The feet of the unfortunate remain in front of the head of the Egyptian below. In the upper right corner of the scene the Egyptians are carrying out the destruction of the groves surrounding the city. Three men are engaged in felling trees, possibly olives. Two others are apparently setting fire to heaps of grain, though the convincing details which may have originally appeared in color are now lacking. The artist has also shown a grape vine and a pomegranate. He seems to have intended to include the chief products of Syrian agriculture.

has already been said about the scene that occupies the left third of the wall (Fig. 2). The central section (Fig. 22) is one of the most decorative compositions in Egypt, though it is now in a sadly muti-

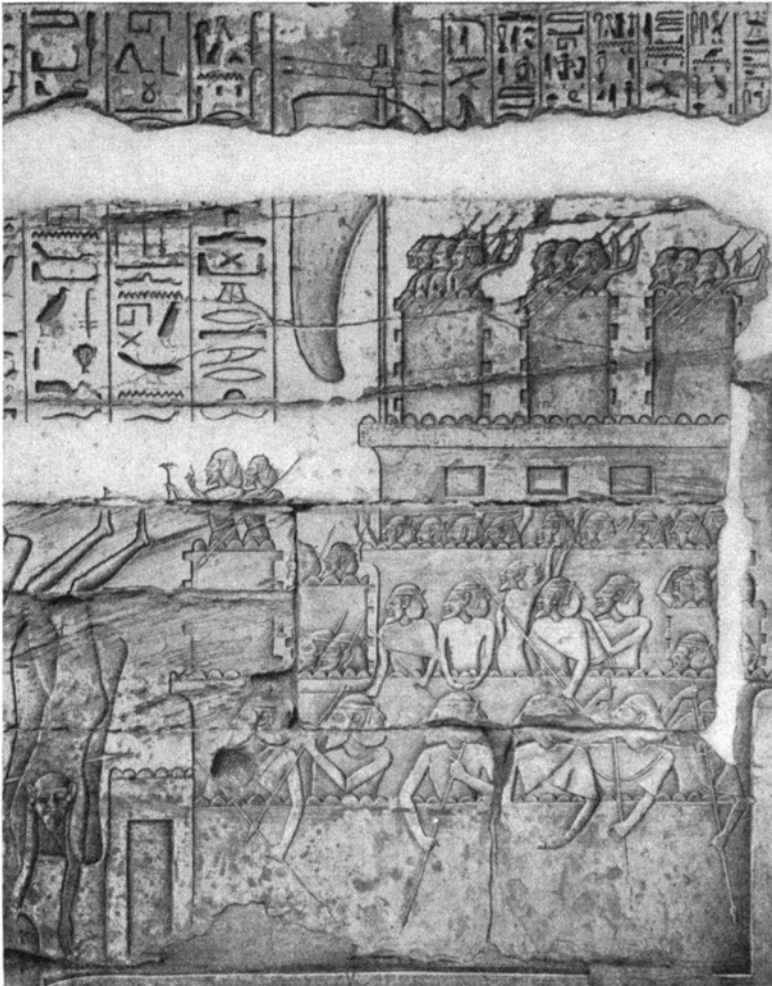


FIG. 20.—A FORTRESS OF THE LAND OF AMOR

The garrison of this town is less demoralized, more ready to defend itself, than is usual in Ramses III's reliefs. One would judge that the attack had barely begun, yet signs of dismay are already visible among the defenders. A high pole with a large banner surmounts the fortress (cf. W. Max Müller, *Egyptological Researches*, II [Washington, D.C., 1910], 158-59). The two arrows at the top of the pole are presumably the result of the king's archery, to judge from analogous representations at the Ramesseum and Luxor temples. The modeling of the faces of the Syrians is more carefully done and more highly successful than is usually the case at Medinet Habu.

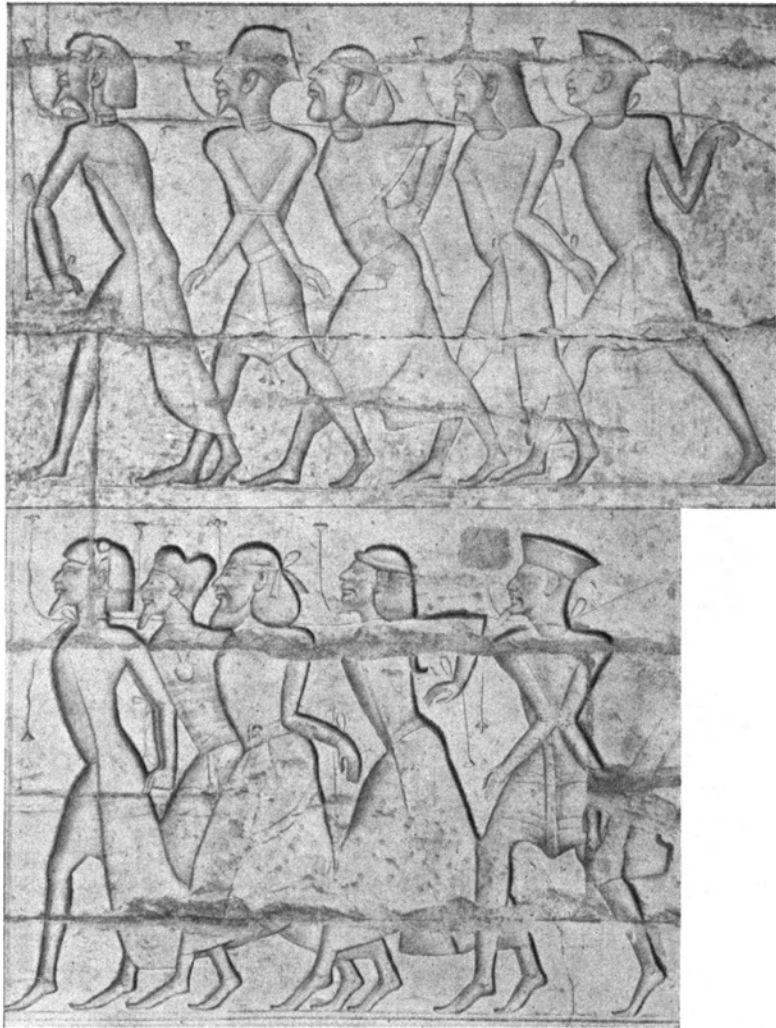


FIG. 21.—CAPTIVE FOREIGNERS DRIVEN BEFORE THE KING'S CHARIOT

These groups are highly selective, containing representatives of most of the nations with whom the Egyptians warred, except the negro tribes. Libyans, South Palestinians, Syrians, Hittites, and members of the Sea Peoples are included. The choice of figures is probably intended to symbolize the wide victories of the king rather than to form a sober record of the captives from any one campaign.

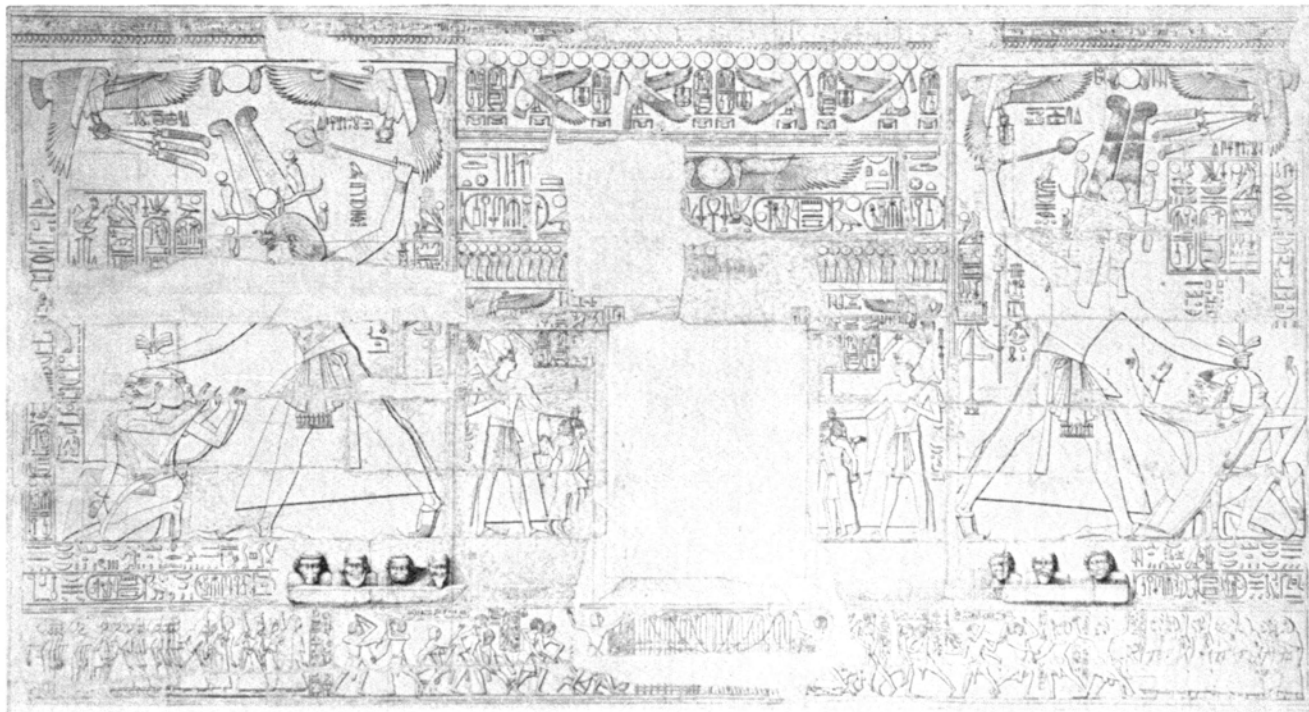


FIG. 22.—DECORATIONS SURROUNDING THE WINDOW OF ROYAL APPEARANCES

In spite of its present mutilated condition, this is a very fine composition. The heads set in a row below the king's feet represent the foreign peoples against whom the Egyptians campaigned in the incessant wars of the period. Originally they extended completely across below the window.

lated condition, due to changes during the reign of Ramses III and also to the fact that this wall formed one side of the later Coptic houses that were built under the colonnade. The center of the area is occupied by the opening of the window of royal appearances, from which the Pharaoh was wont to view the spoils of victory, also various games and festivities, and to extend rewards and favors to those whom he delighted to honor. A row of heads of typical foreign peoples once extended entirely across the middle portion of the wall below the window. Of these heads only seven remain *in situ*, seven more were hacked off by Ramses III when the window was enlarged during the latter part of his reign, and the rest were removed and re-used in later construction whence Hölscher has since recovered them. The design furnishes one of the most striking illustrations of the oft recurring phrase uttered by the god to the king, "I have placed all lands together under thy sandals," or, in the words of the Hebrew prophet, "I have made thine enemies thy footstool." The Egyptian use of balanced decorative elements clustered symmetrically around some central point, in this case the window, is shown in remarkable completeness.

Below the window, and forming the lowest register of the whole wall, a relief for which no parallel is known (Fig. 23) shows sports and games between Egyptians and captive(?) foreigners being viewed by the Pharaoh, his court, and foreign ambassadors of neighboring states. That such events actually took place in the court before the window, and at other residences of the monarch, we cannot doubt. The inscription of the year 8 states: "The travelers and messengers who behold him over Egypt are bowed and bent before him. They say daily: Montu in his real form is he who is over Egypt."¹ Figure 23 shows just such "travelers and messengers" present at the games. In a model letter to a Nubian prince an Egyptian official is made to say: "Be mindful of the day when the tribute is brought, when thou passest before the king beneath the window, and the counselors are ranged on either side in front of his majesty, and the chiefs and envoys of all lands stand there marveling and viewing the tribute."² Substitute "games" for "tribute" in the foregoing quotation, and it would serve as an exact description of the scene before us.

¹ *Medinet Habu*, Vol. I, Pl. 46, line 6.

² Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

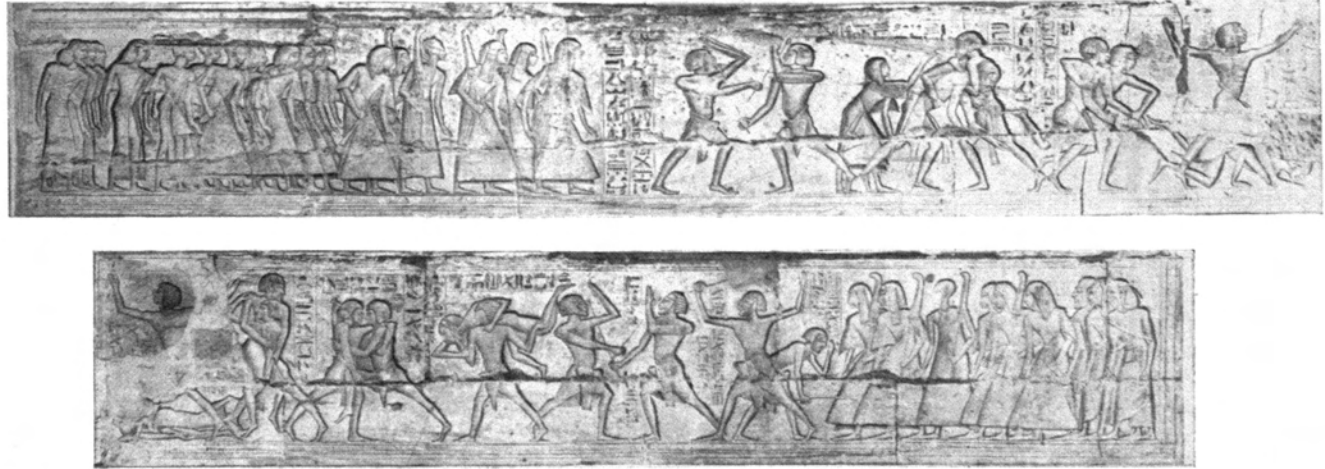


FIG. 23.—MEMBERS OF THE COURT AND FOREIGN AMBASSADORS VIEWING THE SPORTS BEFORE THE WINDOW OF ROYAL APPEARANCES

Wrestling and singletick were favorite sports with the Egyptians. In this scene the Egyptians contend with foreigners as the Pharaoh and the court look on. Such contests as this undoubtedly took place in the court before the window. The short inscriptions above and before the contestants give the words of the actors in the scene. Thus the Egyptian wrestler on the left addresses his Nubian opponent: "Woe to thee, thou negro enemy! I make thee take a fall, helpless, in the presence of Pharaoh." The singletick fighter in the center right calls out to his adversary: "Stand fast and I will make thee see the hand of a warrior!" The foremost of the spectators on the right is a royal prince. The inscription before him, carved during Ramses III's reign, reads: "King's son, commander in chief of the army," followed by a blank space for the later insertion of the name. The name, however, was apparently not carved during Ramses III's day, but someone placed the prince's name in the lacuna after both Ramses III and the prince were dead; for the inserted name reads, "Ramses, deceased," and furthermore a uraeus has been added to the forehead of the figure. Both name and uraeus are lightly carved. It would seem that the prince had actually ascended the throne after Ramses III's death and had then died in his turn before the lacuna was filled. When the inscriptions on the temple wall were first carved, blank spaces were left here and there for the later addition of names of members of the royal family. However, no such names, other than those of the Pharaoh himself, are contemporary with Ramses III, but wherever they occur were apparently added later. We know that toward the end of the Pharaoh's reign a conspiracy against his life was hatched in the harem and that the queen and one or more of the royal princes were involved. Had the king already, at the time the temple was first decorated, premonitions of such treachery within the family which induced him to omit their names from his temple records?

That the window of royal appearances was a necessary part of any palace we may be sure. It is constantly represented at Amarna, and traces of it have been found elsewhere at other sites, while it occurs in several paintings in the Theban tombs. Such a scene as this, probably almost identical with it, occurred at the Ramesseum on the palace front beneath the window; for the block at present placed by Daressy just below the window at Medinet Habu, though found by him elsewhere in this temple, came originally from the Ramesseum, as witnessed by the nature of the stone, the character of the carving, and a fragment of one of Ramses II's inscriptions still surviving upon it. Yet it fits remarkably well into its present position, and the portions of the two figures at either end of the stone are obviously to be completed as Ramses III's sculptors designed the corresponding figures at Medinet Habu.

The remaining third of the palace façade is shown in Figure 24. The Pharaoh is there reviewing his stud, the restive steeds held by their halters by the grooms of the royal stables while the inevitable trumpeter blows his instrument. Below the figure of the king appears a group of courtiers, a replica on a smaller scale of the group still surviving in the corresponding place on the façade of the palace at the Ramesseum (Fig. 25). Behind the king are his personal attendants, who play so conspicuous a part in many of the scenes at Medinet Habu. This is a well-balanced and very decorative scene. It must have been a gorgeous sight when the color was still preserved, when the two doorways on either side, now so severely mutilated, were still intact with their rich fayence inlay decorations, and when the doors themselves, overlaid with copper in beaten work or with gold leaf, still swung on their pivots. Ramses III need not have been ashamed of his work when he held his first public audience from the window of royal appearances in his new palace-temple at Medinet Habu.

One of the most imposing reliefs in Egypt is that of the king hunting wild bulls near the marshes of the river (Fig. 26). It is placed in a peculiarly favorable position to be viewed today, though originally it was obscured by the first palace and actually concealed by the second. It was this latter fact that undoubtedly preserved it from mutilation by deep gouges such as have elsewhere so greatly injured the

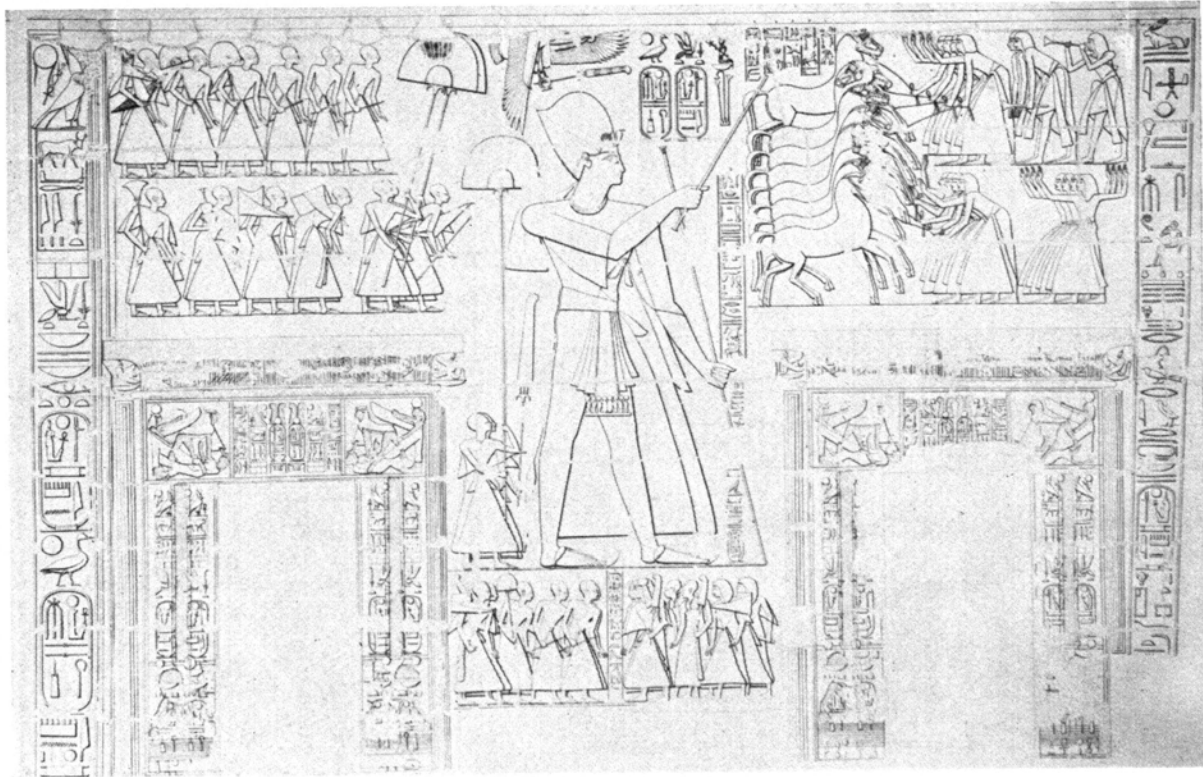


FIG. 24.—RAMSES III INSPECTING THE ROYAL STUD

The pharaohs seem to have been very proud of their horses. Ramses II declared, after the Battle of Kadesh, that the span that had stood him in such good stead in his moment of supreme danger, when he charged single-handed into the victorious Hittite hosts, should thenceforth be fed daily under his own eye. The royal stables are not infrequently mentioned in inscriptions. The horses' heads in this relief form a fine group, though much injured when the wall on which they appear was used as part of a Coptic house.

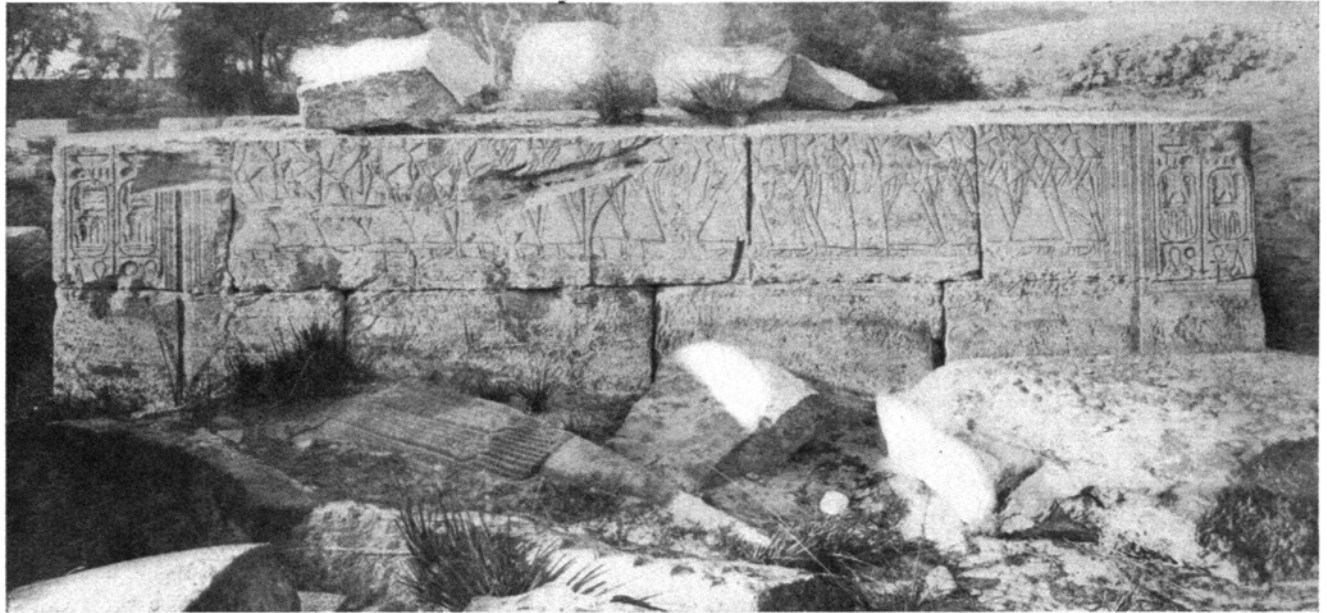


FIG. 25.—RAMSES II'S COURT

This figure shows the only remnant of relief from the façade of Ramses II's palace at the Ramesseum remaining *in situ*. A comparison with the group below the Pharaoh's feet in Figure 24 will show the similarity in arrangement of the two reliefs and support the contention that at the Ramesseum the south wall of the first court served as a pattern for the decoration of the corresponding wall at Medinet Habu. At the Ramesseum there are more individuals represented, since all the figures at that temple are drawn on a smaller scale than those at Medinet Habu and are therefore frequently more numerous within a given area.

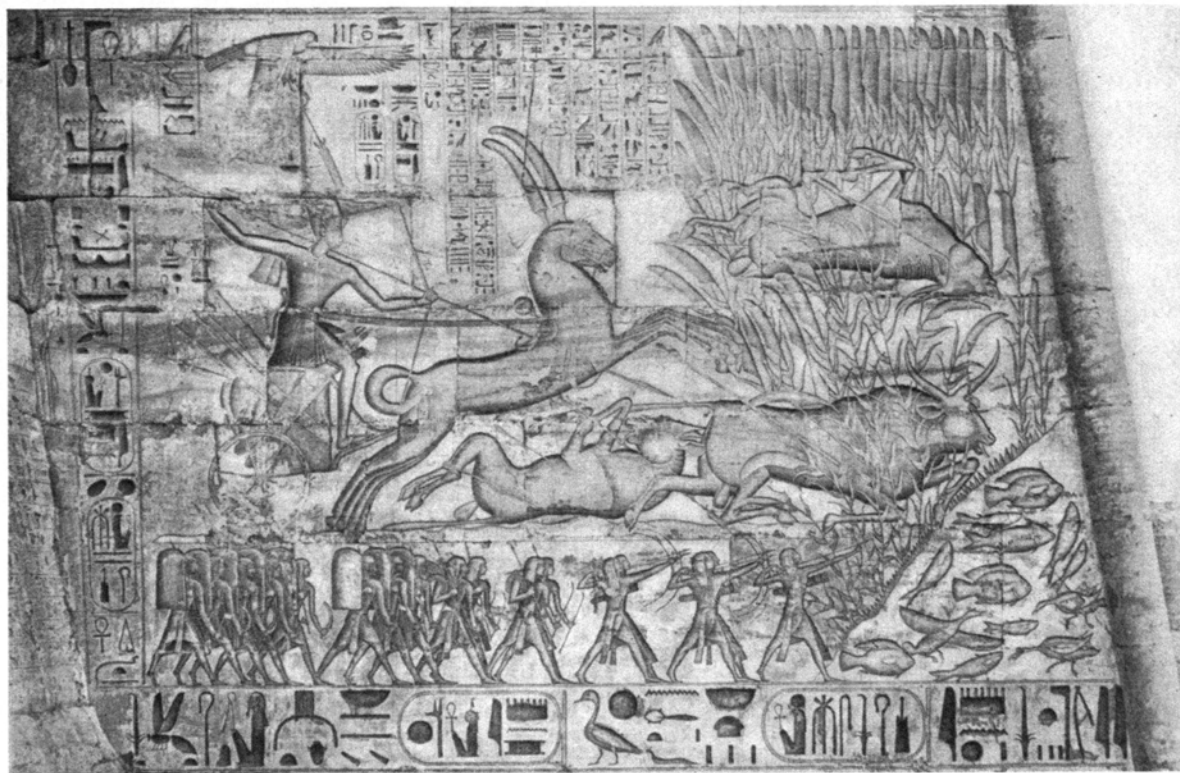


FIG. 26.—RAMSES III HUNTING WILD BULLS

This scene is one of the masterpieces of Egyptian artistic composition. It is full of life and vigor. The huge figures of the wild cattle charging into the reed swamps by the river are magnificent creations. The artist has achieved in the handling of his subject a depth that is rarely seen in Egyptian reliefs, though it is doubtful whether in this instance it is the result of conscious effort. The fine swing of the marching men in the lower register adds greatly to the movement of the piece. This composition is surely the work of a master artist. Did he live under Ramses III or under one of his predecessors? One is never sure at Medinet Habu what is original composition of the 20th dynasty and what is mere imitation of earlier work. In any event, the sculptor who produced this relief was surely at least a skilled craftsman. Compare the desert hunt in Fig. 27.

outer walls of the temple.¹ No line drawing, we learned by experience, can possibly do justice to this work of art, for the life of the piece rests largely on the boldness of the carving, on the plastic elements. When drawn in outline only, the wild cattle seem scarcely worth while, and the flatness of such a drawing deprives the composition of one of its most remarkable characteristics, its depth, a rare element in Egyptian art. It was therefore decided not to reproduce this scene by the same method as that used for the reliefs in general, but to publish a re-touched, or rather an emphasized, photograph, so as to give the effect produced when the afternoon sun falls aslant the wall and the animals and marching men seem to spring to life. There is no real addition or subtraction in this plate. It is a far closer approximation to the original than any mere photograph can be.² It is interesting that, when examined closely, this relief displays more corrections than almost any other in the temple. Practically every part of it has undergone change during the progress of the original work. In the first rendering, for instance, the long lance held by the Pharaoh extended far forward of its present position and pierced the flank of the bull at which it is

¹ In *M.H.*, I, 3, n. 21, I suggested that these grooves or gouges in the temple walls are the result of scrapings by the ancient villagers in order to secure sand from the stones of a building held in superstitious regard to be used as charms or medicine. I have since learned that this practice still persists at Karnak and Edfu (and undoubtedly at other sites also), where women especially resort to these temples today to scrape off the sand from the crumbling walls. The material thus gathered is placed within a wet cloth and bound over the eyes, being considered efficacious for certain diseases. That the marks are not the result of sharpening tools, as has been suggested, is apparent from their shape, for they practically never show a flat surface but present a continuous curve from the top to the bottom and from side to side. The edge of any instrument would be utterly ruined were it whetted on such a surface. I have been informed that there are analogous practices in connection with certain old churches in Europe.

² The usefulness of a photograph in checking the accuracy of a drawing has led one reviewer of our *OIC*, No. 5, on the earlier work of the Expedition, to express a desire that photographs, as well as drawings, of the reliefs should be published. In support of his opinion he suggests that Figure 17 of that "Communication," from a photograph, indicates a mistake in the drawing of the same scene as shown *ibid.*, Figure 18. A re-examination of the original on the temple wall shows that, as was suggested in the "Communication" reviewed, a photograph has again proved misleading and the photograph *plus* the eye of the artist has given the correct rendering of the ancient Egyptian's work. It is hoped that a reinforced photograph such as that shown here in Figure 26 may prove to be a still more reliable reproduction.

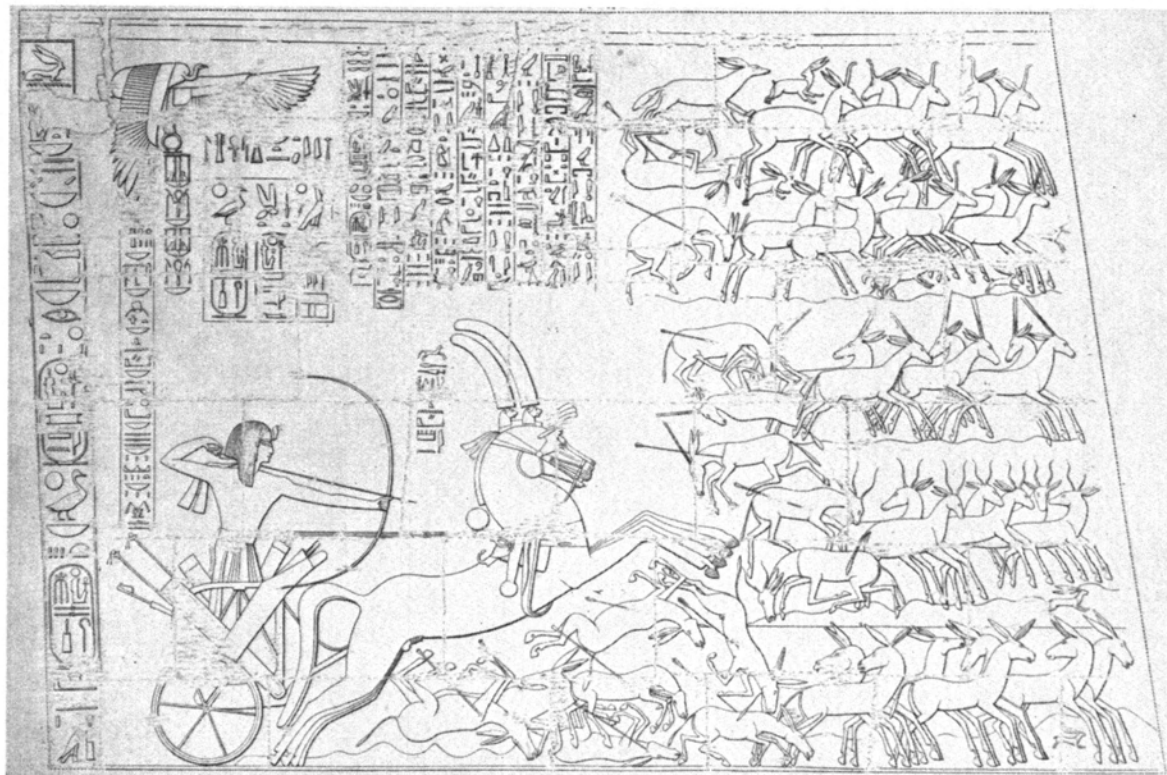


FIG. 27.—RAMSES III HUNTING DESERT GAME

The original of this figure was much obscured by wasps' nests, which abounded in all the deeper cuttings. When the hard masonry of the insects was removed, the relief revealed proved of considerable interest and no small merit. The wild hares are perhaps the least successful of the artist's creations; but some of the figures of the larger animals, especially those of the asses in the lowest register, are well executed.

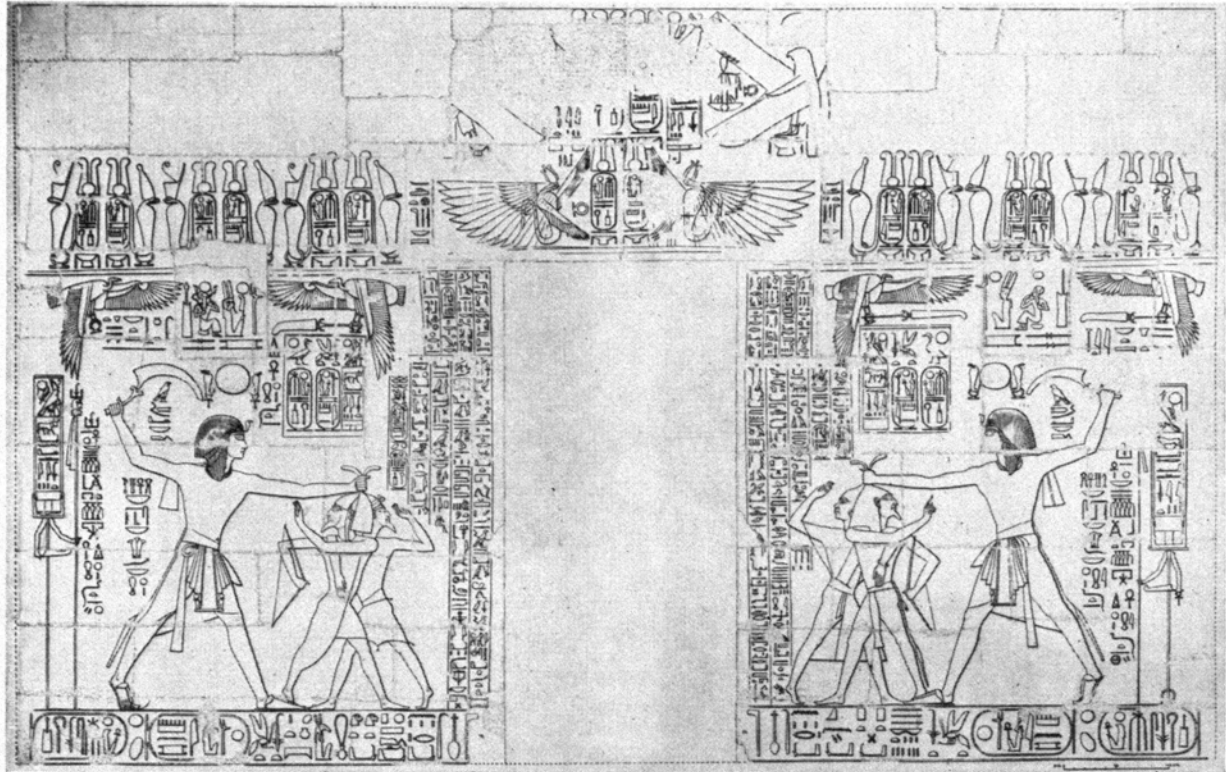


FIG. 28.—THE ENTRANCE TO THE WINDOW OF ROYAL APPEARANCES

This relief originally adorned the north wall of a hall in the royal palace. The roof of the hall was at first supported on four rows of columns (Hölscher in *OIC*, No. 5, Figs. 33 and 34). Later the hall was made more lofty, and for the four columns two were substituted. The king's monogram above his head and the two short inscriptions at either side of the top of the doorway mark the spots where the architraves of the first palace were set into the wall. When these architraves were removed at the reconstruction of the palace, blocks of stone were set into the recesses so created and were decorated as shown in the drawing. The whole device above the door was also altered to conform to the larger free area of the wall. This portion of the relief, therefore, shows extensive alterations. The remainder of the composition is very successful, though the artist has given the king two right hands and has certainly failed with the captives' arms where they hang across the shoulders of their comrades.

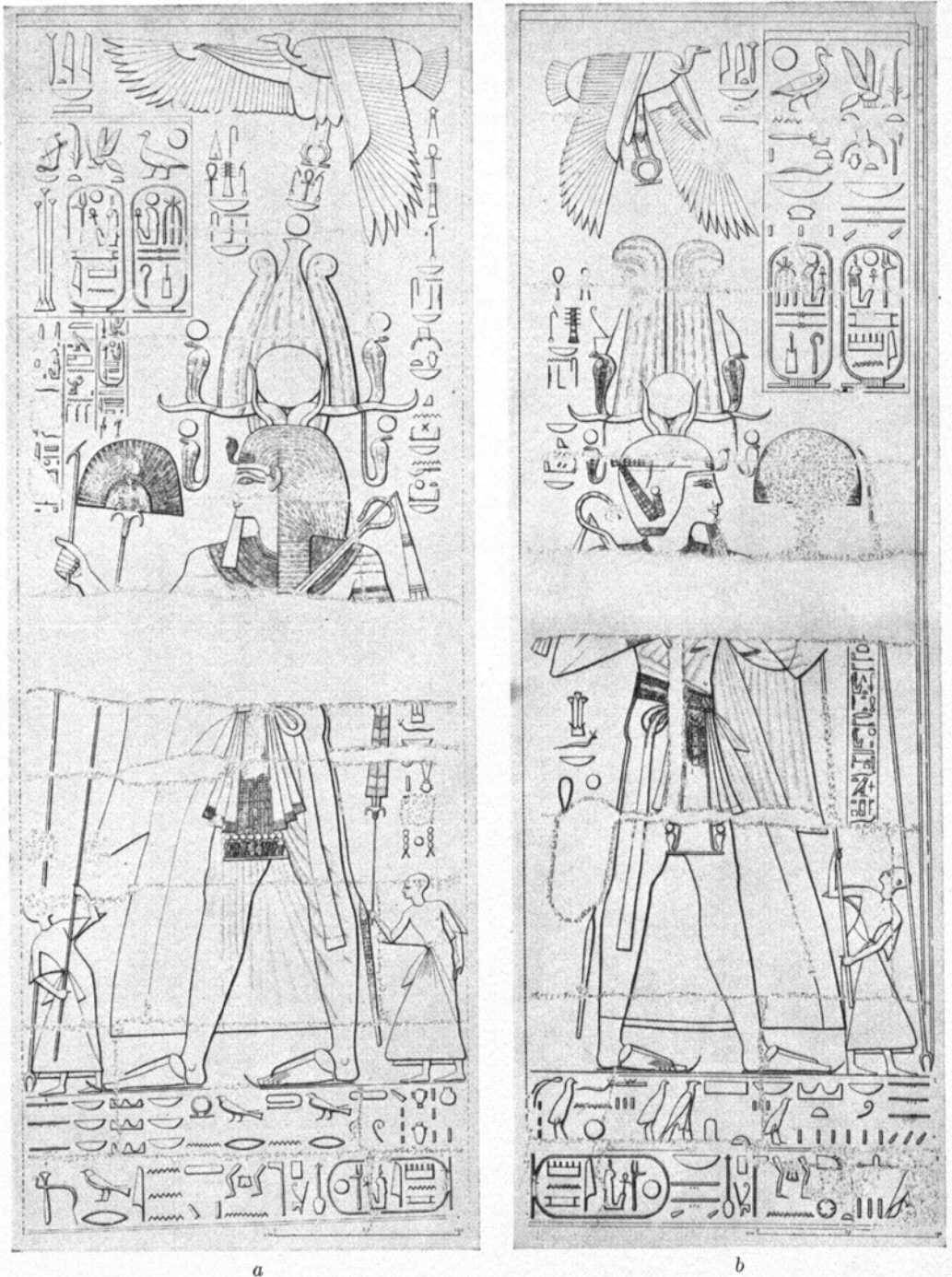
aimed. The later revision shortened the weapon to more natural proportions. It is only the protecting wall that was built against it during



FIG. 29.—THE SOUTH COLONNADE OF THE FIRST COURT, LOOKING WEST

Ramses III's reign that has kept the correcting plaster in position and so preserved the beauty of the work.

Figure 28 shows the decoration surrounding the entrance to the window of royal appearances on the south or palace side. This was



a

b

FIG. 30.—THE PHAROAH ENTERING THE TEMPLE

The two panels at the ends of the north colonnade of the first court

subject to numerous changes when the second palace was built, but the general fine effect of the composition is not seriously marred. The two monograms of Ramses III between the vulture goddesses on



FIG. 31.—A STELA BY THE GATEWAY THROUGH THE FIRST PYLON

This is a badly preserved inscription, one of two in stela form carved at either side of the main entrance into the first court of the temple. It is dated in the twelfth year of Ramses III's reign and recounts the divine favors showered upon the Pharaoh. It reads much like one of the Hebrew psalms and is obviously a poetic composition, probably regarded as of considerable merit by its authors but only mildly impressive today.

either side above the royal figures were carved when the second palace was built, and belong to the later style of the reign, to that of the Fortified Gate rather than to that of the temple itself. Passing through the doorway and looking right and left from the window of royal appearances, we see the king, at either end of the colonnade (Fig. 29), in the act of entering the temple (Fig. 30)—splendid figures in conventional style with much of the color retained. They form one of the concluding plates of *Medinet Habu*, Volume II, and lead us along with the Pharaoh into the temple proper, among the religious scenes (cf. top of Fig. 31) now accumulating for our third large folio volume.

II

THE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

1929/30

BY UVO HÖLSCHER

INTRODUCTION

Our campaign of 1929/30 made great demands upon the powers of both workmen and leaders, for the north side of the Medinet Habu area which we had undertaken to clear contained far more rubbish than had the south side, which we had cleared during our first season (1927/28). The number of native workmen employed in excavation averaged, as in previous years, from two hundred and fifty to three hundred, about one-fourth of whom were our skilled workers from Guft.

All excavation in rainless Egypt is exceedingly unpleasant because of the troublesome dust which continually rises; but we suffered abnormally in this respect last season while removing the ruins of Coptic houses, where the fine dust was trying to the utmost. At times Medinet Habu was completely enveloped in an opaque and blinding cloud of dust which resembled the thick masses of smoke that hover over a great conflagration. One can thus easily understand how the workmen and their supervisors were handicapped so that at times it became necessary to arrange for a shorter schedule of working hours.

The writer was assisted in the season's work by Messrs. Hans Steckeweh and Harald Hanson. As the former unfortunately had to leave us in the middle of the winter for personal reasons, Mr. Siegfried Heise came to take his place. For a portion of the season Mr. Jack Bolles of the Anatolian Expedition joined us, and Mr. Gordon Loud tarried with us for several weeks on his way to Mesopotamia. The photographic work was carried on by Mr. Leichter, of Luxor, who was with us two or three days of each week. A not inconsiderable part of the work, that of arranging the finds, cataloguing, and the like, was taken over for a time by Frau Hölscher. When special need arose, particularly in philological questions, the epigraphic staff assisted us in all possible ways with service which we gratefully acknowledge.

Thus an excavation which had at first been mostly architectural in interest has gradually grown into an undertaking which touches all branches of science that are involved in Egyptian archeology.

For the next season there remain to us only the clearance of the west side of the Medinet Habu area and a few isolated investigations to be made outside of the great girdle wall, where several puzzling questions are still involved, the answers to which we are eagerly awaiting.

THE COPTIC TOWN OF JĒME

During the season of 1929/30 the area to the north of the Great Temple of Medinet Habu was cleared. The result of the excavation presented a somewhat different aspect from that of the opposite side, which we excavated in our first year and upon which we reported in "Oriental Institute Communications," Nos. 5 and 7. While in that area all the buildings, which formerly projected ten or fifteen meters above ground, had been entirely removed by modern excavators, extensive remains of Coptic houses could be perceived north of the temple even before we began to excavate. Here, therefore, we were confronted with the opportunity and the problem of wresting from the ruins part of the remains of old "Jēme," as the town was known in the seventh and eighth centuries.

To be sure, this task had very little connection with our primary object of recovering the plan of the temple and palace area of Ramses III. Still our immediate problem proved to be keenly fascinating and of no little scientific importance as well. For we had before us not an unknown mass of ruins similar to countless others in Egypt, but a town familiar from numerous papyri of the seventh and eighth centuries. These consist of bills of sale, deeds, wills, and the like, which, originating in "Castrum Jēme," have given us important insight into the legal situation in Upper Egypt at the time of the Arabic conquest A.D. 640.

It is necessary first of all to admit that unfortunately our secret ambition to unearth some new Jēme papyri has not yet met with success. Only papyrus scraps about as large as a finger tip have been found, though we have completely cleared several dozen Coptic houses, including their cellars. This failure to discover papyrus documents is probably more than accidental. It can be assumed that such

papyri as the *fellahin* have brought to light in the past were not left in antiquity as isolated rolls scattered here and there in private dwellings, but rather that they had been deposited in official archives, possibly in the houses of judges or of priests. For there they would not only have been protected against robbery and forgery, but also would have been guaranteed public credence. Since the well-known Jēme documents came on the market in groups of considerable size and not individually, it seems probable that, when the ruins of Medinet Habu suffered demolition, the *fellahin* discovered and plundered one or more such archives. Hence our own chances of unearthing papyrus documents are very meager. We shall have to content ourselves with whatever Coptic houses may accidentally have been spared in the outer zone.

Although our excavations have not been rewarded by the discovery of papyri, literary products of a humbler sort have come to light in the form of thousands of Coptic ostraka. These are potsherds and flat limestone flakes on which are written prescribed prayers, priestly admonitions, letters, business accounts, and the like. We may hope that some Coptic authority will find in them, on careful examination, valuable information concerning the time from the late Roman to the beginning of the early Arabic period.

But let us now consider what the excavation itself has revealed. We can clearly distinguish two main strata in this late Roman and Coptic town. In the lower stratum were found several bags and jars of small Roman coins which date, as is well known, from that period of decline in monetary values when single coins were absolutely worthless and only bags and jars containing a large number were accepted in exchange. This level must therefore be dated from the third to the fifth century after Christ. In the second level there appeared only a few of these worthless coins. In contrast, we unearthed two examples of a gold coin—the solidus of Heraclius, the last Byzantine emperor before the Arabic conquest—which would probably date this stratum in the sixth to eighth century. Study of the ostraka may later permit a more exact dating of certain groups of houses.

During these centuries, then, the area around the stone temple of Ramses III was filled with high mud-brick houses (Fig. 32), several of which were partially preserved. They consisted of three stories—



FIG. 32.—RUINS OF THE COPTIC HOUSES WHICH STOOD INSIDE MEDINET HABU AND HAD TO BE REMOVED DURING THE EXCAVATION

cellar, first floor, and second floor. Occasionally there were even traces of a third floor and flat roof.

The floor space in these houses was very limited (Figs. 33 and 34). Most of them consisted of two barrel-vaulted rooms, beside which a similarly vaulted staircase led to the upper floors. Light and air were admitted from the narrow street and possibly from a very narrow rear court. Such courts commonly served several adjacent buildings, and beneath them there were cellars. These, as well as those beneath the houses, usually had no windows, but only vents in their vaulted ceilings. Even on the first floor there were no true windows, only small slits admitting light and air, while on the second floor the windows were of only the most humble dimensions. On the whole, therefore, it must have been depressingly dark and gloomy in these houses. Only at the very top there must have been larger windows divided by columns, for small stone columns fitted for supporting lattice work have been found in the rubbish.

The doorways, like the rooms and stairs, were extraordinarily low and narrow. Those opening upon the street regularly possessed lintels of stone, which were usually decorated with Coptic crosses or similar ornaments.

Immediately inside the entrance in such houses was usually found a pair of water jars standing in a niche or on a stone bench, beneath which, as a rule, stood a bowl for the collection of the water which seeped through the porous clay of the jars and dripped to the ground. Because of this continued moisture the niches and benches for the jars were usually made of stone or burned brick and cemented with lime mortar.

Houses of this type stood clustered together in compact blocks with one or more courts for air and light in the center. Although most of the houses had doors which opened upon the street, there were others which were accessible from the inner court only. In these instances a long, narrow tunnel from the street passed beneath intervening structures and emerged into the court beyond.

Most striking are the extreme crookedness and narrowness of the streets. The widest of those which we have definitely determined had a width of only 1.80 meters, whereas the narrowest were from 1.10 to 1.20 meters. Blind alleys also were very numerous.

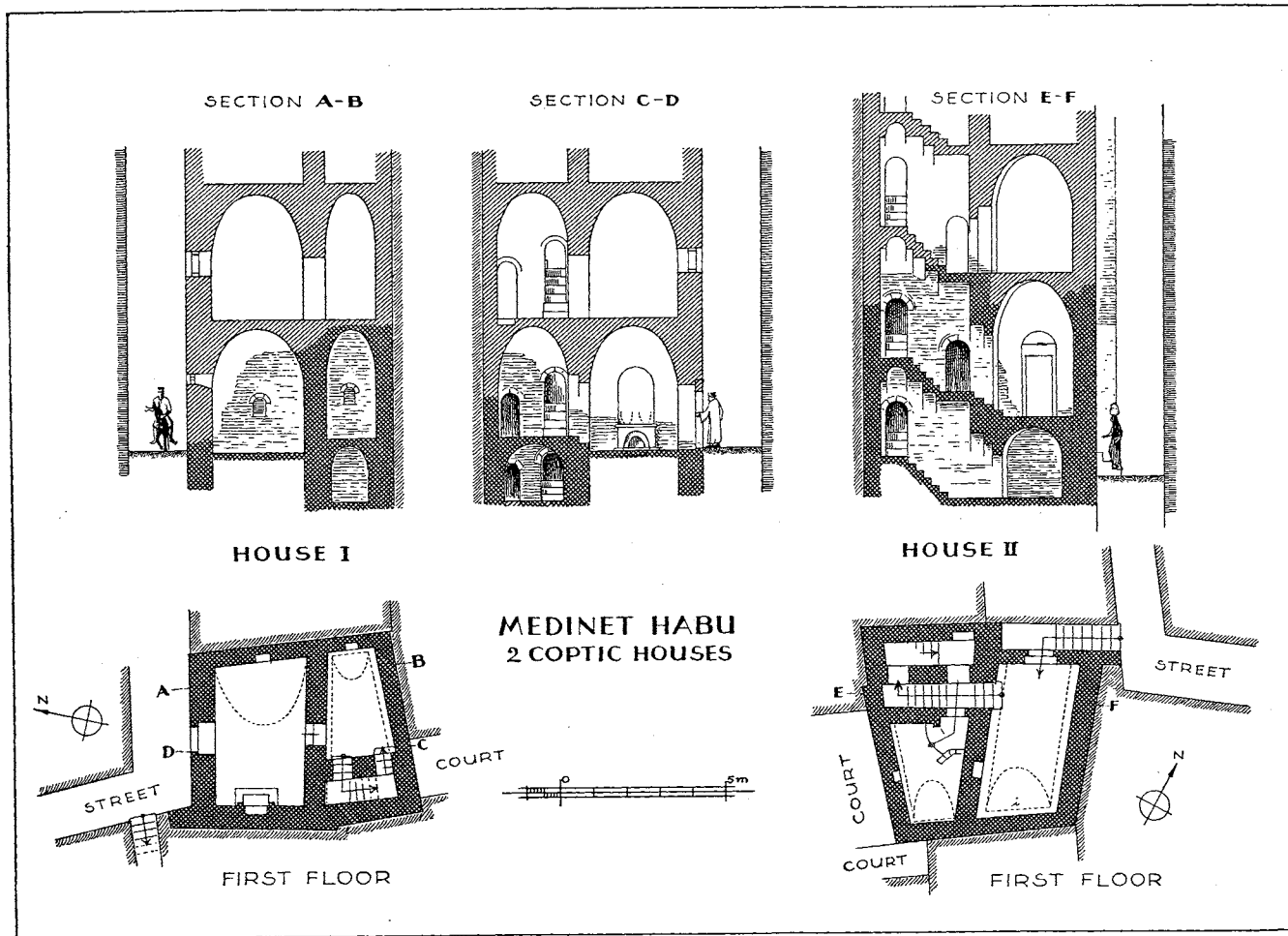


FIG. 33.—TWO EXAMPLES OF THE COPTIC HOUSES OF MEDINET HABU

Houses such as have been described were built even upon the ruins of Ramses III's great girdle wall and extended still for some distance

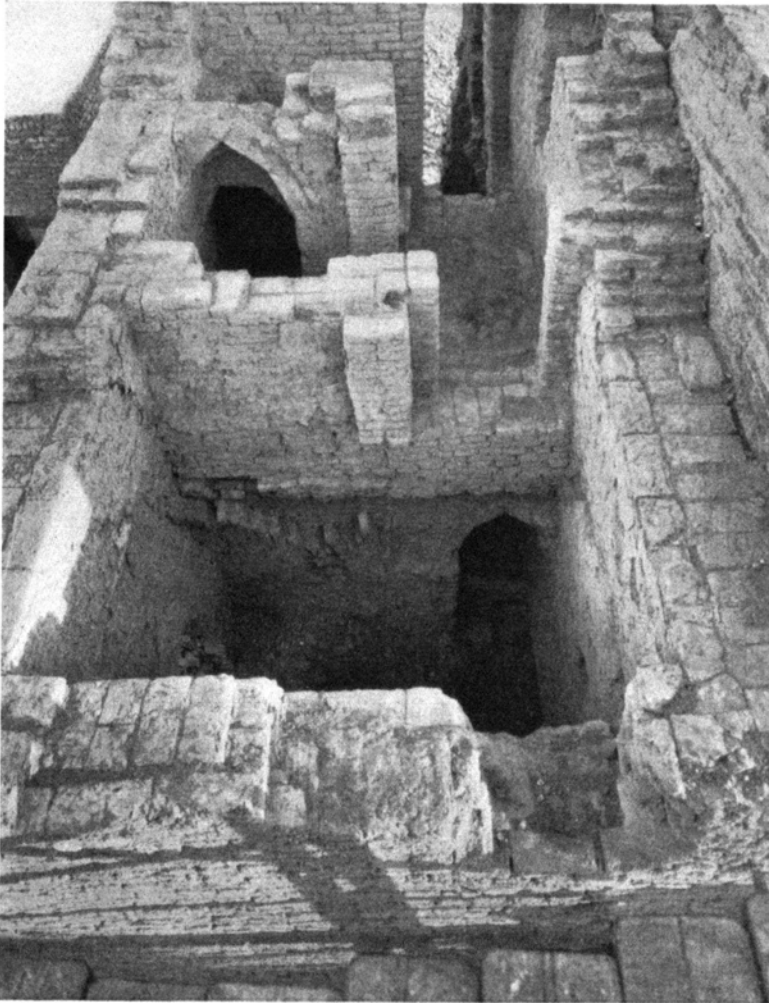


FIG. 34.—RUINS OF A COPTIC HOUSE OF ABOUT THE 8TH CENTURY

This shows cellar with collapsed vault, first story, and stair well

outside of the ancient inclosure. The rear part of Ramses III's temple also was filled during Coptic times with dwellings the doorways of

which are still recognizable, hewn into the stone walls, although the houses themselves have long since been removed. Furthermore, the second court of the temple was appropriated by the Copts, who rebuilt and decorated it to house the "Holy Church of Castrum Jēme." Only a few decades ago, in fact until the "*déblaiement*" of Medinet Habu, a few stone columns which had supported this five-aisled church still stood in place (Fig. 35).

The remains of a second Coptic church have been discovered outside of the Ramessid wall in a southerly direction from the quay by the Fortified Gate. Whether these are the remains of the "Place of Apa Paternuthios," which is often mentioned in the records, is still an unsolved question.

THE OFFICES AND STOREHOUSES OF THE GREAT TEMPLE

Most of the Coptic houses had to be removed, as we wished to push on to the Ramessid level. In doing so, we found that the older strata had for the most part been removed already in antiquity. But it was reserved for the modern *sebbakhin* not only to destroy almost completely the post-Ramessid levels but also, indeed, to strip the walls of Ramses III down to the very foundation trench, in order to secure the greatly prized fertilizer.

As for the Ramessid plan, in spite of woeful destruction it revealed itself almost in its entirety in the course of our excavation (Fig. 36). We have seen (*OIC*, Nos. 5 and 7) that the central building of the whole area, the Great Temple of Ramses III, is boxed into a rectangular inner inclosure by a massive turreted surrounding wall. Inside the area thus formed, the king's palace lay south of the temple. Immediately west of the palace was an open place, a garden or court; farther on were situated several treasuries. This year the district north of the temple has revealed the temple storehouses.

To understand fully what we have before us, it must be kept in mind that in Ramessid times money had not yet come into existence as a medium of exchange. All revenues of the temple, therefore, as well as all disbursements, had to be paid in kind. For that reason extensive storehouses for grain, oil, wine, beer, leather, metals, and similar products were required; and a well-organized administration had to see to it that all revenues due were promptly delivered and recorded and that all expenditures were likewise tabulated and verified.



FIG. 35.—REMAINS OF COPTIC CHURCH WHICH STOOD IN SECOND COURT OF THE GREAT TEMPLE, AS SEEN BEFORE 1891, THE YEAR IN WHICH THAT COURT WAS CLEARED

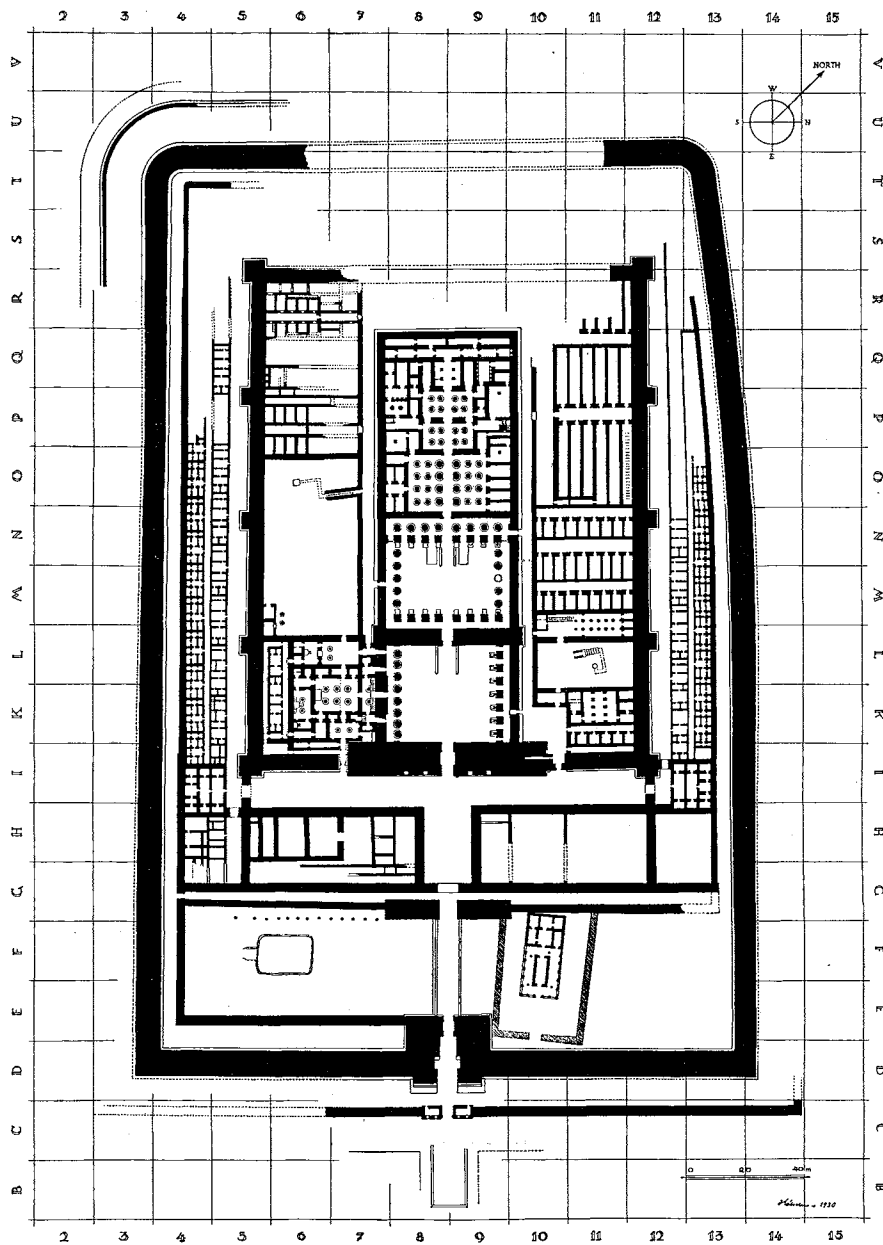


FIG. 36.—GROUND PLAN OF RAMSES III'S TEMPLE AND PALACE AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES AFTER THE SEASON OF 1929/30

Compare the complete plan of Medinet Habu before excavation (*OIC*, No. 5, Fig. 27).

We can best picture the activity surrounding the temple of that day if we imagine ourselves taking part in it. We have come, perhaps, as envoys from some small village or estate, commissioned to bear a certain quota of wheat as taxes to the temple storehouses. Arriving with our laden donkeys before the great pylon of the temple, we are directed to enter by the first gate through the wall north of the pylon into a small, square court, where we are to announce ourselves. Leaving the donkeys outside, we go straight on through two doors to the court of administration. There, near the stairway which leads down into the great well, we wait until we are summoned. Then we proceed across the court to the office of the scribes. Here search is made through the papyrus rolls, in order to verify the amount that we are to deliver, our load is weighed, the result recorded, and a receipt filled out.

The office we have just entered, which adjoins the court on the north, consists of a three-aisled hall. In the two side aisles the scribes sit at work before their papyrus rolls, while in the center the chief scribe issues orders and signs completed documents. At the rear are situated three small chambers. The central one is probably a chapel dedicated to Thoth, who, in the form of an ape, is thus honored in the very offices of his devotees. Under his protection, to left and right, are archives for the papyrus documents, which are stored there in wooden chests. In front of the building occupied by the scribes themselves is a small court furnished with a stone bench on which we, along with many of our fellows, squat and patiently wait until all of our documents have been completed.¹

At last all is in order and ready. Passing the door of the guard-room, we come out into a long passage which extends along the temple wall. Here we are instructed to unload and take the bags to the store-rooms. The first of these may have been designed for wine, oil, or products of a similar nature. We are directed, however, to the larger ones beyond, which serve as the granaries. These consist of two rows

¹ The arrangement of such an office is known quite exactly from a representation in the tomb of a vizier of Ramses II, published by Ludwig Borchardt in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, XLIV (1907), 59-61. It is pleasantly surprising to find that the entire ground plan there indicated is almost exactly reproduced at Medinet Habu.

of long, barrel-vaulted rooms, reached from a central corridor. Each room is a sort of silo which can be filled by pouring the grain through openings in the flat roof and emptied through the doors opening upon the corridor. Our task is finally completed; relieved of our burdens, with receipt in hand, we remount our donkeys and ride gaily homeward.

RAMSES III'S EARLIER AND LATER BUILDING PLANS

I wish now to refer to a few other particulars of the Ramessid plan. As we have stated in former reports, there were two palaces of Ramses III, the later of which was erected above the foundation walls of an earlier one that had been destroyed. As a result of our excavation, we are able to follow both these periods of Ramses III's building activities throughout the entire temple complex.

The original plan contained only the buildings which were embraced by the turreted inner wall. The dwellings of the priests, servants, and workmen, as well as the gardens, stables, and other farm buildings, were perhaps to have been outside in a separate little community. When, in the second half of his reign, Ramses constructed the great girdle wall with its Fortified Gate, he was able to inclose all the service and administration buildings within its protective embrace. Possibly toward the end of his life Ramses III no longer considered his temple and palace in Upper Egypt sufficiently safe, for undoubtedly the political and economic situation at that time became distinctly disturbing. Perhaps it was for that reason that he secured himself at Medinet Habu by means of a fortification similar to the boundary fortresses with which he had become acquainted in the north.

The expansion which was to develop under the new building scheme was, however, never fully completed. It is true that the massive wall and the Fortified Gate were finished after a fashion, but probably with the death of the royal builder work on all his operations was halted. Though the harem apartments lacked only a few finishing touches, they remained as they were, while the rows on rows of servants' quarters toward the west and the buildings in the front part of the temple area were left absolutely uncompleted. Now and then later Ramessids attempted to finish some of these structures, but with altered plans and in a wretched manner entirely unworthy of him who had planned the originals. But such minor imperfections and short-

comings sink into insignificance when we contemplate as a whole the plan of Ramses III's temple area, which presents to us quite a unique picture of architectural composition in early antiquity.

THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU

The so-called Small Temple of Medinet Habu deserves our very special interest. It originated, as is well known, in the 18th dynasty, about 1480 B.C. Three hundred years later Ramses III incorporated it into his vast compound, where it served as a sanctuary of Amon along with the Great Temple. The latter, however, since it was dedicated in the first place to the mortuary cult of Ramses III himself, naturally after his death, and especially toward the end of the 20th dynasty, gradually lost its importance and later was probably abandoned entirely as a sanctuary. The older temple, on the other hand, even after the Ramessid era, was considered the principal sacred place of the district, and as time went on enjoyed ever increasing respect and veneration (cf. Fig. 37).



FIG. 37.—AN EGYPTIAN LADY, PROBABLY OF THE 26TH DYNASTY

Head from a life-size statue of black granite, found near the Small Temple in 1927.

The Small Temple, therefore, passed through a much longer historical development and underwent reconstruction and expansion in practically every dynasty, so that in its present form it is a very characteristic example of the development of Egyptian temple-designing from the glorious imperial age down through the centuries to the beginning of Christianity.

In its original form the Small Temple of the 18th dynasty, as we see it on the general plan (Fig. 36, F 10), lying close behind the Fortified Gate and oblique to the axis of the Ramessid temple, is a peripteral structure. That is, around the nucleus, which served as a sanctuary for the sacred bark of the god, are pillared halls open on three sides except for screen walls connecting the pillars as far as the main en-

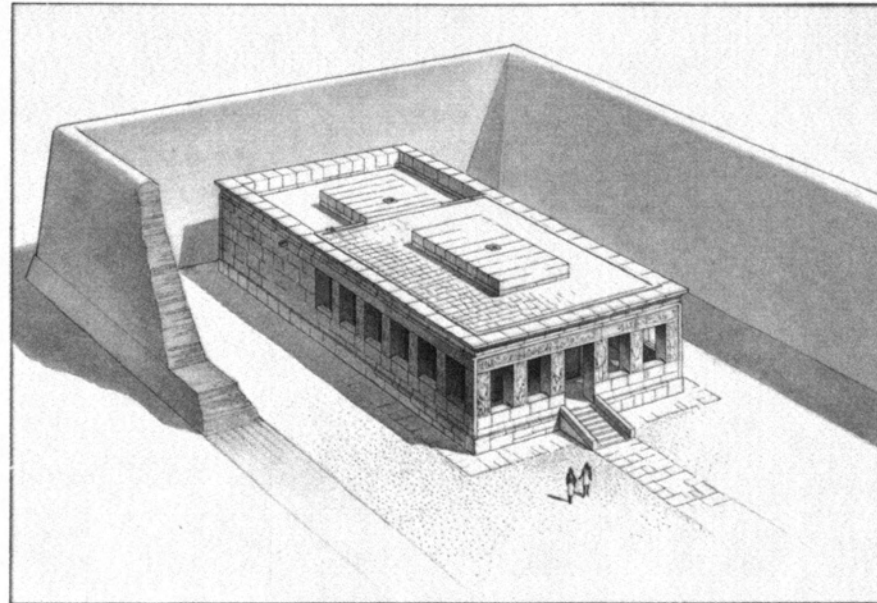
trance (Fig. 38). Only at the rear were added several closed cult chambers. The whole edifice stands upon a slightly elevated platform (see reconstruction, Plate I).

Evidently the architectural theory in this temple, as in those of the Greeks and Romans, was that the observer should obtain an impressive view of the sacred structure from three sides, if not from all. With remarkable inconsistency, however, in total disregard of this theory the temple was inclosed as in a huge box by a high girdle wall of mud brick. Incredible as it may appear, the wall is not of later date, but, as the stamped bricks and foundation deposits show, was built by Queen Hatshepsut at the very time when the stone temple itself was erected. Thus we find corroborated here in this peripteral temple the underlying idea found in all Egyptian temple construction, namely, that the building did not stand open to the gaze of the general public, but was only for a privileged and honored few who slowly and decorously in solemn procession made pilgrimage to its jealously guarded precincts and were permitted to view its holy of holies. The splendid pillared hall in this case is but an open passage around the sanctuary of the sacred bark.

Certainly there must have been several temples of peripteral type in the 18th dynasty. That dating from the time of Amenhotep III on Elephantine must have been particularly impressive. When it was recorded a hundred and thirty years ago by the French expedition, it still stood in excellent condition. Since that day, however, it has completely disappeared. The Small Temple of Medinet Habu remains, therefore, the best-preserved example of this beautiful as well as rare type of Egyptian temple.

It is not within the realm of the excavator to discuss the reliefs and inscriptions which cover the walls of the Small Temple. Suffice it to mention that representations here are among the most important historical documents relative to disturbances over the succession during the reigns of Hatshepsut and the Thutmosids. Furthermore, one may observe how under the reign of the heretic king, Ikhnaton, the name and image of Amon were everywhere chiseled out, only to be restored by Harmhab and Seti I. How still later Rasmes III, who removed the old inclosure in order to incorporate the Small Temple into his more ambitious building enterprise, desired to have its walls

PLATE I



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**THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU
BUILT BY QUEEN HATSHEPSUT**

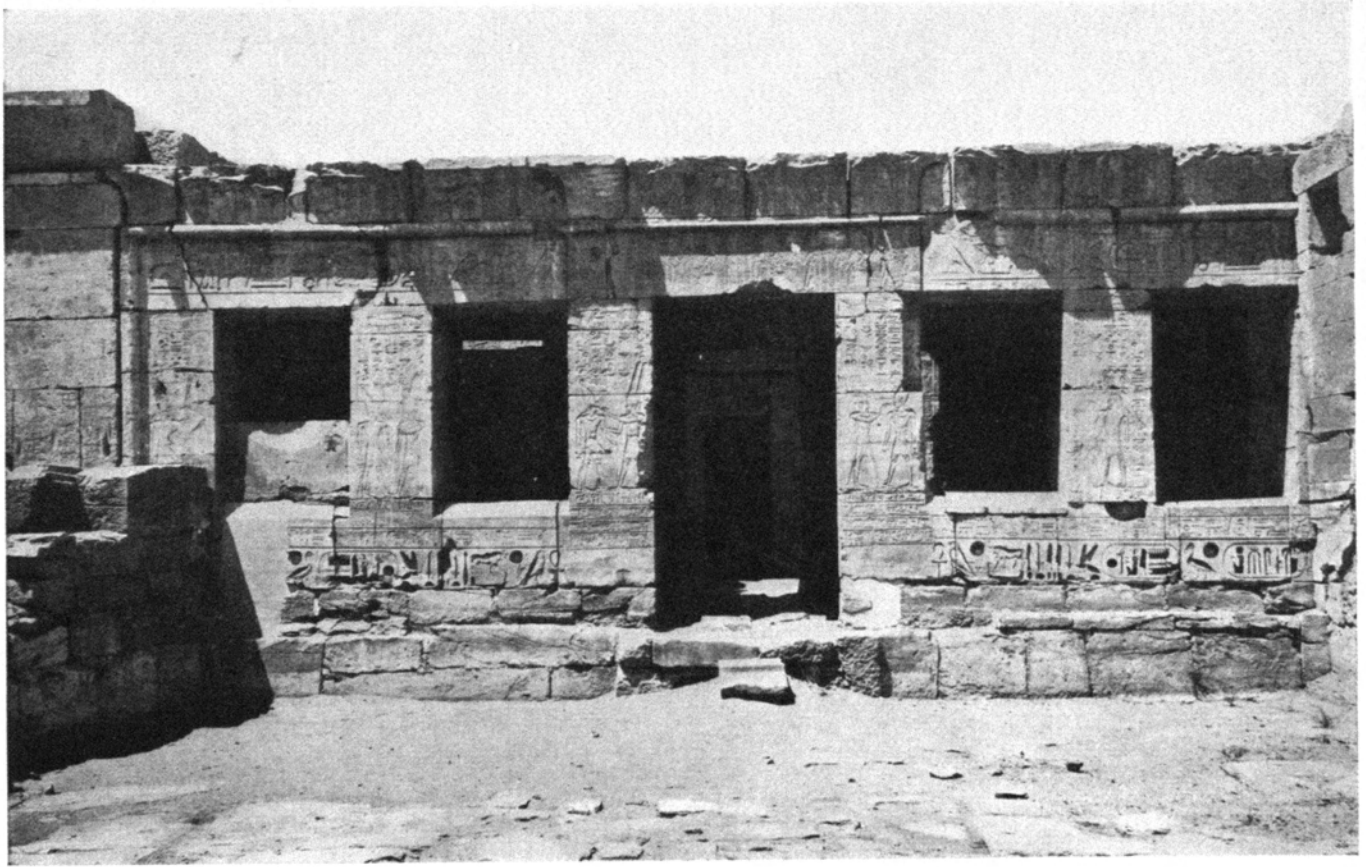


FIG. 38.—FRONT OF THE SMALL TEMPLE OF THE 18TH DYNASTY, PRESENT STATE
The added structures belong to the expansion of King Achoris (about 390 B.C.)

bear testimony to his glory also, is evidenced by the deeply cut hieroglyphs characteristic of his reign. In like measure, the priest-kings of the 21st dynasty could not refrain from immortalizing the part they had played in the history of the temple.

The second period of building expansion for the Small Temple began with the 25th dynasty, when the Ethiopian kings attempted through a magnificent building program to restore Thebes, the religious center of Upper Egypt, to the glory it had possessed during the Empire. The expansion that the Small Temple now underwent (Plate II) was wholly inconsistent with the original plan of the building. In front of the peripteros was erected a long, narrow hall ending in a pylon (Fig. 39). The length of the structure was strongly emphasized and increased; the entrance was brought into prominence by means of the pylon; but the original beauty of the 18th dynasty peripteros was totally destroyed.

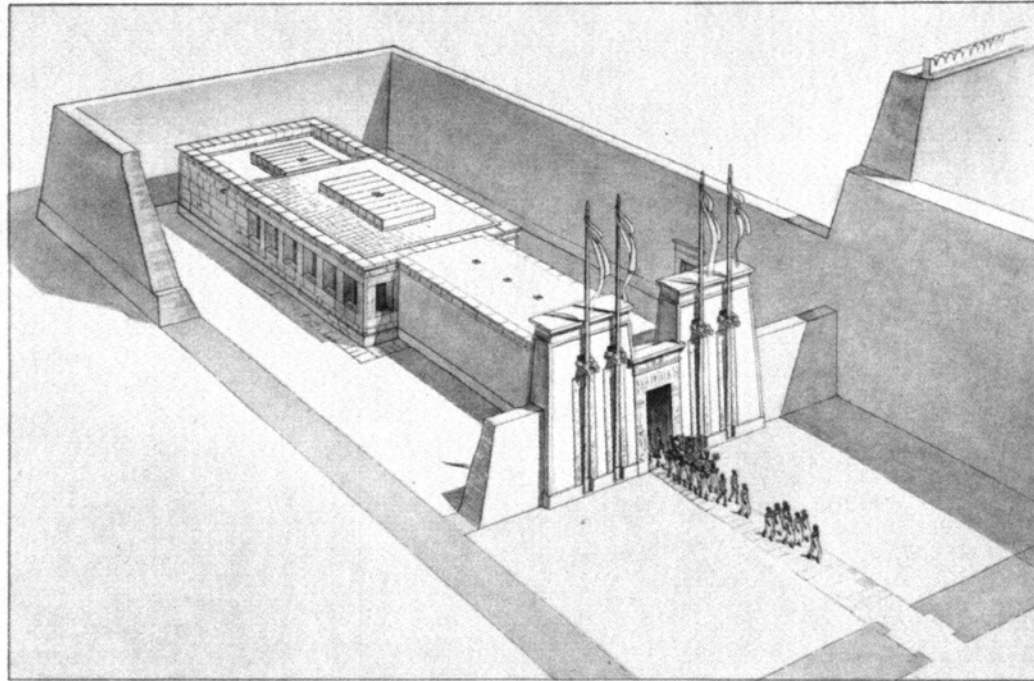
At the same time the girdle wall—as it was in Hatshepsut's time—was restored, and the great Ramessid wall which, in violation of the original plan, had been built in front of the entrance was removed as thoroughly as possible and replaced by the above-mentioned pylon. In the interior of the temple several changes and restorations were also undertaken by Amenirdis, the sacerdotal princess of Thebes, who belonged to the Ethiopian royal house.

During this time and well into the Saitic period (26th dynasty) the Small Temple must have enjoyed the greatest of veneration, for in its immediate vicinity not a few persons of high degree were buried. Among them were Amenirdis, sister of the Ethiopian Pharaoh Shabaka, and her adopted daughter Shepnupet II (Fig. 40), daughter of the Ethiopian Piankhi.¹

The next picture (Plate III) shows the temple when, in the midst of Persian dominance, there suddenly rose once more a native kingdom, and consequently the revenues of the land were available for local enterprises. Achoris in the first half of the fourth century before Christ built a wide three-aisled hall of stone to replace the narrow mud-brick hall of the Ethiopians, and two wings were added at the sides between the temple and its girdle wall. A few years later Nectanebo I built an open columned porch with wooden beams supporting

¹ This rectifies an editorial error in *OIC*, No. 7, p. 4.

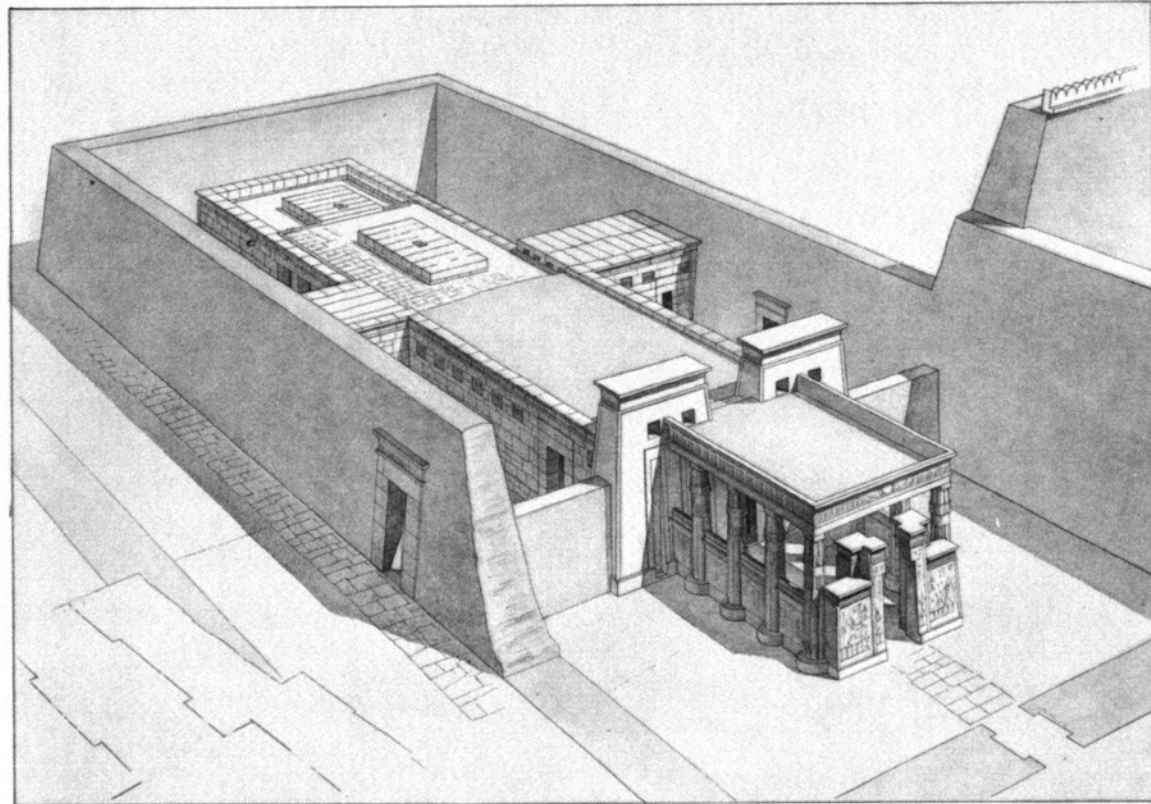
PLATE II



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**THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU
PERIOD OF THE ETHIOPIAN KINGS**

PLATE III



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THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU, FOURTH CENTURY B. C.

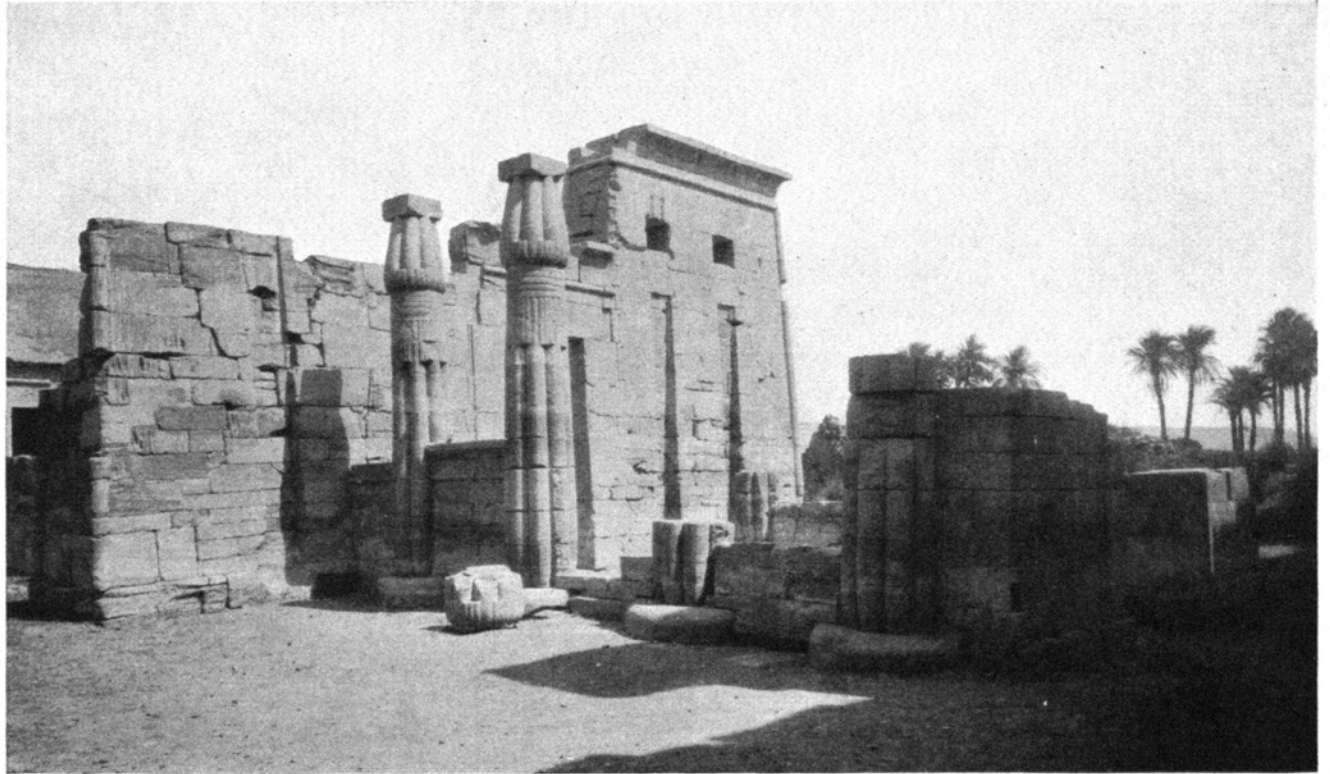


FIG. 39.—THE ETHIOPIAN PYLON OF THE SMALL TEMPLE WITH THE COLUMNED PORCH OF NECTANEBO (4TH CENTURY B.C.)

the roof and with stone-screen walls connecting the columns (Fig. 39). This was to serve as a reception room from which to conduct the sa-

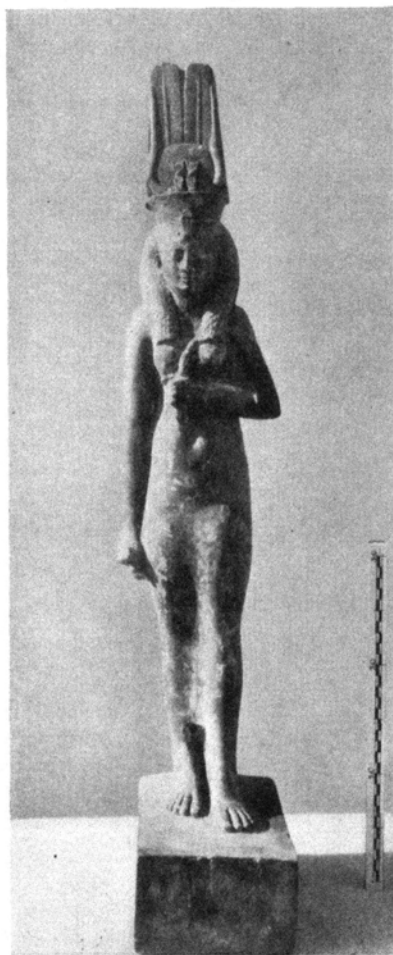


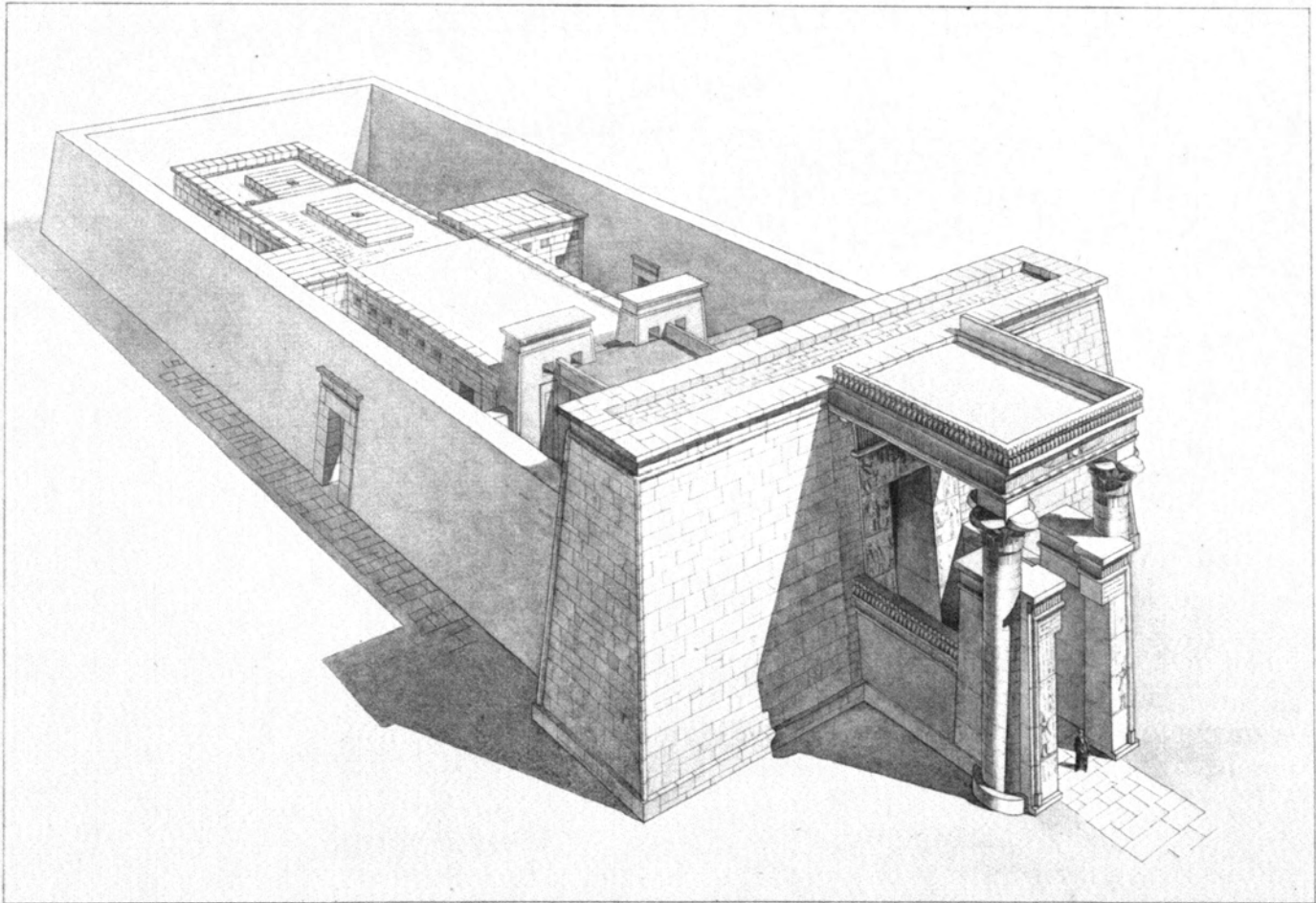
FIG. 40.—SHEPNUPET II, DAUGHTER OF THE ETHIOPIAN PIANKHI

Half life-size statue of black slate with remains of original gilding, found near her mortuary chapel at Medinet Habu in 1928.

cred procession into the temple. The structure as of this time affords us a glimpse into a late Egyptian temple before the Greek invasion.

In the Ptolemaic period which followed, the complex was once

PLATE IV



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THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU, PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

again expanded to the extent of a mighty stone pylon which was erected in front of it (Plate IV). To be exact, it was stone on three

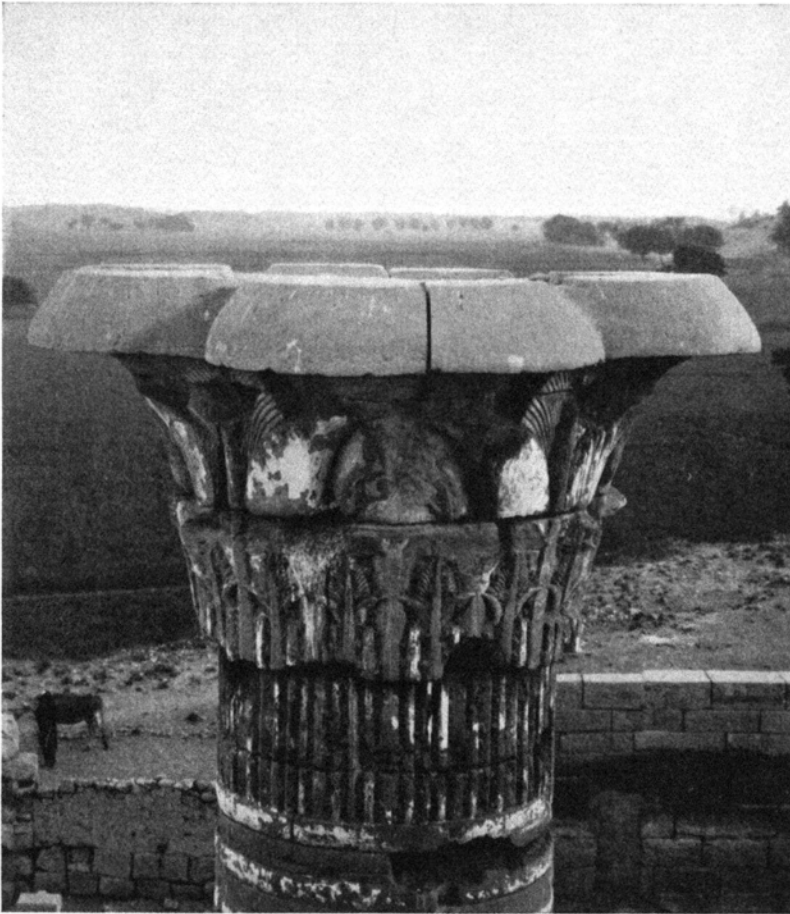


FIG. 41.—CAPITAL OF COLUMN IN FRONT OF THE PTOLEMAIC PYLON OF THE SMALL TEMPLE

sides only, for the interior and back consisted of the already existing mud-brick wall, which was simply mantled on the front and sides with stone in order to give the effect of a solid stone pylon. Before this pylon was erected an airy portico supported by two tall columns.

The traditional two-towered pylon form with flagstaves in front of

it—a form which had already been altered in the Ethiopian pylon through the addition of the columned porch of Nectanebo—had by this time been entirely abandoned. The pylon constituted now merely the mighty rear wall of the portico, whose wide-spreading roof offered shade and coolness to pilgrim and worshiper. It is interesting to observe in detail how, in this Ptolemaic period which has been so

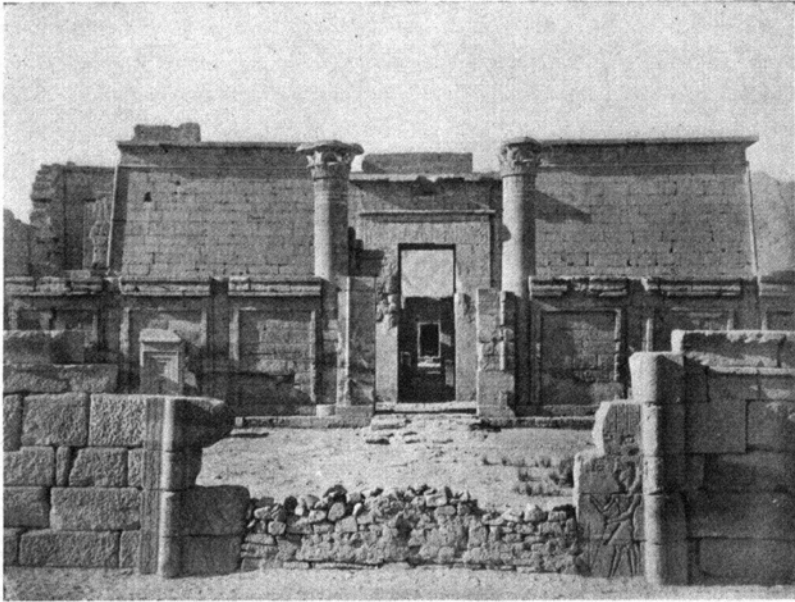


FIG. 42.—THE PTOLEMAIC PYLON OF THE SMALL TEMPLE WITH THE UNFINISHED ROMAN PORTICO AND COURT

much neglected and so little appreciated by students of the history of art, new forms and motives force their way into Egyptian artistic expression. Numerous charming devices appear, the effect of which is enhanced, especially in our case, by the well-preserved colors (Fig. 41).

The temple was to experience its last remodeling in Roman times in the second century after Christ. Beside the two columns of the Ptolemaic portico three others were commenced on each side, and a forecourt was placed in front of it (Fig. 42). Had this project been carried out, the temple would have presented an eight-columned front, with high screen walls between the columns, and so would have con-

veyed an impression similar to that given by the temples at Edfu, Esneh, and Dendera. However, since this plan was never completed, we are not in position to reconstruct with certainty its intended appearance.

During Coptic times the inner rooms of the Small Temple were utilized as a Christian church. There remain traces of wall paintings, among which the figure of St. Menas can still be recognized.

Thus in our brief review of the architectural development of the Small Temple we can see how it continued to be esteemed and employed as a holy place from the moment when the district of Medinet Habu first appeared in history until the decline of the town of Jēme. Its architectural history can tell us not a little of the passing of the ages, the development of the race, and the transformation of customs and religious beliefs.

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