

## Publications

JEAN ECKENFELS, *Editorial Secretary*

In the spring of 1970, two of the Oriental Institute's major publishing efforts were completed: *Medinet Habu* and *Persepolis*.

With the appearance of *Medinet Habu VIII: The Eastern High Gate, with Translations of the Texts* ("Oriental Institute Publications," Vol. XCIV), the record in facsimile of all the reliefs on the Mortuary Temple of Ramses III and on the monumental three-story pleasure pavilion and entrance to the temple compound of Medinet Habu is complete.

The Medinet Habu project was begun by James Henry Breasted in 1924, when the Epigraphic Survey, under the direction of Harold H. Nelson, was initiated to "save for posterity the enormous body of ancient records still surviving in Egypt." To be sure, the Epigraphic Survey has recorded and published other monuments and a world war has intervened in these 46 years, but the huge task is now finished: This major Egyptian monument is available to scholars and to posterity in its entirety in as meticulously accurate a copy as it is humanly possible to make.

Volume VIII presents the reliefs and inscriptions of Ramses III, with marginal inscriptions of Ramses IV usurped by Ramses VI, on the Eastern High Gate, a structure unique among the extant ancient buildings of Egypt.

Seven years after work at Medinet Habu was begun, Professor Breasted initiated the excavation of Persepolis. Ernst Herzfeld, Professor of Oriental Archeology at the University of Berlin, became the first field director and was succeeded in 1934 by Erich F. Schmidt, who was then in charge of the excavation at Rayy. Professor Schmidt saw the first two volumes of *Persepolis* through publication, but the manuscript of the final volume, which he had completed shortly before his death in 1964, became entirely the responsibility of Mrs. Albert R. Hauser, who had edited the two earlier volumes.

*Persepolis III: The Royal Tombs and Other Monuments* ("Oriental Institute Publications," Vol. LXX) contains the report of the excavations at Naqsh-i Rostam and Persepolis, including the Ka'bah-i



Princesses in attendance on Ramses III (from *Medinet Habu VIII*). Drawing by Barnwell

Zardusht, the Sasanian reliefs on the cliff of Naqsh-i Rostam and at nearby Naqsh-e Rostam, and the tombs of Darius the Great and his successors at Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis.

A further result of the Persepolis excavations that appeared in 1970 was Raymond A. Bowman's *Aramaic Ritual Texts from Persepolis* ("Oriental Institute Publications," Vol. XCI). One of the important discoveries of the expedition was this body of green chert mortars, pestles, plates and trays bearing Aramaic inscriptions. The fragments of these vessels were found in the ruins of the Achaemenid Treasury building, where they had been shattered against the walls by the soldiers of Alexander the Great. The vessels proved to have considerable significance because they provide tangible first-hand evidence of an aspect of Persian religion at the time of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I. The texts on these vessels memorialize occasions of the haoma ceremony in which the celebrants participated. Many of those who used the vessels are identified as the highest generals of the Persian army, corresponding in rank to Greek chiliarchs and myriarchs. It seems quite probable, therefore, that there existed in the Persian army during the Achaemenid period the rudiments of a religious cult, perhaps directed toward Mithra, the Persian god of war. Such a phenomenon is encountered later in the military Mithraism of Christian times.

Two new publications by I. J. Gelb, *Sargonic Texts in the Louvre Museum* ("Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary," No. 4) and *Sargonic Texts in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford* ("Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary," No. 5), appeared in 1970. The first volume presents transliterations of all the unpublished Sargonic material in the Louvre Museum except that from Lagash and Susa. Nearly all the texts are administrative documents concerning animals (mainly sheep and goats, but also bovines) and grain (especially threshed barley). Twenty-one witnessed tablets make up a very important group of legal texts. One school exercise is included. Most of the texts come from clandestine excavations at Umma.

The second volume presents transliterations of texts in the Ashmolean Museum, most of which are from Kish and Umm-el-Jir, near Kish. A few texts of unknown origin have also been included. The

majority of these tablets are standard administrative texts such as are found in other great collections of Sargonic texts from Gasur, the Diyala Region, Lagash, and Susa. A small but important group of texts consists of contracts or memos concerning contractual agreements. Other types of texts are also represented, including letters, orders, school exercises, and one incantation. This is the first collection of Sargonic texts from North Babylonia. One of the most important contributions of the Kish and Umm-el-Jir texts is the light they shed on the geography and ethno-linguistic background of Babylonia; forty geographic names are mentioned, the most common being Mugdan, which may represent the ancient name of Umm-el-Jir.