PART III

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EGYPTIAN Chronology.

WARNING.

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The last but one number of the Zeitschrift für Assyriol. Sprach- und Alterthumskunde (Bd. XXXII, Zweites Heft, S. 99 ff.) contains an article from Dr. Eduard Mahler of Yemen, "Materialien zur Chronologie der alten Aegypter (Chronologische Bestimmung der Regierungzeit der Ramsesiden)", wherein the author claims to have fixed chronologically (gestützt, l.c., S. 105) by calculatory deduction the dates from Amosis to Ramses VI (1573-1598 A.C.).

Although in a paper read at the Oriental Congress at Geneva, entitled: "Die Festlegung historischer Daten durch die Häuf der Astronomie," I have, while gratefully acknowledging the help of astronomers as Riob, Ideger, Oppolzer, Wislicenus, and also of Dr. Mahler to fix chronological dates, expressively cautioned against the use of uncertain bases to build chronological reckonings upon, and especially refuted the consequences drawn by Dr. Mahler from some dates for the reign of Tutmosis III, and Ramses II, in the Aegyptische Zeitschrift, XXVII, 2, p. 97 f., and XXVIII, 1, p. 35 f., still some time will elapse before the proceedings of the Geneva Congress are printed. To prevent people from being misled by statements they are unable to verify, as, for example, I already see Dr. Mahler’s deductions have been accepted by Prof. Elber (Böllage sur Allg. Zeitung, 1891, No 89). I may be allowed to give a short extract of what I explained more in detail in my Geneva paper. The time of Tutmosis III is based by Dr. Mahler (Aeg. Zeitschrift, 1889, S. 103) on the commemoration of two new moons in two consecutive years, the 23rd and 45th of this king, the first mention in the Karnak inscription (Dokk, I, III, Pt. 35, 13) on the 23 Pachons of the 23rd year, the second (Mariette, Karnak, Pt. 12, 7) on the 40 Mecher of the 45th year of Tutmosis III. The first of these two dates is in the text brought into connexion with the day of the king’s accession to the throne, which is reported at the 4th of the month of Pachons. The king’s death is known from the inscription in the tomb of Amenemhab (found and published by...
Ebers, Deutsch Med. Gesellschaft, Vol. XXX, p. 391 ff.), as having happened on the lam of the Phaenonoth in the 54th year of his reign. Dr. Maker, understanding all these dates in the fixed year (beginning with the heliacal rising of the Dog Star on the 20th July) finds on the 5th April (as 11 Pachons), 1479, B.C., and on the 25th January (as 50 Mechir), 1479, B.C., the mentioned new moons to two consecutive years of Tuten III, who therefore would ascend the throne about May, 1503 B.C., and die the 14th February, 1449 B.C.

As I am (contrary to Dr. Maker's supposition) convinced that dates of historical events, and not, we have undeniably in the annals of Tuten III, as in the biography of Ammenophis, cannot be understood otherwise than in the vague year, I could not accept these two days of new moons, on which he states his chronology. When I communicated this to the author, he answered me by letter, that understanding the given dates of 21 Pachons and 50 Mechir of the vague year, we should find in the list of new moons for the 16th May, 1484, B.C., and the 14th February, 1460, B.C., like the two corresponding new moons, which afford for the beginning of Tuten III's reign, 1504, B.C., instead of 1503, so that Tuten III began his reign after the vague year 4 Pachons = 40 May Jul. 1504, and died the 30th Phaenonoth = 16th May, 1450 B.C.

While in this manner, with the necessary correction for the days of the fixed year with those of the vague year, I came to a similar result for the time of Tuten III, fully acknowledging the value of Dr. Maker's new method of making use of the tables of new moons for chronology, I cannot accept in the same way the other results of his paper. We are prohibited from drawing any chronological conclusions from the Smith Calendar so long as the royal cartouches therein cannot be explained. That it cannot be that of Ammenophis I, because the last sign is surely not ka (see Proceedings, Vol. XII, p. 598; Prof. James in Memais, p. 56, has proved nothing to the contrary; the sign [Süeha 202] is quite differently written from the last sign in the royal cartoucche). I ought not to have to repeat. So every conclusion drawn from that cartouche is more than arbitrary.

We come now to the weakest part of Dr. Maker's explanation, his fixing the time of Ramessi 11. First he asserts that the representation on the ceiling of the Ramesseum (Leps. Denks., III, 170, 171; Brugsch, Memais, Pl. V, VII) reports the beginning of a boitic period, which was celebrated in the 30th year of
Rameses II. Now we know far certain from the hall at Silese, that a festival was celebrated in the 50th year of the reign of Rameses II, the so-called Triakontester (Hierogl. 3 = Ρέθηθη τῆς βασίλειας, Brugsch, Thes., p. 220) of the Rosetta stone (Greek text, l. 31), a jubilee, repeated afterwards every 3 or 4 years (cf. Brugsch, Thes., p. 1199 ff.; Ettman, Arch. Zeitsh., XXIX, 1891, p. 128, where the eighth jubilee of Rameses II is commemorated). Dr. Mahler confines this festival with the beginning of a Sothic period and finds in the words Ρέθηθη a indication of the 60th day of the month of the Sirius star happened at the 28th July jul. and this is the 760, the 28th day of the moon, the 1st July of the year 1318 a.c. (after Oppolzer the beginning of a new Sothic period must have been a new moon, which really was the case. Now firstly it is not correct that the Ρέθηθη festival of the 50th year of Rameses II was a commemoration of the Sothic period; secondly, the signs Ρέθηθη, on the Ramesseum ceiling, are not to be found in the month of Thoth and near the goddess Isis Sept, where they ought to be if they had relation to the Sirius star, but in the month of Tybi. So every conclusion fixing the reign of Rameses II from the Triakontester and the 760 day on the Ramesseum ceiling must be given up.

Dr. Mahler, on the contrary, finds a confirmation of his date for Rameses II in the Leyden hieratic Papyrus I, 325, verse (dates of the 50th year of that king), col. iii., line 6, where he reads: "Moses Mecheh Tag 16 in der Stadt Rameses II, Tag der Neumondfeiert." First, the day cannot be the 16th of the month Mecheh, but must be the 26th, because in the journal, on the foregoing column, ii, 19, the events of the 15th Mecheh are treated, as Prof. Lauth has already shown (Moses der Ehekr., p. 9) and after our date (iii, 24) the events of the 10th of the same month are related. Besides that, III, 6, the hieratic signs at the end of the line contain nothing of a new moon but only Ρέθηθη, festive day, so that all conclusions of Dr. Mahler for his erroneously read date are futile.

The same false conclusions are made by Dr. Mahler for the day of Rameses III's accession to the throne. He asserts that this day, the 26th of the month Pachons, belonged to the fixed Sirius year, and that for the first time in the 23rd year of King Rameses III the 26 Pachons was contemporary with the 26th day of the [282]
month. But reference to this is made in the great Pap. Harris, Pt.
17a, but only that from the 2nd to the 3rd year a festival of
20 days was added to the festivals of Amon at Thebes, which
began the 26th of the month Pachons. There is no mention
of a coincidence of a new moon with the 1 Pachons, but the date
is taken of the vague year, which had a month of 30 days, which were
independent of the real new moons. So it seems that the chronolo-
gical dates, which Dr. Mahler draws from the inscriptions by help of
the new moons, are in no way credible. We must demand first the
unquestionable reading of texts, before we can permit the erection
of a building on them: when the foundation is of sand instead of
stone, the building will soon collapse, as we see is the case here.