THE LUXOR BUILDING INSCRIPTION OF RAMSESSES III

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The purpose of this short contribution is to give a new text\(^1\) of an inscription published for the first time by Dessau in 1894\(^2\) and again by Otto in 1933\(^3\), and to add a few remarks on its contents. Such a new text is not wholly superfluous, since both previous publications show a number of mistakes and inaccuracies, especially in the first line.

The inscription is written on a large block of gritstone (grès siliciueux), lying flat behind one of the standing colossi of Ramesses II in the south-west corner of the court of this king\(^4\), to which place it has been dragged to prevent the statue from falling down (Pl. Ia). In fact it is the uppermost of three layers of stone, of which the second is a block of approximately the same size and of the same material\(^1\), while the third, which forms the base of the structure, consists of several smaller stones cemented together (Pl. Ib). Whether the block must be called a stele or not\(^5\) is mainly a matter of definition; certainly it was not a freestanding stele, but part of a wall; but to all probability it did have the form of a rectangular stele, as is also apparent from the last line of the text.

The inscription consists of 10 lines, but there can be little doubt that the beginning of the text (presumably some 6 or 7 lines) together with the representation on top of it are missing.

The external form of the inscription leads us to a minor problem which occupied Otto\(^6\). Reading \[\text{inr n blyt}\] , "ein schöner erwür diger Pelast", he wondered how to reconcile the statement of the text that this was built of \[\text{inr n blyt}\] with the fact that according to I.8 the building was made of sandstone (\[\text{inr n fr n swlt}\]). This problem is entirely eliminated by the correct reading of the group; actually the text has \[\text{inr n fr n swlt}\] , "a large and august (rectangular) stele", i.e., the very block on which the inscription is written. This is indeed made of gritstone (\[\text{inr n blyt}\]), while the chapel, the building of which it commemorates, was made of sandstone.
Unfortunately, however, the main questions posed by the text cannot be answered so easily, and therefore the following remarks are to be considered only as an attempt to give a status quae-
tionis. In the first place there is the problem of the location of the chapel built by Ramesses III. According to 1.7 it was erected "to the right of his august father Amun-Héf-foremost of his Sanctuary". This has been interpreted by various authors as a place between the Luxor Temple and the Nile, or more precisely to the west of the Court of Ramesses II. A location to the west of the Luxor Temple is supported by the fact that, apart from the scenes on the south wall usurped by Shebitku, inscriptions of Ramesses III occur especially on various places on the west wall of the temple; these inscriptions might indicate that at these points the main temple was connected with structures of Ramesses III located to the west of it. Within this area the part next to the Court of Ramesses II is indeed the best candidate, since the Court had at least partly the same function as the chapel of his namesake and epigone; such a place is also favoured by the present location of the block, which then would have been dragged in through the western entrance of the Court.

Secondly, the question arises, whether the chapel of Ramesses III is identical with the "Chapel of Heemsse-Huler of Heliopolis-United with Joy in Most-Select-of-Places", which the king according to the great Harris-papyrus built in the domain of the Luxor Temple. Since no exact location is mentioned in the papyrus an answer remains speculative. Schaedel and originally also Utto were quite positive about the identity of the two buildings, but later Utto showed much more hesitation. It is indeed also possible that the chapel of the Harris-papyrus was situated more to the south, next to the sanctuary of the main temple (cfr. n. 10), or even that it lay somewhere to the north of the temple, in front of the pylon of Ramesses III. Perhaps the reference to Karnak in the name of the chapel favours the latter possibility.

Finally, the text contains an interesting reference to the public appearance of the ithyphallic Amun of the Luxor Temple on the first
of every decade. This event is first recorded in the inscriptions of Ramesses II in the court of the temple, published a few years ago by Mahmoud Abd el-Hazik. According to these texts the courtyard was a "place of supplication and of hearing prayers" and a place in which Amun hailed at the beginning of every ten days. At least from the beginning of Dyn.XXI this appearance of Amun was followed by a trip across the river to Medinet Habu, which is fairly well documented in late period and Ptolemaic texts, and though this journey is not mentioned explicitly in the inscriptions of Ramesses II and III, the location of a chapel to the west of the Court of Ramesses II makes it probable that it took place already in this time. How this frequently recurring event was connected with the annual Feast of Upset, mentioned in both Ramesside inscriptions, remains unclear.

Notes.

1 Copied and collated during a visit to Luxor in January 1979. I am grateful to Dr. William J. Murnane (Oriental Institute, Chicago) for his readiness to discuss with me some of the problems related to this text during his stay at Groningen in May 1979.

2 E. Hauser, "Notes et remarques," CVII, HT 16 (1894), 55-56.


4 PM II 117, 312 (68); cfr. Plan XXX.

5 Though I could not detect any traces of text or representations on the visible parts of this block, the possibility should not be excluded that it contains the missing upper part of the text under consideration.

6 Cfr. Otto, o.c., 93.

7 o.c., 95-96, n.(p).

8 W. O. Schaefer, "Die Listen des grossen Papyrus Harris (LRS 6 )." Glückstadt etc., 1936, 25; F. Otto, "Topographie der thebaischen Geve (UGAR 16)." Berlin 1952, 42; id., ZAS 90, 96; cfr. also E. Wente, "Late Ramesside Letters" (SAUC 33), Chicago 1967, 79.

9 PM II 117, 335 (22).3

10 Base-texts on inner wall of court of Ramesses II: PM II 117, 308 (28)-(29); cartouches on west doorway of hypostyle: o.c., 318 (106); scene and texts on west doorway of Hoam Xi: o.c., 323 (135); four scenes on outer wall: o.c., 334 (210). Cfr. Schaefer, o.c., 25, n.4.

11 pHarris I, 5:6-7; 12:3.
Evidence of building-activities of Ramesses III in this area has been discovered in recent years, see Abdul-Wadid Muhammad, ASAE 60 (1968), 242-244.


JEA 60, 147 (§ 38); cfr. JEA 61, 128.— In my opinion, the sh-ntr of granite mentioned in this text, which served as a "resting-place of the Lord of Gods in his Feast of Opet", cannot refer to the triple shrine in the court, because (a) this is called mnkh, not sh-ntr, in §§ 6 & 14A, (b) because it is made of sandstone, not of granite, though its façade is of granite, and (c) because no reference to its function as a resting-place is found in the inscriptions of the triple shrine itself (§§ 13-15).

Feininger, LRL 56, 4-6; cfr. Wente, LRL 79.

K. Sethe, Amun und die echt Urgötter von Hermopolis (APAW 1929: 4), § 112.

The Luxor Building Inscription of Ramesses III, Text.
Textual notes.

NB. Mistakes made by Daressy (D.) and corrected by Otto (O.) are not mentioned; the same applies to minor inaccuracies, due to the inadequacy of the Theinhardt hieroglyphic font, used by both D. and O.

Line 1. At the top of this line approximately \( \frac{1}{4} \) of the total height is missing, a fact not noted by O., and indicated only very inconsistently by D.
(a) D. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \text{[0]} \), in fact only the head and beak of the vulture are missing; \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) and \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) are perfectly legible.
(b) D. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \text{[0]} \).
(c) D. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \text{[0]} \); two \( \alpha \)-signs and the lower half of \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) are visible.
(d) The \( \alpha \) (cfr. Gerdiner, EG\( ^{5} \) 459, Ermen, NAG II 275), not noted by D. or O., is quite clear.
(e) Above \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) (so D., O.) enough room for the required \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \).
(f) D. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \text{[0]} \).
(g) Doubtful; D. & O. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \).
(h) Above \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) there seems to be room for one horizontal sign (not noted by D. and O.); hardly enough room for \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \).
(i) So with D.
(k) Above \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) there is room for one horizontal sign; \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) is required (cfr. wr. IV 181, 4).
(l) The \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) is quite clear, as is the following \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \).
(m) D. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \).
(n) D. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \), in fact the \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) is not in the middle of the group, but above the first stroke of \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \); cfr. for the proposed restoration, e.g. KRI II, 58 (Qede\& P 180); LEM 124, 4.
(o) D. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \); \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \) is clear; above it room for one small sign.

Line 2.
(a) O.'s text has the \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \), but in the corrections of misprints (ZAS 91, 140) this was erroneously altered into \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \).

Line 3.
(a) O. \( \text{\textcircled{0}} \).
(b) so correctly D.; Ọ.עב.א

**Line 4.**

(a) The ד is actually there, as noted by D., but expressly omitted by 0.

**Line 5.**

(a) Ọ.עב.א (after correction ZB5 91,14G).
(b) So with D.; Ọ.עב הא.

**Line 6.**

(a) The י, noted by D., but omitted by Ọ., is clearly legible.
(b) Ọ.עב.א.
(c) Ọ. (after correction) י.עב.א.
(d) Neither Ọ.’s original י, nor his later י, are correct.
(e) Ọ.עב.א.

**Line 7.**

(a) So with D.; Ọ. wrongly corrected this to י.עב.א.

**Line 8.**

(a) So with D.; Ọ. עב.א.
(b) Ọ.עב הא; D. again was correct here.

**Translation.**

(i) The young bull, sharp of horns, the fear of whom is great in the heart of the Asiatics; they come to him in adoration, all their tribute (7) being upon their back, for fear of the might of his majesty, asking petitions from him. Your father Amun has assigned them to you (2) to satisfy you with them. The entire land is like a smoothed slab (7) since your kingship upon earth; you have established Maat throughout the Two Banks for your august father, in order that he may live through her; you present her before him (3) daily, for you know that he is content with her. He gives eternity as king of the Two Lands and everlastingness as Hulur of Joy to the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Usimâ=Re[-beloved of Amun,] Heir of the Ennead, Son of Re, Hâ=messe-Hulur of Heliopolis, who doubles (4) the offerings in the Southern Sanctuary, a vigilant king, beneficent to him who is beneficent to him, lord of Sed-Festivals like his father Re, who ene-
getically builds monuments for him who begot him, who satisfies the heart of him who created his perfection, (5) whose plans are more distinguished than those of any king, intelligent like foremost of Hars², shrewd of knowledge like Beautiful-of-Race, pure of hands when he offers incense in front of his father Amun, Mut and Khonsu being in his (Amun's) company, (6) when he goes to rest in the Southern Sanctuary, his very place in truth in which he (usually) rests, being joyful indeed. As for the good god, the potent king who has come to rule over Egypt, all his limbs are the work of God. He spends the night awake without sleeping, (7) pondering on excellent deeds to carry out in Mighty Thebes for his father, the King of Gods, to build a chapel in the Southern Sanctuary, to the right of his august father Amun-RE²-foremost of his Sanctuary, that he might rest in it at the beginning of every ten days, (8) it being in the likeness of the horizon of heaven, made of beautiful sandstone. It will exist as long as heaven exists, a place of promenading¹ for the Lord of the Gods at his beautiful Feast of Upet, a model of its kind² which will come into existence in Thebes, (9) its lifetime being eternity and everlastingness. What God reveals is immediately realised for his son who came forth from his body, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, Lord of Strength, Lord of Ritual, Usima²-RE²-beloved of Amun, (9) father. He has executed, as a monument for his Amun-RE²-foremost of his Sanctuary, the making for him of (10) a large and august stele of gritstone in front of it³. It was made for him by the Son of RE², Lord of Diadem, RE²-mesae-Kuerer of Heliopolis, beloved of Amun-RE²-Lord of Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands, foremost of Most-Select-of-Places, given life, stability and power like RE² forever.

Notes to the translation.

¹ Cfr. for the word and the references quoted by W.F. Edgerton & J.A. Wilson, Historical Records of Memphis III (SAUC 12), Chicago 1936, 34, n. 73a.
² i.e. Ithoth. Cfr. for Vart Beuthier, BG IV 42-43 and Gardiner, AEU II, 81a.
This is an attempt to render *mut nfrt*; it is a feminine derivation of "to stay" and suggested "Urt des Bleibens", "Aufenthaltsort"; however, in this case one would expect a determinative [ ]. I think *mut* must be the of Wb. I I 65, 6-8 and Faulkner, Conc. Dict., 107 ("the like"); *copt. MInE* (J. Zepp, Coptic Etymological Dictionary, Cambridge 1976, 83; "sort, quality, manner"); *nfrt* would then mean "a (thing of) perfect quality", "a perfect sample", "a model of its kind".

31 *mwhv*: "promenade", "avenue (with trees)", here in the more metaphorical sense pointed out by Gardiner, ZRS 50 (1912), 54.

vitr., in front of (or as part of the frontwall of) the sandstone chapel referred to in 11, 1-8.