

THE LUXOR BUILDING INSCRIPTION OF RAMESSES III


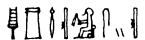
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The purpose of this short contribution is to give a new text¹ of an inscription published for the first time by Deressy in 1894² and again by Otto in 1963³, and to add a few remarks on its contents. Such a new text is not wholly superfluous, since 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 silicieux), lying flat behind one of the standing colossi of Rameses II in the south-west corner of the court of this king⁴, 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 material⁵, 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 stela or not⁶ is mainly a matter of definition; certainly it was not a freestanding stela, but part of a wall; but to all probability it did have the form of a rectangular stela, 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 Otto⁷. Reading , "ein schöner ehrwürdiger Palast", he wondered how to reconcile the statement of the text that this was built of inr n bi3yt with the fact that according to 1.8 the building was made of sandstone (inr nfr n rwdt). This problem is entirely eliminated by the correct reading of the group; actually the text has , "a large and august (rectangular) stela", i.e., the very block on which the inscription is written. This is indeed made of gritstone (inr n bi3yt), 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 quaestionis. 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-Rē^c-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 II⁸. 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 Shebitku⁹, inscriptions of Ramesses III occur especially on various places on the west wall of the temple¹⁰; 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 Ra^cmesse-Ruler 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 Temple¹¹. Since no exact location is mentioned in the papyrus an answer remains speculative. Schaedel and originally also Otto¹² were quite positive about the identity of the two buildings, but later Otto showed much more hesitation¹³. 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 II¹⁴. 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 Mahmud Abd el-Razik¹⁵. According to these texts the courtyard was a "place of supplication and of hearing prayers" and a place in which Amun halted at the beginning of every ten days¹⁶. At least from the beginning of Dyn.XXI¹⁷ 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 texts¹⁸, 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 time¹⁹. How this frequently recurring event was connected with the annual Feast of Opet, mentioned in both ramesseid 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 G. Daressy, Notes et remarques, CVII, RT 16 (1894), 55-56.

³ E. Otto, Eine Bauinschrift Ramses' III. in Luxor, ZAS 90 (1963), 93-97, with corrections of misprints in ZAS 91 (1964), 140.

⁴ PM II², 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 H. D. Schaedel, Die Listen des grossen Papyrus Harris (LMS 6), Glückstadt etc. 1936, 25; E. Otto, Topographie des thebanischen Gaus (UGA 16), Berlin 1952, 42; id., ZAS 90, 96; cfr. also E. F. Wente, Late Ramesseid Letters (SAOC 33), Chicago 1967, 79.

⁹ PM II², 335 (223).

¹⁰ Base-texts on inner wall of court of Ramesses II: PM II², 308 (28) - (29); cartouches on west doorway of hypostyle: o.c., 318 (106); scene and texts on west doorway of Room X: o.c., 323 (135); four scenes on outer wall: o.c., 334 (210). Cfr. Schaedel, o.c., 25, n. 4.

¹¹ pHarris I, 5:6-7; 12:3.

¹² Schaedel, o.c., 24-26; Utto, Topographie, 42.

¹³ ZAS 90, 96.

¹⁴ Evidence of building-activities of Ramesses III in this area has been discovered in recent years, see Abdul-Qader Muhammad, ASAE 60 (1968), 242-244.

¹⁵ M. Abd el-Razik, The Dedicatory and Building Texts of Ramesses II in Luxor Temple, JEA 60 (1974), 142-160; JEA 61 (1975), 125-136.

¹⁶ JEA 60, 147 (§ 3B); 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 mnkb, not sh-ntr, in §§ 8 & 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 restingplace is found in the inscriptions of the triple shrine itself (§§ 13-15).

¹⁷ Černý, LRL 66, 4-6; cfr. Wente, LRL 79.

¹⁸ K. Sethe, Amun und die acht Urgötter von Hermopolis (APAW 1929: 4), § 112.

¹⁹ Cfr. C. F. Nims, Thebes of the Pharaohs, London 1965, 131.





1. ^a ^b ^c ^d ^e ^f ^g ^h ⁱ ^j ^k ^l ^m ⁿ ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{kv} ^{kw} ^{kx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tq} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{vy} ^{vz} ^{wa} ^{wb} ^{wc} ^{wd} ^{we} ^{wf} ^{wg} ^{wh} ^{wi} ^{wj} ^{wk} ^{wl} ^{wm} ^{wn} ^{wo} ^{wp} ^{wq} ^{wr} ^{ws} ^{wt} ^{wu} ^{wv} ^{ww} ^{wx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{xg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xx} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yx} ^{yy} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}



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 fount, used by both D. and O.

Line 1. At the top of this line approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total height is missing, a fact not noted by O., and indicated only very inconsistently by D.

(a) D. , O. ; in fact only the head and beak of the vulture are missing;  and  are perfectly legible.


(b) D. , O. .



(c) D. , O. ; two Δ -signs and the lower half of  are visible.

(d) The Δ (cfr. Gardiner, EG³ § 459, Erman, NAG § 275), not noted by D. or O., is quite clear.

(e) Above  (so D., O.) enough room for the required .




(f) D. , O. .


(g) Doubtfull; D. & O. .




(h) Above  there seems to be room for one horizontal sign (not noted by D. and O.); hardly enough room for .

(i) So with D.

(k) Above  room for one horizontal sign;  is required (cfr. Wb. IV 183, 16).



(l) The  is quite clear, as is the following  (O.: ).

(m) O. .


(n) D. , O. ; in fact the Δ is not in the middle of the group, but above the first stroke of ; cfr. for the proposed restoration, e.g. KRI II, 58 (Qadeš P 180); LEM 124, 4.


(o) D. , O. ;  is clear; above it room for one small sign.

Line 2.


(a) O.'s text has the , but in the corrections of misprints (ZAS 91, 140) this was erroneously altered into .

Line 3.

(a) O. .


(b) So correctly D.; O. .

Line 4.


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


Line 5.

(a) O.  (after correction ZAS 91,140).



(b) So with D.; O. .


Line 6.

(a) The , noted by D., but omitted by O., is clearly legible.


(b) O. .

(c) O. (after correction) .


(d) Neither O.'s original , nor his later  are correct.


(e) O. .

Line 9.

(a) So with D.; O. wrongly corrected this to .

Line 10.

(a) So with D.; O. .

(b) O. ; D. again was correct here.

Translation.

(1) 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 (?) 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 (?)¹ since your kingship upon earth; you have established Ma^Cat 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 Ruler of Joy to the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Usima^Cre^C-beloved of Amun, Heir of the Ennead, Son of Re^C, Ra^Cmesse-Ruler 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^C, who ener-

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 Ḥasrō¹, shrewd of knowledge like Beautiful-of-Face, 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-Rē^C-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 promenading² for the Lord of the Gods at his beautiful Feast of Upet, a model of its kind³ 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 Rituals, Usima^CRē^C-beloved of Amun. He has executed, as a monument for his⁴ Amun-Rē^C-foremost of his Sanctuary, the making for him of (10) a large and august stela of gritstone in front (of it⁵). It was made for him by the Son of Rē^C, Lord of Diadems, Ra^Cmesse-Ruler of Heliopolis, beloved of Amun-Rē^C-Lord of Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands, Foremost of Most-Select-of-Places, given life, stability and power like Rē^C forever.

Notes to the translation.

¹ Cfr. for the word smdt the references quoted by W.F. Edgerton & J.A. Wilson, Historical Records of Ramses III (SAUC 12), Chicago 1936, 34, n. 73a.

² i. e. Thoth. Cfr. for Hert Gauthier, DG IV 42-43 and Gardiner, AEU II, 81*.

¹ This is an attempt to render mnt nfrt; Utto saw in 𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏 a feminine derivation of mn "to stay" and suggested "Ort des Bleibens", "Aufenthaltsort"; however, in this case one would expect a determinative [𓄏]. I think mnt must be the 𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏 of Wb. II 65, 6-8 and Faulkner, Conc. Dict., 107 ("the like"), copt. MINE (J. Černý, Coptic Etymological Dictionary, Cambridge 1976, 83: "sort, quality, manner"); mnt nfrt would then mean "a (thing of) perfect quality", "a perfect sample", "a model of its kind".

² st swtwt, "promenade", "avenue (with trees)", here in the more metaphorical sense pointed out by Gardiner, ZAS 50 (1912), 54.

³ viz., in front of (or as part of the frontwall of) the sandstone chapel referred to in ll. 7-8.



P1.1 a-b



Pl. II