

THE LIBYAN ANARCHY:
INSCRIPTIONS FROM EGYPT'S
THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

Translated with an Introduction and Notes
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Atlanta

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B. OSORKON III

110. A THEBAN FLOOD RECORDED IN LUXOR TEMPLE

Discovered by Grébaut in 1889, this weathered hieratic graffito of fifty-one lines is incised on two faces at right angles on the southernmost pilaster base separating the forecourt of Amonhotep III from the following hypostyle hall at Luxor temple (Nelson Key Plans 83).¹ The text begins (twenty-one lines) on the western face of the pilaster at the front of the hypostyle, with the continuation (thirty lines) from its left edge onto the northern face of the pilaster at the rear of the forecourt. Composed by the priest and scribe Nakhtefmut (line 9), the text comprises a hymn and reproof to the god Amon, who has inexplicably submerged his sacred city, disrupting human activity and diverting temple ritual (lines 4–8). Nakhtefmut is careful to remind the deity that there have been no lapses in temple construction or ritual texts (lines 28–30), cited elsewhere as motives for divine displeasure.²

The Luxor inscription corresponds to text 5 of the records of Theban Nile flood levels carved on the western face of the Karnak quay. It is the second highest level recorded, indicating a flood depth of more than two feet (62 cm) above the Luxor temple pavement.³ For the quay records, see above, text 7.

Presented here is the first complete translation, aided by collation of the original by John C. and Deborah Darnell and the author in 1996. Recently cleaned, the text is now damaged by salts from rising ground water. Text and partial translation in Daressy 1896a, 181–86⁴; with further commentary in Legrain 1896a, 120; Daressy, 1898, 80 §CLIX; Breasted 1906–7, 4:369–70 §§742–44 (lines 1–6 only); Meyer 1907–8, 116; Porter and Moss 1972, 317 (98 a–b); and Chicago Oriental Institute Photos 9091–92. For the reattribution of the text to Osorkon III rather than II, see Gauthier 1914, 382–83 §I; and Daressy 1926, 7–8 n. 3. See Kitchen 1986, 92 n. 38 and 342–43 n. 557.

A. HYPOSTYLE SECTION = PORTER AND MOSS 1972, 317 (98 B)

(1) ḥsb.t 3.t 3bd 3 pr.t⁵ sw 12 ḥr ḥm⁶ n ny-sw.t bī.ty nb t3.wy Wsr-m3^c.
t-R^c-stp-n-Imn ‘nh wḏ3 snb s3 R^c

(2) Wsrkn mrī-Imn s3 3s.t⁷ dī ‘nh ḏ.t īw bs⁸ nwn m tp(?)⁹ [...] t3 pn
r ḏr.w=f

(3) īqh.n=f¹⁰ tn.wy¹¹ mī sp tpy [...]t[...] t3 pn n šḥm=f mī w3ḏ-wr nn
‘-(n)-mw¹²

(4) rmṭ r ḥsf 3.t=f ḥr nb m ḥmwy.w¹³ ḥr nīw.t=f¹⁴ nšn [...]f ḥy [...].
mī p.t

(5) r.w-pr.w nb n W3.s.t mł ɸm.w hrw pn šɸ^c n ʔImn n ʔIp.t p3 w[ɸ3¹⁵] n sšm=ɸ šp[sy]¹⁶

(6) ʔq=ɸ r pr wr n wɸ3=ɸ r-pr pn nɸw.tyw=ɸ mł nb[ɸ.w] m w3w sbɸ=

(7) sn pw m p.t ɸr R^c r s3ɸ ntr pn ʔ3 m p3 ɸw nfr ɸtp=ɸ m ʔIp.t-s.wt

(8) dsr nn rɸ=tw mn ʔIp.t mł p.t¹⁷ r sw3š ntr ʔ3 m wr b3.w=ɸ s3-mr=ɸ ɸsk wd=ɸ

(9) ɸr.n{n}¹⁸ ɸm-ntr n ʔImn-R^c ny-sw.t ntr.w sš ny-sw.t m pr-^cnɸ¹⁶ Nɸt-
t3y=ɸ-Mw.t¹⁹ [s3 ɸm-ntr ...]-nw²⁰ (n) ʔImn B3k-n-ɸns

(10) dd=ɸ ɸ ntr šps ms sw ds=ɸ ɸty n sp3.t(?)=ɸ ʔɸ m ɸ^c[.w(?)]=ɸ¹⁶ dmd
ɸr ɸtn=ɸ mł [...]

(11) ɸr d.t=ɸ r šɸ3p sšt3=ɸ smsw ɸpr m ɸ3.t t3.wy ɸr ɸnty=ɸ q3mw ɸt.
nb.t

(12) šɸb r.w-pr.w=ɸ wbny r nɸɸ ɸtpy d.t msb n ɸn [nɸ]ɸ¹⁶

(13) wɸm ms.wt ɸr sšp.t krɸ m ɸprw=ɸ mnɸ n ɸ^cɸ ɸy n ɸ^cpy

(14) r b^cɸ t3.wy s^cnɸ r3 nb m rwd=ɸ t3w pw ɸns m sts=ɸ srq.n=ɸ ɸty

(15) nb pr nsr.t m sty.w=ɸ ɸr smnɸ ɸr.n=ɸ nb šɸm dsr ɸr(?) n

(16) dr.t(?)=ɸ²¹ ɸpr ntr.w ntr.wt ɸm=ɸ wtt=ɸ rmt.t ʔw.t ɸpty.w ɸnn.w dd-

(17) mw.t(?)²² nb.t ɸr.t(w) nn r 3w m ɸmw n ɸb=ɸ ɸr grg t3.wy ɸr pr(?)
r(?) šn.t=ɸ r ɸpr m-^c

(18) nɸw.t=k W3.s.t ɸr.t R^c ɸnw.t t3.w twt pw r ɸry.t ɸry šɸn r=s m sp
tpy

(19) mšɸn.t nfr.t n.t B3.wy-dmd ɸ3=ɸ r=s m ɸt Nw.t ɸ3yn²³ pw n

(20) b3=ɸ K3-mw.t=ɸ swr nɸt.w=ɸ m ɸnty=s b3wtw²⁴ s.w

(21) ntr.w ntr.wt dmd=sn r=s ɸr nfr.w[=s]¹⁶ stɸn ɸr nb n m33=s m ɸp
bh²⁵

B. FORECOURT SECTION = PORTER AND MOSS 1972, 317 (98 A)

(22) ɸnm=s m ʔntyw nb wrɸ[...] w3d [...]s=sn

(23) s.t-ɸb n ntr.w r [p.t(?)] pw-trɸ mkw s.t nn n(t)k

(24) [rw]d=s¹⁶ m ɸnt t3 pn r 3w=ɸ wbn.tw r^c nb ɸr m33 p3 ɸtn(?)

(25) ɸty(?)=s m t3w n¹⁶ r3 ɸr=s ɸt.t r Šm^c=s [...] b^cɸ¹⁶

(26) r ɸ.wt-ntr=k wr s.t=k dsr m p3wtw t3.wy ɸmn.n=k tw m¹⁶

(27) ɸnw=s swr mnw=ɸ [...]w [...] ny.w-sw.t bɸ.tyw ɸr ɸr

(28) 3ɸ n k3=k skm.tw ds.t ɸnr.w r s3w.t=s ɸr

(29) sq3=s ɸmy.t hw.t-ntr=k r3=s=sn wr s ɸr=k ɸr dd=k r=s m r3=k

(30) ds=k ɸnk ʔImn ɸtp=ɸ m ɸnty ɸp.t=ɸ ɸr r3.w ntry ɸr.n nb mk3.tw

(31) ɸft sd̄m.tw²⁶ mł ɸmy.w sp3.wt wn=s=sn ɸr nɸs=k r^c nb ɸr dr

(32) dw nb m nɸw.t=w q^c ɸmw²⁷ wɸm.n=ɸ ɸy ɸmw²⁷

(33) sšm pn w^c3w pw wr nn šɸ3.tw [mł.ty]=ɸ gs ɸpt ʔ3mw

(34) (ɸ)n w3d-wr ptr sɸ3.tw m-^c ɸnmm.t bss

(35) ɸ^cpy m wd.n=k ɸn-ɸw=ɸ smɸ pr=k m mdw.t=ɸ wbn.tw ɸ^c.tw

(36) m W3.s.t rɸ=s=sn mł m wɸm(?) m qɸ=ɸ pr=ɸ ɸ3=ɸ ɸr šɸr.w

(37) w3ɸ=ɸ wd̄b.w r [...] dbn

- (38) .n=f ṗ.t=k (m) ṗtrw¹⁶ [...]s ḥnn.w m ḥnty=s [...]
 (39) ḥpr ds=f šḥr.w dw pw r [...] ... [...] nṗw.tyw
 (40) wr ṗr.n(n) ṗmw m ḥnty nṗw.t=k [...] wbn [...]
 (41) [...] m rkw ny-sw.t Mn-ḥpr-R^c [...]
 (42) [...] =f rh=f nn wnw m-^c=f wnn ṗty ḥr [...] pr(?)=k k3
 (43) [...] nṗw.t=k m ḥ3yn3 [...] =k [...] m ḥnty [...]
 (44) [...]
 (45) ḥprw n-ṗm=s wh3 [...]
 (46) m rkw s3=k ny-sw.t bṗ.ty Wsrkn ḥn^c sn=f¹⁶ [ṗwpt(?)...]
 (47) ṗmw²⁷ ṗt ṗm=s swr=k šf(y.t)=k m ṗb.w(?) nb ḥ3(wt)=sn ntt
 (48) 3[q] m wd=k nn nh[t²⁸ r] sh ḥr=k²⁹ r=s wp³⁰ nn mk [...]
 (49) [...]
 (50) ṗw(?)=k ṗr=k dd [...]w [...] p3 [ḥrly(?) [...]]
 (51) ṗmw²⁷ r tḫ.t=f ṗp.t [...] =s

(1) Regnal year 3, third month (of) winter,⁵ day 12 under the Majesty⁶ of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, Usima^c-resetepenamon, l.p.h., Son of Re,

(2) Osorkon, beloved of Amon, Son of Isis,⁷ given life forever. The flood water of the Abyss welled up⁸ in the first (?)⁹ [...] this entire land.

(3) As at the beginning of time (lit., “the first occasion”), it attained¹⁰ the bordering mountains,¹¹ [...] this land being in its power like the sea. There was no canal¹²

(4) made by (lit., “of”) man to repel its intensity, everyone being as fleas¹³ in hisJ city, its raging high [...] as heaven,

(5) every temple of Thebes like swamps. On this day occurred the processional appearance of Amon of Luxor (in) the ba[rk¹⁵] of his au[gust]¹⁶ portable image.

(6) He entered into the shrine (lit., “great house”) of his bark of this temple, with his citizens like swimmers in the waves. It was

(7) their petition in heaven before Re to approach this great god in the beautiful island so that he might rest in Karnak

(8) the holy, since it was unknown whether Luxor was (yet) firm like heaven,¹⁷ in order to praise the great god through the greatness of his manifestation. The son-who-loves, then, (here is) his command,

(9) made by¹⁸ the prophet of Amon-Re, King of the Gods, royal scribe in the scriptorium,¹⁶ Nakhtefmut,¹⁹ [son of the ...²⁰ prophet] of Amon, Bakenkhons.

(10) He said: “O noble god who gave birth to himself, sovereign of his nome (?), exalted in his appearance[s]¹⁶, united with his disk like [...]

(11) with his body in order to conceal his secret image! O eldest one, who came to be before the Two Lands at his beginning, who created everything,

(12) who puts his temples in festival, rising forever, setting forever, conducting to the limits [of eter]nity,¹⁶

(13) who is reborn in the glow of night in his excellent form as the moon, who comes as the Inundation

(14) to flood the Two Lands so as to vivify every mouth with his strength! He is the wind that flies through his firmament, having caused

(15) all throats to breathe, from whose rays the heat goes forth perfecting all that he has made. Sacred power, who acted by means of

(16) his hand,²¹ from whom all gods and goddesses came into being! He engendered all mankind, animals, birds, fish, and matter (?),²²

(17) with all this done by the skill of his heart in founding the Two Lands, having caused that things go forth (?) to his storehouse (?) in order to be in the possession of

(18) your city Thebes, the Eye of Re, mistress of the lands. It is equal to distant heaven, in which one alighted in the beginning of time,

(19) the goodly birth-brick of "Him-Whose-Two-Spirits-Are-United," to which he descends from the body of Nut. It is the dwelling place²³ of

(20) his *ba*-spirit, Kamutef, who augments his victories within it—the primordial one (?),²⁴ (for) men,

(21) gods and goddesses, to which they gather because of [its] beauty,¹⁶ at the seeing of which every face is brightened, through the running of the one who has fled,²⁵

(22) its fragrance all of myrrh, great [...] flourish [with] their [flowers (?)],

(23) the favorite place of the gods, more than [heaven (?)]. Who will protect it, if not you,

(24) [that it might gr]ow¹⁶ from the beginning of this land to its full extent, shining each day, seeing the [disk (?)],

(25) its throat (?) with breath for¹⁶ the mouth, its face turned (?) to its Upper Egypt [...] flood¹⁶

(26) into your great temple, your sacred place as the primeval one of the Two Lands, you having hidden yourself¹⁶

(27) within it, O you whose monuments are magnified [...], with kings of Upper and Lower Egypt performing

(28) benefactions for your *ka*-spirit. Completed is the cutting of stones to be its walls,

(29) elevating them within your temple. As for their incantations, they are great before you because of what you said regarding them with your own mouth:

(30) "I am Amon, resting within his chapel because of the divine incantations that the lord made." Be attentive

(31) and listen, please,²⁶ to those who are in the nomes. They have been summoning you daily about driving out

(32) all evil from their city since the “sea”²⁷ poured forth, and again it has come forth (as) a sea.²⁷

(33) This situation is a great curse! Nothing [like] it can be recalled, with half of Luxor swallowed

(34) by the sea! How is (it) to be perceived by humanity? It is

(35) in accordance with what you have commanded that the Inundation wells up. Will it submerge your temple in its depths while you rise and shine

(36) in Thebes? How will they know when his proper form will return, when he comes and goes according to plan,

(37) depositing sandbanks at [...?]

(38) He has encircled your chapel (with) the river¹⁶ [...] its [...], fish before it [...]

(39) [...] who came into being by himself. It is an evil plan to [...] compel (?) [...] citizens

(40) [...] great [...] which the sea made before your city [...] shine [...]

(41) [...] in the time of King Menkheperre (Tuthmosis III) [...]

(42) his [...] he knew he had nothing. The sovereign was doing [...] your house. Then

(43) [...] your city as the dwelling place [...] you [...] before [...]

(44) [...]

(45) which came into being within it, fail [...]

(46) in the time of your son, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Osorkon and his brother¹⁶ [Iuput (?) ...]

(47) sea²⁷ take possession of it (Thebes?), that you might magnify your dignity in all hearts. Their corpses that

(48) have perished as you commanded, there is no prayer²⁸ [to] dissuade²⁹ you regarding them. Nor³⁰ is there protection [...]

(49) [...]

(50) you come (?) that you might do [that which ...] said [...] the [...] heaven [...] that there return (?)]

(51) the sea²⁷ to its cavern-source, and Luxor [...] its [...].

NOTES

1. Wrongly stated to be the “northwest” corner of the hypostyle in Daressy 1896a, 181; followed by Breasted 1906–7, 4:369 n. a. From the central axis of the hypostyle hall, the pilaster stands in the northeast corner; see Porter and Moss 1972, pl. XXXI (98 a–b); and Nelson 1941, pl. XXII (83).

2. Cf. “The Dream of Nectonebo” in Wilcken 1927, 369–74; and Maspero 1967, 285–89.

3. Daressy 1898, 80 § CLIX, correcting 1896a, 186. For earlier texts of the “flood genre,” see Baines 1974, 39–54; Breasted 1906–7, 4:308–9, §§627–30 (Gebelein inscription of Smendes), and cf. the stela of Ahmose describing unprecedented

rain, discussed in Foster and Ritner 1996, 1–14, and note the reference to events under Tuthmosis III in line 41, below.

4. Daressy had first discussed the text in a lecture before the Institut Égyptien, 6 December 1895; see Legrain 1896a, 120.

5. Daressy read *tpy pr.t* “first month of winter/Tybi”), although this date was noted as uncertain already in Legrain 1896b, 120. E. Meyer, aided by a collation by L. Borchardt, emended the date to *3bd 3 pr.t* “third month of winter/Phamenoth” (1907–8, 116). The revised dating is followed by Gauthier 1914, 382–83. For discussion, see Gauthier 1914, 383 n. 1.

6. The divine determinative, miscopied by Daressy as a seated deity, is represented by a falcon on a standard throughout the text.

7. For the clear distinction between Osorkon-beloved-of-Amon (III) “Son of Isis” and Osorkon-beloved-of-Amon (II) “Son of Bastet,” see Kitchen 1986, 88–94.

8. Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:474/5–6.

9. Uncertain traces; *tp(?)* “first/upon”?

10. Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:138/13.

11. Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 5:372/5–6.

12. First recognized by Daressy 1896a, 184 n. 11; see Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:159/7; Clère 1983, 95–96; and the full writing in Erichsen 1954, 51.

13. Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 3:281/12. Daressy 1896a, 184, translated “pelicans.”

14. Probably “Amon’s”; cf. lines 6, 18, and 43.

15. Reading suggested by Breasted 1906–7, 4:369, corroborated by still-visible traces of a bark.

16. Reading courtesy of John C. and Deborah Darnell.

17. If correctly analyzed, the passage suggests a transferral of the cult image from the flooded Luxor to the Karnak temple.

18. For the writing with double *n*, characteristic of the period, see Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:111/7, marked “D. 22”; and Caminos 1952, 51–52, textual note 5.

19. *Nḥt* determined by a man with stick, not *w* and strong arm.

20. Second-, Third-, or Fourth-ranked Prophet of Amon.

21. Text copy marked uncertain by Daressy 1896a, 182. If correctly transcribed, a reference to the creator’s generative act of masturbation.

22. Text copy marked uncertain by Daressy 1896a, 182. Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 5:634, literally “heaps” of minerals, vegetation, etc.

23. Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 2:484.

24. On the basis of the determinative, taken as a phonetic rendering of *p3w.ty* (Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:496–97), with a common *b/p* switch. Or (?) metathesis for *bw3.t* “covert, sporting place” (Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:455/1). Daressy 1896a, 185, translated “center(?)”.

25. A reference to the heavenly course of the returning sun god? Daressy (1896a, 185) translated: “on ne peut s’en aller l’abandonnant.”

26. The phrase was miscopied by Daressy, who translated (1896a, 185): “Un appel t’est fait pour combattre (le mal).” For the emended text, see Caminos 1958, 107 §q; Osing 1983, 356 §u; and Erman and Grapow 1935–53, 2:240, to 1926–63, 2:162/11: *mk3.tw ḥft sḏm.tw*.

27. Variant spellings of *ym* “sea/floodwaters” unregistered in Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:78/11, and unrecognized by Daressy 1896a, 186 n. 1. This metaphorical use of “sea” corresponds to the mention of *w3d-wr* in lines 3 and 34.

28. Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 2:289.

29. Literally, “to make dumb the face”; see Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 3:474/5–10.

30. “But there is not...”; taken as disjunctive, Erman and Grapow 1926–63, 1:301/21. Or (?) translate “dissuade you regarding them (in) judgment.”

111. AKORIS STELA OF OSORKON III

Now lacking its rounded lunette, this limestone stela discovered in 1982 measures 51.0 cm in height, 49.5 cm. in width, and 11.0 cm in depth. The eleven preserved lines of text record a gift of oil by Osorkon III to the local temple of Amon-Re at Akoris (Tehneh) in Middle Egypt and the oracular confirmation of the gift by Amon-Re, Mut, Khonsu, and the local avatar of Amon. The stela is notable primarily for its extensive quotation of Osorkon’s titulary, which here includes the designation “high priest of Amon.” Despite this addition, Osorkon III probably cannot be identified with the earlier high priest Osorkon (B), son of Takelot II; see Kitchen 1995, xxxi §BB. For royal use of this title, cf. the Titles of the Tanite Priest-King Pseusennes I, no. 29 above.

For the text, photo, and translation, see Den Tomimura in Paleological Association of Japan, Egyptian Committee 1995, 301–6 and pl. 116 (top); and Madoka Suzuki in Paleological Association of Japan 1983, 13–16. See Kitchen 1986, 580 §520.

TEXT

(1) [h]sb.t 3 [+ x 3b]d 3 [... sw] 3 [+x] hr hm [n ...]

(2) h3s.wt s3 3s.t Hr shm hpš iṯi t3.wy [ʿ3] ph.ty iṯy nb(?)

(3) t3.wy m3i hs ʿ3 hmhm hry.t=f m h3s.wt mī ʾImn-R^c ny-sw.t nṯr.w
wr

(4) ny(.t)-sw.t mī Tm (wr) hb(.w)-sd mī Tnn hm-nṯr tp(y) n ʾImn-R^c
ny-sw.t nṯr.w ny-sw.t bī.ty nb t3.wy Wsr-m3^c.t-R^c-stp-n-ʾImn[-R^c]¹ nṯr hq3
W3s.t

(5) s3 R^c nb h^c.w Wsrk(n) mrī-ʾImn s3 3s.t dī ʿnh mī R^c d.t h32 pn smn.
ty p3 12 n g3dy3 n

(6) nh(h)⁴ r Pr ʾImn-R^c-m3i-hnty5 tp t3 mr (hr)-ʿ.wy6 n3 iṯy.w-r37 mr
in ny-sw.t bī.ty nb t3.wy

(7) Wsr-m3^c.t-R^c-stp-n-ʾImn[-R^c]¹ nṯr hq3 W3s.t⁸ s3 R^c nb h^c.w Wsrk(n)
mrī-ʾImn s3 3s.t dd ʾImn-R^c ny-sw.t nṯr.w p3 nṯr ʿ3 wr š3^c hpr Mw.t wr(.t)

(8) nb(.t) ʾIšrw Hnsw m W3s.t Nfr-ḥtp Hr nb 3w.t-ib ʾImn-R^c-m3i-hnty5
ir p3 nty-īw=f