

THE POSSESSED PRINCESS.

TABLET OF RAMESES XII.

 TRANSLATED BY

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THE Inscription of the departure of the ark of Khonsu or Chons, is found on a sandstone tablet in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. The tablet has been published by M. Prisse, *Monuments Égyptiens*, fo. Paris, 1847, pl. xxiv. ; and a translation by S. Birch, *Transactions* of the Royal Society of Literature, New Series, 1853, Vol. IV. p. 217, the text and translation of the inscription by the late Vicomte Emmanuel De Rougé, *Étude sur une stèle Égyptienne*, 8vo., Paris, 1858 and a translation only by M. Brugsch, *Histoire d'Égypte* 4to. Berlin 1859 p. 206. The monarch in whose reign the event took place is supposed to be Rameses XII. of the XXIst dynasty but there is

some difficulty about the succession of these later monarchs of the XXIst dynasty, as the discoveries of new papyri and documents have had the effect of displacing Rameses X.

An idea has been started by the Rev. D. Haigh in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde* 1874 p. 65, that Bakhten was connected with Assyria and that the king of the land of Bakhten mentioned in the tablet was Tiglath-Pileser I., but it cannot be considered as proved without further confirmation. The inscription is one of the most remarkable of the ancient Egyptian Monuments and records the possession of a princess of the land of Bakhten by a spirit or demon and the exorcism of the spirit by the Egyptian god Khonsu or Chons sent specially from Egypt for that purpose: similar possessions appear to have been not unknown to the Assyrians and Babylonians and an incident of these possessions is found in the Book of Tobit. It is clear from the name of the princess that she was of the Semitic race and that the country to which she belonged was some distance from Egypt.

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SCENE representing the departure of the ark of the god KHONSU or CHONS borne by twelve priests and accompanied by two others one reading, the ark having a feather standard in front and a flabellum behind. The ark is called "KHONSU in Egypt NEFERHETP." Before the ark stands Rameses XII. wearing a helmet and tunic offering burning incense to the god. Over the head of the monarch is a vulture flying holding a signet. The inscriptions here read,

"The King of the Upper and Lower Egypt, the Lord of the two countries RA-TSER-MA, SATP-EN-RA the Son of the Sun of his race RAMESES beloved of AMEN, beloved of NISHEM, Giver of eternal life gives incense to (his) father KHONSU in the Uas¹ NEFERHETP. The protection of life behind all (his) limbs."

On the right side is seen the return of the ark of CHONS borne by a pole on the shoulders of 4 priests and met by Ha-neter-neb, the priest of the god offering fire. All the priests wear sandals, and scull caps. The inscription reads "Beloved of KHONSU the Giver of oracles in the Uas,¹ the great god, driver away, of possessing,² Giver of life like the Sun. The name of the Prophet, Priest of KHONS the Giver of oracles in Uas,¹ KHONS-PA-NETER-NEB."

Above the scene is the usual winged disk called "*Hut*,³ the great god, Lord of Heaven."

- 1 The HORUS, the Powerful Bull, the type of diadems, establishing reigns, like TUM, the Hawk of gold, the powerful (by) the scimitar, the destroyer of the Nine bow barbarians, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt

¹ The Thebaïd.

² Evil spirit entering into the body.

³ *Telhut*, winged disk.

- Lord of the two countries, RA-TSER-MA, approved of the Sun, the son of the Sun of his loins, RAMESSES beloved of AMEN, beloved of AMEN-RA
- 2 lord of the thrones of the two countries, and the circle of the gods, Lords of the Thebaid The good god son of AMEN, born of HORUS, engendered of HAREMAKHU, the illustrious seed of the entire lord, the issue of KAMUTEF,¹ King of Egypt, ruler of Teshet, Chief
- 3 taking the Nine bow barbarians. Coming from the womb he has arranged the forces, he has given orders as soon as *he* issued from the egg, a resolute Bull, he went forward, being a Bull King, a god manifest the day of combats, like MENTU, the very valorous
- 4 like the son of *Nut*.² His Majesty was in Naharana³ registering the annual tributes the Princes of all the countries came prostrating and giving peaceful (words) to the spirits, of His Majesty. The places began bringing their tribute of gold, *lapis lazuli*⁴
- 5 *turquoise*,⁵ and all the good wood of Taneter⁶ on their backs, one outvying another. The Chief of the land of Bakhten was causing his presents to be brought, he placed his eldest daughter first. They entreated His Majesty praying life of him. She
- 6 was a very beautiful person, and delighted the heart of

¹ The mystical title of Amen Ra considered as the Father and Son, the first and last avatar of the god.

² Or *Naut* goddess of the celestial water or the Greek Rhea.

³ Mesopotamia.

⁴ *Xesbet*, supposed to be lapis lazuli, but two kinds mentioned in the inscriptions, *Xesbet ma* real lapis, and *Xesbet* lapis only, possibly an imitation. Glass, or as it is technically termed paste, imitations of lapis are found.

⁵ *Mafka* turquoise. This like *Xesbet* was true or otherwise: some suppose it to be malachite, but neither malachite nor turquoise are found in Egyptian works of art. It is figured blue and may be intended for blue fayence or else it was a mineral of copper for making blue paint.

⁶ The Holy Land, part of Arabia.

His Majesty beyond all things. The title of great¹ royal wife RANEFERU was conferred on her. *When* His Majesty returned to Egypt, she performed all the rites of a royal wife. It happened on the 15th year the 22nd of the month Payni² His Majesty was in Uas,³ the powerful, the Ruler of Temples, performing

- 7 the orders of father AMEN-RA, Lord of the thrones of the two countries in his good festival of Southern Thebes (from) the seat of his heart, at the first time, it was sent to tell His Majesty there was an envoy of the Chief of the Bakhten come having numerous presents for the royal wife. When he was brought
- 8 before His Majesty with his presents, he said adoring His Majesty, "Glory to thee, Sun of the Nine bow barbarians, Let us live before thee." *When* he had said his adoration before His Majesty he said again to His Majesty "I have come to thee my
- 9 Lord on account of BENT-RASH the little sister of the royal wife RANEFERU *a malady has penetrated her limbs.*⁴ Would Thy Majesty send a person acquainted with things⁵ to see her?" His Majesty said "Bring me the scribe of the houses of life and those acquainted with mysteries
- 10 of the inner palace." (They) were brought forthwith. His Majesty said, "I have called you to hear this word, bring me one intelligent in his heart and skilful with his fingers from amongst you." Was brought the royal
- 11 scribe TAHUTIEMHEB before His Majesty His Majesty ordered that he should go to the land of Bakhten with that envoy. The journey to the land of Bakhten was

¹ The *ur* or chief wife, the superior of all the rest.

² The 10th month.

³ *Uas*, Thebes. The Western is sometimes added.

⁴ Or "there is an evil movement in her limbs."

⁵ *Rex-xet sa*, one knowing the things of books, a learned man, magus, sacred scribe or physician.

made by the person acquainted with things. He found BENT-RASHT in the conditions¹ of being under spirits. He found

- 12 them hostile to contend with him. The Prince of the land of Bakhten was a second time sending to His Majesty saying "Prince my Lord would His Majesty order a god be sent
- 13 to His Majesty." On the 26th year the 1st of the month Pashons² during the festival of AMEN His Majesty was in Uas.³ His Majesty was a second time before KHONSU, in Uas³ (called) NEFERHETP,⁴ saying "My good Lord I am again before you on account of the daughter of the Chief of the land
- 14 of Bakhten." Then was led KHONSU, in Uas³ (called) NEFERHETP, to KHONSU the Giver of oracles, the great god, expeller of possessors. Then said His Majesty before KHONSU, in Uas³ (called) NEFERHETP "My good Lord wouldest thou turn thy face to KHONSU
- 15 the Maker of oracles, the great god chaser of possessors let him go to the land of Bakhten by a very great *favour?*" Then said His Majesty "Give thy *protection* with him." I let His Majesty go to the land of Bakhten to save the daughter of the Prince of Bakhten.
- 16 Assented⁵ favourable KHONSU in Uas³ (called) NEFERHETP, he gave his divine virtue fourfold to KHONSU the Giver of oracles in Uas,³ His Majesty ordered that KHONSU the Giver of oracles in Uas³ should be made to

¹ He found her in the conditions of having demons or being possessed by demons.

² The 9th month.

³ The Thebaid.

⁴ Khonsu was a god with two names; the second, by which he was known in Uas or the Thebaid, being Neferhetp.

⁵ *Han api ur akar*, "Moved the head" very much, assented; "an action probably shown by some action of the statue."

- proceed to the great ark¹ and five small boats, a chariot
 17 and many horses on the right and left. That god came
 to the land of Bakhten at a period² of one year and five
 months. The Prince of the land of Bakhten came with
 his soldiers and his Chiefs before KHONSU the Giver of
 oracles he placed himself
 18 on his belly saying "Thou comest to us, thou art
 peaceful to us by orders of the King of Upper and
 Lower Egypt RATSER-MA approved of the Sun. That
 god went to the place where BENT-RASH was. He made
 a *cure*³ of the daughter of the Prince of the land of
 Bakhten; she was right
 19 forthwith. That spirit who was with her said before
 KHONSU the Giver of oracles in Uas.⁴ "Thou hast
 come in peace (the) great god, driver away of possessors,
 the land of Bakhten is thy city, its men are thy slaves.
 I am thy slave.
 20 I will go to the place whence I came to give peace
 (to) thy heart on account of thy journey here. Let the
 Prince of the land of Bakhten order that a good day be
 made with me and the Chief of the land of Bakhten."
 That god intimated to his prophet saying
 21 "Let the Prince of the land of Bakhten make a great
 sacrifice before that spirit." While this agreement was
 made by KHONSU the Giver of oracles in Uas⁴
 and (the) spirit the Prince of the land of Bakhten
 and his army were in great fear.
 22 He made a great sacrifice before KHONSU the Giver of
 oracles in Uas⁴ and that spirit, the Prince of the

¹ *Ua*, a boat. The Egyptian ark was placed in a kind of boat: the other smaller ones are called *kaka-t* "boats."

² *Sam*, a stay or stopping.

³ The word *sa*, aid or protection, means here some action, and from the context the cure or exorcism.

⁴ The Thebaïd.

- land of Bakhten on a good day for them. The spirit went in peace wherever he chose by order of KHONSU the Giver of oracles in Uas.¹
- 23 The Prince of the land of Bakhten was very much delighted and every one in the land of Bakhten. He communing in his heart saying "Let that god be given to the land of Bakhten I will not let him go to Egypt.
- 24 That god remained 3 years, 4 months (and) 5 days in the land of Bakhten. (When) the Prince of the land of Bakhten was lying on his couch he saw that god who came out of his shrine. He was like a Hawk of gold, he flew on high to the land of Egypt.
- 25 (When the Prince) awoke he was as one agitated² (with horror). He said to the prophet of KHONS, the Giver of oracles in Uas¹ "That god is at variance with us let him go to Egypt, let us send his chariot to Egypt."
- 26 The Prince of the land of Bakhten made that god to proceed to Egypt giving to him very many presents of all good things, troops and very many horsemen. They approached in peace to Egypt. That god KHONSU the Giver of oracles in Uas¹ went
- 27 to the house of KHONSU in the Thebaid NEFERHETP. He laid the presents which the Prince of the land of Bakhten had given of all good things before KHONSU in Uas¹ NEFERHETP. He did not give any thing out (of them) to his (own) house. KHONSU the Giver of oracles in Uas¹ approached
- 28 his (own) house in peace on the 33rd year the 19th of (the month) Mechir³ of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt RA-TSER-MA approved of the Sun, who has been made a Giver of life like the Sun immortal.

¹ The Thebaid.

² *Em ua neh neh* "as one struck with horror" or "paralysed." The *u* for *ua* "a person," one.

³ The 6th month.

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