

## INSCRIPTION OF CHNUMHETEP.

---

 TRANSLATED BY
S. BIRCH, LL.D., D.C.L.
 

---

THE following inscription, taken from the celebrated tomb at Beni-hassan, belonging to a most remarkable family which flourished at the XIIth dynasty, has long been known. The text was first published by Burton, *Excerpta Hieroglyphica*, fo., Cairo, 1830, pl. 33-34, and afterwards, in a more complete and exact form, by Professor Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Abth. II., Bl. 124 and 125. It is taken from the walls of a well-known sepulchre. The most important and historical portion has been translated by Brugsch-Bey, *Histoire d'Égypte*, 4to, 1856, p. 55; his *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 8vo, Leipzig, 1877, pp. 139, 143, 146, and the translation, *A History of Egypt under the Pharaohs*, 8vo, London, 1879, pp. 148, 149,

157, 158, comprising the first half; but the other portion, although not so interesting, is far more difficult. Later, a translation of the whole has been given by M. Maspero in the *Recueil des Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archeologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, 1879, p. 160 and foll. The contents show the old feudal constitution of Egypt, the power of the monarch over the principalities, the amount they paid, and the hereditary succession of the great nobles, as also the rights of women to the hereditary estates under the Crown.



## INSCRIPTION OF CHNUMHETEP.

- 1 The hereditary chief, the royal relative, loving the god,<sup>1</sup>  
governor  
2 of the lands of the East, XNUMPETEP, son of NEHERA,  
justified,  
3 son of the daughter of a chief, BEQAT, justified,  
4 has made a monument for the first time<sup>2</sup> to embellish<sup>3</sup>  
5 his district, he has sculptured his name for ever<sup>4</sup>  
6 he has embellished it for ever by his chamber  
7 of KARNETER,<sup>5</sup> he has sculptured the name of his  
8 household, he has assigned their place.  
9 The workmen, those attached to his  
10 house, he has reckoned amongst his  
11 dependents of all ranks,<sup>6</sup> he gave to  
12 all the ministers,<sup>7</sup> it was as they were.  
13 his mouth said, granted me  
14 the sanctity of the HORUS adoring with truth, the Lord  
of Diadems adoring with  
15 Truth, the Golden Hawk the justified, the King of the  
South and North, RANUBKA, son of the Sun.  
16 AMENEMHA (II.), Giver of Life, established and strong  
like the Sun, immortal, to be

<sup>1</sup> Beloved of his god. Maspero.

<sup>2</sup> The first time he made any monument.

<sup>3</sup> *Smenx*, to fabricate or make; translated, throughout, "embellish," or "adorned," or "complete."

<sup>4</sup> *Srut*, some read, "made to flourish."

<sup>5</sup> His tomb.

<sup>6</sup> *xest*, at this period *xest*, replaces the face, and usually read "her."

<sup>7</sup> *Net'en xet*, a kind of officers, a word like the *net'xet* of the Tablet of Canopus.

- 17 the hereditary chief governor of the lands of the East,  
 18 HORUS, PAKHET<sup>1</sup> to the succession<sup>2</sup> of  
 19 the father of my mother in Mena-  
 20 XUFU, he set up to me  
 21 the landmark of the South; he made  
 22 the Northern like the heaven;  
 23 he stretched the great river at  
 24 its back,<sup>3</sup> as was done to my father  
 25 and mother,<sup>4</sup> by the decree  
 26 proceeding from the mouth of the sanctity of  
 27 the HORUS, the second born, the Lord of Diadems, the  
 second born,  
 28 the Golden Hawk, the second born, the King of the  
 South and North, RASATETPAB, son of the Sun.  
 29 AMENEMHA(I.), Giver of Life, established and strong like  
 the Sun for ever,  
 30 he appointed him to be hereditary chief of the lands of  
 the East, in Mena-Xufu;<sup>5</sup>  
 31 he established the landmark<sup>6</sup> of the South; he sculptured  
 32 the Northern like the heaven; he stretched the great  
 river  
 33 on its back,<sup>7</sup> its place in the East  
 34 was Apollinopolis,<sup>8</sup> to remain in the East.  
 35 Came his sanctity doing away with

<sup>1</sup> The patron god. Brugsch reads, "these god as parents or makes the chief their priest." Perhaps of the East of Har-Pakhet.

<sup>2</sup> *Fau*, race.

<sup>3</sup> In its middle. Maspero.

<sup>4</sup> Father of my mother. Brugsch.

<sup>5</sup> Minieh.

<sup>6</sup> *Hutu*, tablets.

<sup>7</sup> Or spine, *aat*; either the Nile flowed through or behind the district.

<sup>8</sup> *Tu-Har*.

36 negligence,<sup>1</sup> crowned<sup>2</sup> as ATUM  
 37 he was ATUM  
 38 himself, he set right what he found  
 39 wasted ; he made the district  
 40 in its two parts ;<sup>3</sup> knowing<sup>4</sup>  
 41 its frontiers, for a district :  
 42 setting up their land marks<sup>5</sup>  
 43 like the heaven, determining their waters ;  
 44 by what was in the list, making  
 45 the dues by the valuation of the greatness  
 46 of his love of justice. He appointed him  
 47 hereditary chief, great protector of the land of Mah ;<sup>6</sup>  
 48 he made the land marks of  
 49 the South of his frontiers at  
 50 Unnut,<sup>7</sup> his northern at Cynopolis ;<sup>8</sup> he stretch-  
 51 ed the great river at its back<sup>9</sup>  
 52 his waters, his fields, his tamarisks,<sup>10</sup>  
 53 his soil<sup>11</sup> to remain to the lands of the West,  
 54 He gave his eldest son NEKHT,  
 55 justified, a worthy person, (to be) ruler  
 56 of his heritage in Mena-Xufu<sup>12</sup>  
 57 by the great favour  
 58 of the King, by an eternal decree

<sup>1</sup> Suppressing the insurrection. Brugsch.

<sup>2</sup> *Rising*. Maspero.

<sup>3</sup> Taking one town after another. Brugsch.

<sup>4</sup> *ReX*, or calculating.

<sup>5</sup> Determining the two parts.

<sup>6</sup> Benihasan.

<sup>7</sup> Hermopolis.

<sup>8</sup> The nome Anupu.

<sup>9</sup> He distributed to him the great river over his territory. Brugsch.

<sup>10</sup> *Aser*, here for trees in general.

<sup>11</sup> *Sá*, sand arena.

<sup>12</sup> Minieh.

- 59 coming from the mouth of the Sanctity of the HORUS,  
 life of the born,  
 60 Lord of Diadems, life of the born,<sup>1</sup> the Golden Hawk,  
 life of the born,  
 61 RAXEPERKA, son of the son USERTESEN (I.) Giver of  
 Life,  
 62 strong (and) firm, like the Sun immortal,  
 63 I succeeded from my birth<sup>2</sup>  
 64 My mother proceeded as an hereditary  
 65 chief, the daughter of a ruler<sup>3</sup>  
 66 of Mah, to the palace of RASATEPAB<sup>4</sup>  
 67 the giver of life, strong and firm, like the Sun immortal,  
 to be the wife  
 68 of the hereditary chief, the ruler of nomes,  
 69 satisfying<sup>5</sup> the heart of the King of the South, favourite  
 70 of the King of the North, to his succession of governor  
 of the country.  
 71 NEHERA justified, a worthy person; brought  
 72 me the King of the South and North, RA-NUB-KAU, Giver  
 of Life, strong and sound,  
 73 like the Sun immortal, as the son of a chief, to succeed  
 74 to the rule of my father and mother out of  
 75 the greatness of his love to me, truly he was ATUM  
 76 himself, RA-NUB-KAU,<sup>6</sup> Giver of Life,  
 77 established and strong, like the Sun immortal, he ap-  
 pointed  
 78 me for chief in the 19th year,<sup>7</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> Or living born.

<sup>2</sup> The first of my race, or those born as heir.

<sup>3</sup> *Heka*, or *hyk*, small prince.

<sup>4</sup> Amenemha I.

<sup>5</sup> *Met-met*.

<sup>6</sup> Amenemha II.

<sup>7</sup> Uncertain if of his reign, but probably so.

79 Menaxufu.<sup>1</sup> I was adorning  
 80 it. I was making it to be (provided)  
 81 with all things. I caused to prosper<sup>2</sup>  
 82 the name of my father. I completed  
 83 the existing temples of the Ka.<sup>3</sup> I served<sup>4</sup> my statues  
 84 at the great temples. I sacrificed to them  
 85 their food, bread, beer, water, vegetables,  
 86 pure herbs. My priest has verified. I procured<sup>5</sup>  
 87 them from the irrigation  
 88 of my workpeople.<sup>6</sup> I ordered  
 89 the sepulchral offerings of bread, beer, cattle, fowl, in all  
 the festivals  
 90 of Karneter,<sup>7</sup> at the festivals of the beginning of the  
 year, the opening of the year, increase  
 91 of the year, diminution of the year,<sup>8</sup> close of the year,<sup>9</sup>  
 92 at the great festival, at the festival of the great burning,  
 93 at the festival of the lesser burning, the five inter-  
 94 calary days, at the festival of bread-making,<sup>10</sup>  
 95 at the twelve monthly and twelve half-monthly festivals,  
 96 all the festivals on the earth (plain) terminating on the  
 hill.<sup>11</sup> But  
 97 should my sepulchral priest or men

<sup>1</sup> Minieh.<sup>2</sup> Or flourish.<sup>3</sup> Or Genius.<sup>4</sup> I dragged my statue to the temples. Brugsch.<sup>5</sup> I chose a priest of the *Ka* or Genius. Maspero.<sup>6</sup> *Mer*, vassals, peasants, serfs.<sup>7</sup> Hades or Purgatory, sepulchral.<sup>8</sup> Little year. Brugsch.<sup>9</sup> These festivals varied according to the fixed or vague years, were in the year but did not mark separate years.<sup>10</sup> *S'et ta s'a*, civil and funereal, or *s'et ta s'a*, flour and food. Entry of grain, Maspero.<sup>11</sup> On the hill, or, "over the hill" is a hill of Anubis.

98 conduct them wrong may he not exist,  
 99 nor his son in his place. I was more  
 100 favoured in the palace than  
 101 any other courtier,<sup>1</sup>  
 102 who reckoned me his following;<sup>2</sup>  
 103 before those who were  
 104 before me, in opposition to  
 105 chamberlains<sup>3</sup> of the palace,  
 106 I paid my court by  
 107 touching the forehead in  
 108 the homage. It was  
 109 in the presence of the word of mouth of the king  
 110 himself, never was like done  
 111 by servants to their lord in their homage;  
 112 he knew the place of my tongue,  
 113 the humility of my thought;  
 114 I was one worthy  
 115 of the sanctity of the king, the honoured  
 116 of those around him,  
 117 favoured in the presence  
 118 of his courtiers, the hereditary chief,  
 119 ΧNUMHETEP'S SON NEHERA, a devoted person.  
 120 Also praised<sup>4</sup> be what has done for me.  
 121 Appointed has been my eldest son NEKHT  
 122 of the lady of the house, KHRATI, to be ruler of  
 Cynopolis,  
 123 for the hereditaments of the father of  
 124 his mother. He is a courtier<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sabmer*, or, as some read, *s'mer*, a courtier or minister.

<sup>2</sup> *χenhu f.* his condition or position, degree, nobility.

<sup>3</sup> *qanbut*, pillars of the palace, "or household."

<sup>4</sup> *Hesut*, thanked, or homage be rendered.

<sup>5</sup> *Sabmer*, one of the king's friends. Brugsch.



- 125 appointed ruler of the district  
 126 of the South, given to him, have been each  
 127 hereditaments by the sanctity of  
 128 the HORUS, conducting the two countries, the Lord of  
     Diadems, crowned (by) truth,  
 129 the Golden Hawk of the gods,<sup>1</sup> King of the South and  
     North, RA-SHA-ΧΕΡΕΡ, son of the Sun,  
 130 USERTESEN (II.), Giver of Life, established and strong  
     like the Sun, for he made  
 131 his memorial in Cynopolis, making good  
 132 what he found defective. He made  
 133 the district into two parts,<sup>2</sup> causing to be determined  
 134 its frontiers, adjusting  
 135 the dues by valuation,  
 136 he placed a landmark<sup>3</sup> at his frontiers  
 137 on the South, he completed the North  
 138 like the heavens, placed in the fields  
 139 of the fallen,<sup>4</sup> making a total  
 140 of fifteen landmarks set up on  
 141 his fields, the Northern frontiers  
 142 to Uas-b-uas,<sup>5</sup> he stretched  
 143 the great river at its back.<sup>6</sup>  
 144 Its western place of Cynopolis to remain  
 145 (as far as) in the land of the West as requested.<sup>7</sup>  
 146 The hereditary chief NEKHT, son of KHNUMHETEP,  
 147 justified a worthy person, says : Not has known my wish

<sup>1</sup> Or third divine golden hawk.

<sup>2</sup> Brugsch translates, taking possession of one town after the other.

<sup>3</sup> *Hutu*, tablets.

<sup>4</sup> Uncultivated. Brugsch.

<sup>5</sup> Oxyrynchite, nome.

<sup>6</sup> See before.

<sup>7</sup> *χελσπερ*, when, or, as asked by me.

148 favoured greatly  
 149 by the King, any other grown old in  
 150 the service as a courtier,<sup>1</sup>  
 151 any among the  
 152 numerous courtiers,<sup>2</sup>  
 153 led to the palace as a courtier.<sup>3</sup>  
 154 There is not in his district who has heard  
 155 (such) great hearings, a mouth  
 156 stopping mouths, bearing<sup>4</sup> the honour<sup>5</sup>  
 157 of the great lord, door and gate of lands,  
 158 XNUMHETEP, son of NEHERA, son  
 159 of the lady of the house, KHRATI,  
 160 keeping alive the name of my father.  
 161 (which) I found injured  
 162 on the doors known by  
 163 the hand,<sup>6</sup> judged by the condition,<sup>7</sup> not  
 164 was given another instead  
 165 of the other, lo, I a son completed,  
 166 making to flourish the name,  
 167 of the ancestors of NEHERA,  
 168 son of XNUMHETEP, justified, a worthy person,  
 169 the chief ancestor, first I completed  
 170 the upper part<sup>8</sup> of the door to let pass  
 171 a person to do what a father had done ;  
 172 my father made for it a statue  
 173 and a sepulchral temple for it, of his great love of the  
 district,

<sup>1</sup> *Sabmer*, or *smer*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ar*, making.

<sup>5</sup> *xut*, the lustre or glory.

<sup>6</sup> Or form.

<sup>7</sup> *S'et*.

<sup>8</sup> *Her*, the lintel.

174 of good and beautiful<sup>1</sup> stone,  
 175 causing his name to flourish for ever.  
 176 He completed it for ever, his name lives  
 177 in the mouth of men, established  
 178 in the mouth of the living,  
 179 through his chamber of Karneter,<sup>2</sup> his place  
 180 completed for ever, placed  
 181 is his house of eternity, through the favour  
 182 of the sanctity of the King, who loved him,  
 183 in his palace. He ruled his district when  
 184 he was a babe, clothed in male attire;  
 185 he accompanied the King, his feathers  
 186 they<sup>3</sup> danced as a boy  
 187 on his forehead, in the South,  
 188 the place of his tongue and humility of his thought

## SEBAK-

189 ANKH'S SON NEHERA, justified, a pure person.  
 190 He knew<sup>4</sup> the hereditaments of his ancestors  
 191 to rule his district. It was IXNUMHETEP,  
 192 making his noble memorial within the district.  
 193 I built a colonnade, which I found  
 194 on the place, I set it up  
 195 with new columns  
 196 inscribed in my own name.  
 197 I kept alive the name of my father in order  
 198 to perpetuate what I had done,  
 199 in all the memorial; a door of six cubits,  
 200 of brass<sup>5</sup> and cedar, inlaid<sup>6</sup> for the first

<sup>1</sup> Or, of good stone to see, or in appearance.

<sup>2</sup> Hades, sepulchral.

<sup>3</sup> *χελ*, dressed; the feathers were *s'u*, ostrich.

<sup>4</sup> Or had assigned *rex*.

<sup>5</sup> Apparently determinative of this metal, and the word *as'*, cedar.

<sup>6</sup> *Neka*.

- 201 gate of the chamber ; two gates of seven cubits  
 202 at the turn<sup>1</sup> of the noble  
 203 house which is within<sup>2</sup> that chamber ; a table of  
 204 offerings, sepulchral meals of bread, beer, oxen, geese,  
     food in all ;  
 205 the monuments I caused to be made hollow. The area  
 206 of its circuit, giving air to  
 207 the great colonnade placed  
 208 within this district for fathers,  
 209 (as) a child of this district completing  
 210 the memorials of its district to the ancestral places  
     those before,  
 211 adding to the turn made before me.  
 212 I am noble<sup>3</sup> by the monuments,  
 213 I ordered all the years of  
 214 disgust<sup>4</sup> within that district  
 215 enveloped ;<sup>5</sup> sculpturing my name  
 216 on all the monuments. I  
 217 held on them without defect in them ; I embarked  
 218 on the boat, as my father ordered.<sup>6</sup>  
 219 I the hereditary chief,  
 220 KHNUMHETEP, son of NAHRI,  
 221 son of the lady BEGAT, justified  
 222 a devout person.  
 223 The chancellor BEGAT made the tomb.

<sup>1</sup> Or area, *kar*, corner.

<sup>2</sup> *χen*.

<sup>3</sup> *Sah*, or *χent*.

<sup>4</sup> *teft*.

<sup>5</sup> *Meru*. Hall of Libations. Maspero.

<sup>6</sup> *ha hut atef*, or else the boat named Hut atef.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:  
**Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature**  
which can be purchased on our Website :  
[www.Brainfly.net](http://www.Brainfly.net)

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :  
**Brainfly Inc.**  
**5100 Garfield Ave. #46**  
**Sacramento CA 95841-3839**

## **TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:**

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website ([www.Brainfly.net](http://www.Brainfly.net)) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

[webcomments@brainfly.net](mailto:webcomments@brainfly.net)