

As god loves a true thing, I am one honored by the king.

(5) One honored by the great god, (6) the Senior Keeper of Nekhen, Elder of the Portal, (7) Privy to the secrets of the Great Mansion, (8) Priest of Maat, (9) one honored by the great god, (10) Hetep-her-akhet.

Right of Entrance

4 long cols.

(1) The Senior Elder of the Portal, Hetep-her-akhet, he says :

I made this tomb on the side of the West,
in a clean place where no (2) person's tomb was,
in order to guard the possessions of one who went to his *ka*.

Any persons who would enter (3) this tomb uncleanly,
and do something evil against it —

they shall be judged for it (4) by the great god !¹

I made this tomb because² I was honored by the king, who brought me the sarcophagus.

Notes

1) On the whole sentence see Edel, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 4-10. — 2) On *m šwy*, "because", see Edel, Gr. § 804.

2. Autobiography of the architect Nekhebu

Boston & Cairo, from Giza

Sixth Dynasty : Pepi I

PM III² 90. Urk. I, 215-221; Dunham, *JEA* 24 (1938) 1-8. Roccati, *Litt.*, No. 39, pp. 181-186. Titles : Baer, Rank, 37; Drenkhahn, *Handwerker*, 90-94; Strudwick, *Administration*, 113.

The autobiography occupies the two door jambs of a doorway in the tomb chapel. The blocks of the right-hand door jamb were removed to the Cairo Museum, those of the left-hand to the Boston Museum. In Urk. I the longer Cairo text precedes the shorter Boston text; but Dunham placed the left-hand text before the right-hand one, and this arrangement yields the logical order of the narration.

Left Door Jamb (Boston)

1 line & 8 cols.

(1) The Sole Companion, Royal Architect, Ankh-Meryre-Meryptah,¹ he says :

(2) I am [a builder² for] King Meryre, my lord. His majesty sent me [to direct all the works of the king] and I [acted] to his majesty's satisfaction in

Lower and Upper Egypt.

His majesty sent me to direct the construction of (3) the *ka*-mansions of his majesty in Lower Egypt, in the district of the (royal) domain. In the north my warrant³ was for Lake-City and Chemmis-of-Horus; in the south my warrant was for the Pyramid Men-nefer-Pepi. I returned thence on completion : (4) I had [constructed the *ka*-mansions] there, built and faced, and their wood-work installed, having been carpentered⁴ in Lower Egypt. I returned on completion by me.

His majesty rewarded me for it (5) in the presence of [the officials] : his majesty gave me 'pendants'⁵ of gold, and bread and beer in very great quantity; and his majesty had a troop of the residence come to me bearing them until they reached my gate with them, (6) because he deemed me more efficient than any other royal architect whom his majesty had sent previously into the district of the royal domain.

His majesty sent me to 'plan' the canal of Chemmis-of-Horus and dig it. (7) I dug it ---⁶ until I returned to the residence when it was under water. His majesty rewarded me for it : his majesty gave me 'pendants' of gold, and bread and beer. Great was his majesty's praise of me for what he had sent me on, (8) for being capable at every task, in every work his majesty had sent me on.

His majesty sent me to [Qus] to dig the canal of his --- of Hathor-in-Qus. I took action and (9) dug it [so that] his majesty rewarded me for it. Then, when I returned to the residence, his majesty rewarded me for it very greatly : his majesty gave me 'pendants' of gold, and bread and beer.

Right Door Jamb (Cairo)

1 line & 10 cols.

(1) [The Sole Companion, Royal Architect, Ankh-Meryre-Meryptah] he says :

(2) [I am a builder for King] Meryre, my lord. His majesty sent me to direct the work of his monument in On. I acted to the satisfaction of his majesty. I spent six years there in directing the work, and his majesty rewarded me for it as often as I came to the residence. It all came about through me by the vigilance I exercised --- (3) ----- there through my own knowledge.

- i Having found me as a common builder, his majesty appointed me :
- ii Inspector of Builders and Team Leader;
- iii Overseer of Builders and Team Leader.
- iv His majesty appointed me Royal Architect-Builder;
- v Royal Attendant and Architect-Builder.
- vi His majesty appointed me Sole Companion and Royal Architect-Builder in the Two Administrations.⁷

His majesty did all this because his majesty favored me greatly.

I am my father's beloved, my mother's favorite.
I gave them no cause to punish me,
until they went to their tomb of the necropolis.
I am one praised of his brothers.

When I was in the service of my brother, the Overseer of Works -----,
I wrote and I carried his 'palette'.

Then, when he was appointed Inspector of Builders, I carried his
measuring rod.⁸

(5) Then, when he was appointed Overseer of Builders, I was his
companion.⁹

Then, when he was appointed Royal Architect-Builder, I governed the
village for him and did everything in it for him efficiently.

Then, when he was appointed Sole Companion and Royal
Architect-Builder in the Two Administrations, I reckoned for him all his
possessions, and the property in his house became greater than that of any
noble's house.

Then (6) when he was appointed Overseer of Works, I represented him
in all his affairs to his satisfaction with it.

I also reckoned for him the produce of his estate (*pr-dt*) over a period of
twenty years. Never did I beat a man there, so that he fell by my hand. Never
did I enslave any people there. As for any people there (7) with whom I had
arguments, it was I who pacified them. I never spent the night angry with any
of them. It was I who gave clothing, bread, and beer to all the naked and
hungry among them.

I am one beloved of all people¹⁰,

I never spoke evil to king or potentate about anyone.

I am one praised of his father, his mother,

an owner of costly offerings in the necropolis

(8) for making their voice-offerings of bread and beer,

for making their feast on the *Wag* feast, Sokar feast,

New Year's feast, Thoth feast, First-of-the-year feast,

First-and-last-of-the-month feast, and every good feast,

celebrated at every season of the year.

O *ka*-servants of the honored ones !

If you wish to be favored by the king,

and honored by your lords, your fathers in the necropolis,

then make voice-offerings (9) of bread and beer,

as I have done for your fathers !

If you wish that I protect you in the necropolis,

tell your children on the day I go there

the words of the voice-offering for me !


I am a potent spirit,

I know all that by which one becomes a spirit in the necropolis !

O you who are alive on earth,
 who shall pass by this tomb !
 If you wish to be favored by the king,
 and honored by the great god,
 (10) enter not this tomb profanely, uncleanly !
 Anyone who enters it profanely despite this —
 I will be judged with him by the great god !
 I will destroy their earth-borne, their homes on earth !

O you who are alive on earth,
 who shall pass by this tomb !
 If you wish (11) to be favored by the king,
 and honored by the great god,
 say, 1000 bread, 1000 beer for Nekhebu, the honored one !
 Not shall you destroy a thing in this tomb,
 I am a spirit [potent] and equipped !
 Anyone who destroys a thing in this tomb —
 I will be judged with them by the great god !
 I am one who speaks the good, repeats the good,
 I never spoke evil against anyone.

Notes

1) Nekhebu's court name; the order of reading its elements is that of Helck, *Beamtentitel*, 105, n. 111. — 2) Dunham read *k3wty* and rendered "workman"; see also Gardiner, *AEO I*, 59* for the various meanings. — 3) Read *'i* and note the book-roll determinative, hence "warrant". — 4) The verb *nḏr* must denote the whole work of cutting and shaping the timber, rather than mere "glätten", as rendered by Drenkhahn, *Handwerker*, 93, n. 39, in order to account for Nekhebu's pointed remark that the woodwork had been done in Lower Egypt. — 5) The nature of the gold object written  is not known. — 6) The remnants of the signs suggest a period of time. — 7) Nekhebu here lists the six stages of his career, from "common builder" (*qd n 'š3t*) to "royal architect-builder" for the dual administration of Upper and Lower Egypt, called "the Two Houses". On the six stages see Helck, *Beamtentitel*, 105, and Baer, *Rank*, 37. One stage got lost in Drenkhahn, *Handwerker*, 91. — 8) In the five sentences that are marked by the repeated *ihḏr* Nekhebu lists the stages of his elder brother's career and his own step-by-step advance as his brother's helper. The previous sentence ("When I was in the service of my brother...") refers to the initial stages of both careers, even though Nekhebu there calls his brother by his highest title, "Overseer of Works". The years of service to his brother — the narration of which adds life and warmth to his autobiography — must have preceded his own rise in the royal administration. — 9) Literally, "his third"; on the expression see Sethe, *Von Zahlen*, 120. — 10) The four-part speech that begins here integrates the "moral profile", the "appeal to the living", and the "warning to visitors".