

INSCRIPTION
OF
THE DESTRUCTION OF MANKIND.

TRANSLATED BY
EDOUARD NAVILLE.

THIS inscription is engraved on the four walls of a small chamber called that of the cow in the tomb of Seti I.; the text has been published for the first time in the first part of the fourth volume of the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, Pt. I., Vol. IV., p. 1 and foll., and accompanied by a translation. The present translation does not comprise the whole of the inscription, lines 44-45 which give the description of the celestial cow have been omitted, as well as the end from line 84 which contains a hymn to the gods of the East. A revision of my French

translation has led me to adopt some slight changes and to make a few additions which will be found in the English version.

Unfortunately the bad state of the walls of the tomb has produced great gaps in one of the most important parts of the inscription ; but there is reason to think that in the tomb of one of the later monarchs named Rameses there is a reproduction of the same inscription, which may perhaps enable us to restore the original text at a future period.



DESTRUCTION OF MANKIND.

PLATE A.¹

- 1 the god being by himself, after he has been established as King of men and the gods together, there was
- 2 His Majesty, living and well, in his old age. His limbs are of silver, his flesh of gold, his articulations of genuine lapis lazuli, there was
- 3 mankind. Said by His Majesty, living and well, to his followers: I call before my face Su,²
- 4 TEFNUT, SEB, NUT,³ and the fathers and mothers who were with me when I was still in NUN,⁴ and I prescribe to NUN who brings his companions
- 5 with him: bring a small number of them, that the men may not see them, and that their heart be not afraid. Thou shalt go with them into the sanctuary, if they agree with it
- 6 until I shall go with NUN to the place were I stand, When those gods came those gods in his place; they bowed down
- 7 before His Majesty himself, who spake in the presence of his father, of the elder gods, of the creators of men and of wise beings, and they spake in his presence,

¹ These plates are those of the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*.

² A solar god, brother of Tefnut.

³ Wife of Seb or Saturn.

⁴ Deity of the heavenly water.

- 8 (saying) Speak to us that we may hear it. Said by RA' to NUN: Thou firstborn 'of the gods whose issue I am, and you ancient gods, behold the men
- 9 who are born of myself; they utter words against me; speak to me what you will do in this occurrence; behold, I have waited, and I have not destroyed them, until I shall have heard
- 10 what you have to say. Said by the Majesty of NUN: My son RA, thou god greater than he who is his father, and who created him; I remain (full of)
- 11 great fear before thee; let thyself consider in thy heart (what we have to do). Said by the Majesty of RA: Behold, they are running away over the whole land, and their hearts are afraid
- 12 Said by the gods in the presence of His Majesty: May thy face allow us to go, and we shall smite those who plot evil things, thy enemies, and let none (remain among them)
- 13 go as HATHOR.² The goddess started, and she smote the men over the whole land. Said by the Majesty of the god: Come in peace, HATHOR, thou hast done (what I had prescribed).
- 14 Said by the goddess: I am living, that I have prevailed over men, and my heart is pleased. Said by the Majesty: I shall prevail over them, (and I shall complete)
- 15 their ruin. And during several nights there was SECHET³ trampling the blood under her feet as far as Heracleopolis. Said by (the Majesty of RA)
- 16 I call before me my Messengers; let them hasten, and

¹ The "Sun" or Helios.

² The Egyptian Aphrodité or Venus.

³ Wife of Ptah, allied with Bast or Bubastis.

- run, and hurry to the utmost of their strength, and the Messengers (came)
- 17 immediately. Said by the Majesty of the god: Let them begin with Elephantine, and bring to me fruits in quantity. And when the fruits had been brought, they were given
- 18 the Sekti of Heliopolis was grinding the fruits while the priestesses poured the juice into vases; and those fruits were put in vessels (with the)
- 19 blood of men; and there were made seven thousand pitchers of drink. And there came the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, with the gods to see the drink after he had ordered
- 20 to the goddess to destroy the men, in three days of navigation. Said by the Majesty of RA: It is well done, all this. I shall now protect
- 21 men on account of this. Said by RA: I raise now my hand that I shall not destroy men. The Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, RA, ordered

PLATE B.

- 22 in the midst of the night to pour out the water of the vessels, and the fields were entirely covered with water through the will of the Majesty of the god; and there came
- 23 the goddess at the morning, and she found the fields covered with water and she was pleased with it and she drank to her satisfaction, and she went away satisfied, and she saw no
- 24 men. Said by the Majesty of RA to this goddess: Come in peace, thou gracious goddess, and there arose

- the young Priestess of Amu.¹ Said by the Majesty of RA:
 25 to the goddess: I order that libations be made to her at
 every festival of the new year, under the direction of my
 Priestesses. Hence comes that libations are made under
 the direction of Priestesses at the festival of HATHOR,
 26 through all men since the days of old.
 Said by the Majesty of RA to the goddess: There is a
 burning disease which torments me. What is it that gives
 27 me pain? Said by the Majesty of RA: I am living that
 my heart is weary to be with them (the men); I have not
 at all destroyed them; it is not a
 28 destruction which I have done myself. Said by the gods
 who followed him: Away with thy weariness; thou hast
 obtained all thou desirest. Said by the Majesty
 29 of the god to the Majesty of NUN: My limbs are
 suffering long ago. I cannot walk, until I reach another
 (to support me). Said by the Majesty of NUN: My son
 SU, thou shalt do
 30 thy father in his creations. My daughter
 NUT, put Said by NUT: As it seems to my
 father NUN
 31 there was NUT the Majesty
 of RA on her back there were the men.
 32 and they saw him on the back of
 (cow;) said to him by the
 33 men: let us smite the enemies, the rebels

 34 His Majesty arrived in the sanctuary the cow
 with them; the earth was in darkness; when
 he gave light to the earth in the morning, the men
 35 were going forth, bearing their bows shoot

¹ Name of a place or town.

- their arrows against my enemies. Said by the Majesty of the god: your sins are behind you, destruction of enemies
- 36 removes destruction to destruction. Said by the Majesty of the god, I have resolved to be lifted up;
- 37 who is it whom NUT will trust with it? and there arose Said by the Majesty of the god: Remove me from them, carry me that I may see
- 38 and there arose and the Majesty of the god saw the inner part (of the sanctuary) and he said: I assemble and give the possession
- 39 of these multitudes of men, and there arose Said by the Majesty of the god: Let a field of rest extend itself, and there arose a field of rest. Let the plants grow
- 40 there, and there arose the field Aalu.¹ I establish as inhabitants all the beings which are suspended in the sky, the stars, and NUT began
- 41 to tremble very strongly. Said by the Majesty of RA: I assemble there the multitudes that they may celebrate thee, and there arose the multitudes. Said by the Majesty of RA:
- 42 My son SU, take with thee my daughter NUT, and be the guardian of the multitudes which live in the nocturnal sky;
- 43 put them on thy head, and be their fosterer; hence comes that
- 44 this chapter is said to the cow which is called the multitude of beings.

[The description of the cow is omitted.]

- 56 Said by the Majesty of the god to THOTH: Call before

¹ Name of the Egyptian *Elysium*.

- me the Majesty of SEB, saying: Hasten, come immediately. When the Majesty of SEB arrived, the Majesty of the god said: Be the guardian
- 57 of thy serpents which are in thee, let them fear me such as I am, thou shalt know their wisdom, and afterwards thou shalt go to the place in which is my father NUN, and thou shalt tell him:
- 58 Be the guardian of the reptiles of land and water, and afterwards thou shalt write in all the abodes in which are thy serpents, saying: Beware to take hold of anything; let them know that for a long time
- 59 I have been giving them light, and all that concerns them belongs to their father and thou art their father in this land eternally. Beware afterwards of those enchanters
- 60 whose mouth is subtle, through whom I am enchanted myself, if I I cannot preserve myself, because of the long time which
- 61 has been before (because of my old age); I send them to thy son OSIRIS. Be the guardian of their children; for the hearts of their elders are perverted through their intelligence, they do what
- 62 they like, on the whole earth, through the charms which they have in their bodies. Said by the Majesty of the god: I call before me THOTH, and THOTH came immediately. Said

PLATE C.

- 63 by the Majesty of the god to THOTH: Come let us leave the sky
- 64 and my abode, because I wish
- 65 to make a luminary
- 66 in the inferior sky and in the deep region

- 67 where thou inscribest the inhabitants, and thou art the
guardian of
- 68 those who do
- 69 evil
- 70 the followers whom my heart hates.
- 71 But thou art my abode, the god of my abode ; behold,
thou wilt be called THOTH, the abode of RA. I shall
give thee to send and there arose the ibis of
THOTH. I shall
- 72 give thee to raise thy hand in the presence of the gods,
greater than the and there arose the two wings
of the ibis of THOTH ; I shall give thee to embrace
- 73 the two parts of the sky, with thy beauty and with thy
rays, and there arose the moon-crescent of THOTH. I
shall give thee to turn thyself towards the Northern
nations ; and there arose the cynocephalus¹ of THOTH
which is
- 74 in his escort. Thou art under my dominion. All eyes
are open on thee, and all men worship thee as a god.
He who says those words himself
- 75 is anointed with balsam and oil ; a censer is in his hand,
and incense
- 76 behind both his ears ; his lips are purified with *bet*, and
he is clothed with two new
- 77 tissues ; he is washed with pure water and has put on
sandals
- 78 of wood ; the sign of MA² is on his tongue in fresh colour
roi of the scribes. When THOTH intends
- 79 to read this Book to RA, he purifies himself during nine
days. The prophets and the men must do

¹ Sacred ape of the god Thoth or Chons.

² The goddess of truth.

- 80 the same ; he who reads it, and makes all the ceremonies which are prescribed in this book
- 81 his life time is multiplied . . . added ; he has his eyes,
- 82 he has all his limbs, his steps are not hindered
the men. He is like
- 83 RA himself on the day of his birth ; his property is not lessened, and his monument is not destroyed.¹

¹ A kind of rubric.



END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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