

Le papyrus Ipuwer

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Je n'ai pas pu trouver une traduction complète du papyrus en Français.

1. Le papyrus du scribe égyptien Ipuwer décrit avec une précision biblique la catastrophe de l'Exode

Source : <http://www.cirac.org/infos-fr/ipuwer.htm>



Ce papyrus, très endommagé, est actuellement conservé au Musée de Leiden en Hollande sous la référence 344. Découvert près de Memphis, en Egypte, au début du 19ème siècle, il a été traduit en 1909 par un grand égyptologue anglais, Sir Alan Henderson Gardiner, spécialiste de [l'écriture hiéroglyphique](#). Le texte de ce papyrus représenté ci-dessous est écrit en cursive égyptienne antique, appelée aussi hiéroglyphique, une écriture dérivée des hiéroglyphes sculptés dans les monuments de l'Egypte antique.



Ce papyrus décrit de violents cataclysmes en Egypte, la famine, la sécheresse, la fuite des esclaves emportant les richesses des égyptiens, et la mort ravageant tout le pays. Ecrit par le scribe Ipuwer au cours de la 12ème dynastie égyptienne et recopié pendant la 19ème, ce papyrus est le récit d'un témoin oculaire d'une terrible catastrophe qui s'est abattue sur le royaume d'Egypte.

Ce récit ressemble étrangement à celui de la Torah des hébreux (Livre de l'Exode) décrivant les effets des 10 plaies d'Egypte. Le papyrus Ipuwer et le Livre de l'Exode peuvent se comparer à des articles de

deux journalistes antiques, l'un égyptien et l'autre hébreu, assistant horrifiés et impuissants à la même catastrophe inexplicable.

Comparaison de deux récits antiques d'une même catastrophe

| Papyrus Ipouwer (Papyrus n°344, Musée de Leiden, Hollande) | Torah (Livre de l'Exode) |
|--|---|
| 2:5-6 La peste s'est abattue sur tout le pays. Il y a du sang partout. 2:10 Le fleuve est de sang. 2:10 Les hommes ont peur de goûter l'eau. Les humains ont soif d'eau. 3:10-13 C'est notre eau ! C'est notre bonheur ! Que pouvons-nous faire ? Tout est en ruine. | 7:20 Toute l'eau du fleuve fut changée en sang. 7:21 Il y avait du sang sur toute la Terre d'Egypte et le fleuve puait. 7:24 Et tous les Egyptiens creusèrent le sol aux abords du Nil pour trouver de l'eau potable, car ils ne pouvaient boire l'eau du fleuve |
| 2:10 En vérité, les portes, les colonnes et les murs de la ville sont détruits par le feu. 10:3-6 La Basse Egypte pleure. Le palais entier est privé de revenus, alors que le blé et l'orge, les oies et les poissons, lui reviennent de droit. 6:3 En vérité, le grain a péri de tous les côtés. 5:12 En vérité, ce que l'on voyait hier a disparu aujourd'hui. La campagne est désertée et la cueillette du lin abandonnée. | 9:23-24 Et le feu courait le long du sol... il y eut de la grêle et du feu mêlé à la grêle, une grêle très forte... 9:25 Et la grêle frappa toute l'herbe des champs et brisa tous les arbres des champs. 9:31-32 Et le lin et l'orge furent frappés, car l'orge était en épis, et le lin en fleurs. Mais le blé et le seigle ne furent pas frappés car ils sont tardifs. 10:15 Et il ne resta aucune verdure sur les arbres ou sur l'herbe des champs dans tout le pays d'Egypte. |
| 5:5 Le cœur de tous les animaux pleure. Les troupeaux gémissent... 9:2-3 Vois, les troupeaux sont abandonnés, et il n'y a personne pour les rassembler. | 9:3 La main de l'Eternel frappera les troupeaux qui sont dans les champs... et il y aura une peste très grave. 9:19 ...rassemble à la hâte tes troupeaux, et tout ce que tu possèdes dans les champs... 9:21 Et celui qui n'écoula pas la parole de l'Eternel, laissa ses serviteurs et ses troupeaux dans les champs. |
| 9:11 Le pays est sans lumière. | 10:22 Et il y eut une obscurité épaisse sur tout le pays d'Egypte. |
| 4:3 (5:6) En vérité, les enfants des princes sont précipités contre les murs. 6:12 En vérité, les enfants des princes sont jetés dans les rues. 6:3 La prison est en ruine. 2:13 Partout le frère enterre son frère. 3:14 Des gémissements s'élèvent dans tout le pays, se mêlant aux lamentations. | 12:29 Et il arriva, au milieu de la nuit, que l'Eternel frappa tous les premiers-nés dans le pays d'Egypte, depuis le premier-né du Pharaon qui était assis sur son trône, jusqu'au premier-né du captif qui était dans la prison. 12:30 ...il n'y avait pas de maison où il n'y eût un mort. 12:30 ...il y eut un grand cri en Egypte. |
| 7:1 Vois, le feu s'élève dans le ciel. Ses flammes se dirigent vers les ennemis du pays. | 13:21 ...le jour dans une colonne de nuée pour leur indiquer la route, et la nuit dans une colonne de feu, pour les éclairer, afin qu'ils puissent marcher de jour et de nuit. |
| 3:2 L'or et le lapis-lazuli, l'argent et la malachite, la carnelite et le bronze sont autour du cou des esclaves femelles. | 12:35-36 ...et ils demandèrent aux Egyptiens, des objets d'argent, des objets d'or et des vêtements. Et l'Eternel fit que le peuple des Israélites trouvât grâce aux yeux des Egyptiens qui acceptèrent leurs demandes. Ils dépouillèrent ainsi l'Egypte de ses richesses. |

Un véritable reportage d'une catastrophe antique

L'égyptien Ipouwer fit sur son papyrus un véritable reportage de la catastrophe : « Le fleuve (Le Nil) est de sang, ...toute l'eau du fleuve se changera en sang, ...la peste s'est abattue sur le pays entier. Le sang est partout ».

La présence d'un pigment de couleur rouge dans le Nil provoqua la mort des poissons, suivie de leur décomposition ce qui entraîna la puanteur constatée par le rédacteur du Livre de l'Exode : « et le fleuve

devint infect, ... et tous les Egyptiens creusèrent le sol aux abords du Nil pour trouver de l'eau potable, car ils ne pouvaient boire celle du fleuve ».

Et le scribe Ipuwer enchaîne : « Les hommes ont peur de goûter l'eau. Les humains ont soif d'eau. C'est notre eau ! C'est notre bonheur ! Que pouvons-nous faire ? Tout est en ruine ». La peau des hommes et des animaux fut irritée par la poussière qui provoquait des pustules, la maladie, et la mort du bétail, « une peste terrible ». Les bêtes sauvages, effrayées par les présages du ciel, s'approchaient des villages et des cités.

Que s'est-il passé?

Velikovsky déclare dans son livre [Mondes en collision](#) : « J'entends établir qu'au milieu du deuxième millénaire avant notre ère, la Terre subit l'un des plus grands cataclysmes de son histoire. Un corps céleste, tout récemment entré dans le système solaire - une nouvelle comète - s'approcha très près de la Terre. On peut reconstituer le récit de ce cataclysme d'après les témoignages fournis par un grand nombre de documents ».

L'un des premiers signes visibles de cette rencontre fut la couleur rouge que prit la surface de la Terre, sous l'influence d'une fine poussière de pigments couleur rouille. Dans les mers, les lacs et les rivières, ce pigment donna à l'eau la couleur du sang. Sous l'effet de ces particules, ou de quelque autre pigment soluble, le monde devint rouge. Le [Manuscrit Quiché des Mayas](#) nous rapporte que dans l'hémisphère occidental, aux temps d'un grand cataclysme où la Terre trembla et où le mouvement du Soleil s'interrompit, l'eau des rivières fut transformée en sang.

Consulter aussi à ce sujet :

http://books.google.be/books?id=C2IOsXQMgN4C&pg=PA252&lpg=PA252&dq=papyrus+ipouwer&source=bl&ots=xm9BJTTBc9&sig=RKpvul2pfu406370IVvX-YOM8KQ&hl=fr&ei=G_cVTI3pLsWQOO7XzPoL&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CBIQ6AEwAzge#v=onepage&q=papyrus%20ipouwer&f=false

Pour se procurer le livre de Velikovsky en Français :

<http://www.amazon.fr/désordre-siècles-Immanuel-Velikovsky/dp/2914569491>

2. Voici un deuxième article avec un même genre de comparaison :

Source : <http://www.ac-nice.fr/giono06/cleusb/exode-et-papyrus.pdf>

Les 10 plaies d'Égypte

Étude comparative du livre de l'Exode et du papyrus d'Ipuwer

L'étude comparative du texte biblique et du manuscrit d'Ipuwer montre bien une description similaire des plaies.

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1^{ère} plaie : l'eau est transformée en sang :

Exode. VII, 21: «Et il y eut du sang dans tout le pays d'Égypte».

Papyrus 2: 5-6: «La terre est couverte de plaies. Il y a du sang partout.»

Ex. VII, 20-21: «Toutes les eaux des rivières furent changées en sang. Le fleuve devient infect» 24- Et tous les Égyptiens creusèrent autour des rivières pour trouver de l'eau; car ils ne pouvaient pas boire l'eau de la rivière.

Papyrus 3: 10-13: «Ce sont nos eaux. Ceci est notre bonheur! Qu'allons-nous faire? Tout est en ruine!»

Papyrus 2 : 10 : « La rivière est en sang. Les hommes se refusèrent à goûter – les êtres humains, et avaient soif.»

2^e plaie : les grenouilles

3^e plaie : les moustiques

4^e plaie : la vermine

5^e plaie : la peste du bétail

6^e plaie : les furoncles

7^e plaie : la grêle et la foudre :

Ex. IX, 25: «Toute herbe des champs fut abattue par la grêle, et tout arbre des champs brisé».

Papyrus 4: 14: «Les arbres sont brisés.»

Papyrus 6: 1: «Il est impossible de trouver ni fruits ni légumes.»

Ex. IX, 23-24: «Des feux s'élançèrent sur le sol, et le Seigneur fit pleuvoir la grêle sur le pays. Elle était très forte».

Papyrus 2: 10: «C'est vrai, des portes, des colonnes, des murs ont été dévorés par les flammes.»

8^e plaie : les sauterelles :

Ex. X, 15: «Et il ne resta plus de verdure soit aux arbres, soit en herbe des champs, dans tout le pays d'Égypte.»

Papyrus 5: 12: «En vérité, tout ce qui était encore visible hier a péri. La terre est aussi dénudée qu'après la coupe du lin».

Papyrus 6: 3: «En vérité, la semence a péri de toutes parts.»

9e plaie : les ténèbres :

Ex. X, 22: «Moïse dirigea sa main vers le ciel, et il y eut obscurité de ténèbres dans tout le pays d'Egypte.»

Papyrus 9: 11 «La terre n'est pas éclairée».

10e plaie : la mort des premiers-nés d'Egypte

Ex. XII, 29: «Ce fut au milieu de la nuit, et l'Eternel fit périr tout premier-né dans le pays d'Egypte, depuis le premier-né de Pharaon, assis sur son trône, jusqu'au premier-né du captif du fond de la geôle, et tous les premiers-nés des animaux. - 30 : Et Pharaon se leva pendant la nuit, lui, et tous ses serviteurs, et tous les Egyptiens; et ce fut en Egypte une grande clameur: car il n'y avait pas une maison où il n'y eut pas de mort. (...).»

Papyrus 4:3: «En vérité, les enfants des princes sont écrasés contre les murs»

Papyrus 6:12: «Les enfants des princes sont précipités dans les rues.»

Ex. XII, 13: «Car il n'y avait pas de maison où il n'y avait pas de mort»

Papyrus 2:3: «Partout on voit ceux qui placent leur frère dans la tombe».

Ex. XII, 30: «Et ce fut une clameur immense dans l'Egypte».

Papyrus 3: 14: «Les soupirs se font entendre dans tout le pays, mêlés aux lamentations».

Le récit de l'Exode se prolonge avec la permission que donne le pharaon à Moïse et aux Hébreux de quitter l'Egypte. Puis, revenant sur sa décision, il réunit son armée pour partir à la chasse des Hébreux, déjà en route vers la mer Rouge.

Papyrus – Au milieu des désordres sauvages de la nature, sa majesté du pays de Shou rassembla ses armées et leur ordonna de le suivre dans des régions où, leur promit-il, ils verraient de nouveau la lumière :

« Nous verrons notre père Ra-Harakhti dans la région lumineuse de Bakhit. » Sous couvert de l'obscurité, les envahisseurs venus du désert, arrivèrent aux frontières de l'Egypte : sa majesté de Shou partit combattre les compagnons d'Apopi, dieu féroce des ténèbres. Le roi et ses hommes ne revinrent jamais; ils périrent.

Exode 14.9 – Mais les Egyptiens se lancèrent à leur poursuite, tous les chevaux et les chars de Pharaon... et ils les rejoignirent alors qu'ils campaient au bord de la mer près de Pi-ha-hiroth (Kiroth).

Papyrus – Sa Majesté (*ici, les mots manquent*) se trouva en un lieu appelé «Pi-Kharoti».

Papyrus – Quand la majesté de Ra-Harmachis (Harakhti?) se battit contre les « mauvais » dans ces marais ou « Lieu des Tourbillons », les « mauvais » n'eurent pas raison de sa majesté. Mais sa majesté fit un bond dans ce qu'on appelle le « Lieu des Tourbillons ».

Exode 14.27-28 – La mer rentra dans son lit... et les Egyptiens en fuyant la rencontrèrent; et le Seigneur culbuta les Egyptiens au milieu de la mer. Et les eaux reflurent, et recouvrirent chars et cavaliers et toute l'armée du pharaon qui avait pénétré avec eux dans la mer. Pharaon lui-même périt. (...)

15.19 Car lorsque la cavalerie de Pharaon avec ses chars et ses cavaliers étaient entrés dans la mer, le Seigneur fit refluer ses eaux sur eux.

On rapporte quelques lignes plus loin qu'il fut projeté avec force. La masse d'eau tourbillonnante le propulsa dans les airs; il s'envola vers le ciel. Il était mort. Le traducteur explique la désignation de ce lieu géographique de la façon suivante: «Pi-Kharoti»: «n'est connu que par cet exemple».

3. Voici mon résumé d'après Ages in Chaos de Velikovsky :

The Plagues of Egypt

The First Nine Plagues

In his book, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden*, Alan H. Gardiner “argued that all the internal evidence of the text points to the historical character of the situation. Egypt was in distress; the social system had become disorganized; violence filled the land. Invaders preyed upon the defenseless population; the rich were stripped of everything and slept in the open, and the poor took their possessions. ‘It is no merely local disturbance that is here described, but a great and overwhelming national disaster’.” - Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos*.

“Forsooth, the Desert is throughout the land. The nomes are laid waste. A foreign tribe from abroad has come to Egypt.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 2:5-6

[The “foreign tribe from abroad” appears to refer to the invasion by the Hyksos.]

“...There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.” - Exodus 7:21

“Plague is throughout the land. Blood is everywhere.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 2:5-6

“...All the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.” - Exodus 7:20

“The river is blood.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 2:10

“...The fire ran along upon the ground....There was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous.” - Exodus 9:23-24

“Forsooth, gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 2:10

“...The flax and the barely was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was boiled.”
“...There remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the fields, through all the land of Egypt.” - Exodus 9:31, 10:15

“The land is left over to its weariness like the cutting of flax.” “Forsooth, grain has perished on every side.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 5:12, 6:3

“...The hand of the Lord will strike with a deadly pestilence your livestock in the field...” - Exodus 9:3

“All animals, their hearts weep. Cattle moan...” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 5:53

“And he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the field.” - Exodus 9:21

“Behold, cattle are left to stray, and there is none to gather them together. Each man fetches for himself those that are branded with his name.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 9:2-3

“...And there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days.” – Exodus 10:22-23

“The land is not light...” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 9:11

“The land was in great affliction. Evil fell on this earth....It was a great upheaval in the residence....Nobody left the palace during nine days, and during these nine days of upheaval there was such a tempest that neither the men nor the gods could see the faces of their next.” - Stone Shrine at el-Arish (from the Ptolemaic period but referring to the much earlier King Thom)

“The first nine plagues described in Exodus “can be explained as natural phenomena, occurring as a result of an abnormally high Nile inundation between July and the following March...The Nile turning to blood could reflect the fact that its waters were filled with red earth carried in suspension from the highlands of Ethiopia. As a result, the river would then become polluted and frogs would infest the shores in search of shelter. Mosquitoes and flies would find ideal breeding grounds in the brackish ponds left behind by the receding floodwaters.

“The death of Egypt’s livestock could be due to an anthrax epidemic spread by the insects with men and animals breaking out in sores. Hail ruining the crops of flax and barley could have happened in January, when such a climatic phenomenon, though rare, is most likely to occur. Swarms of locusts could have been blown into the Nile valley by winds from the Sudan and Ethiopia and the three days of darkness are typical of a severe khamsin, a sandstorm of unusual proportions.” - Great Events of Bible Times

The Last Plague

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will send just one more disaster on Pharaoh and his land, and after that he will let you go; in fact, he will be so anxious to get rid of you that he will practically throw you out of the country. Tell all the men and women of Israel to ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold and silver jewelry’.” - Exodus 11:1-2 (Living Bible)

“Yahweh gave the people such prestige in the eyes of the Egyptians, that they gave them what they asked. So they plundered the Egyptians.” - New Jerusalem Bible

“The storehouse of the king is the common property of everyone.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 10:3

“According to the Haggadic tradition, not only the firstborn but the majority of the population in Egypt was killed during the tenth plague.” - Immanuel Velikovsky, Ages in Chaos

“And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon.” - Exodus 12:29

“Forsooth, the children of princes are dashed against the walls.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 4:3, also 5:6

“...There was not a house where there was not one dead.” - Exodus 12:30

“He who places his brother in the ground is everywhere.”

“Forsooth, those who were in the place of embalment were laid on the high ground.” - Papyrus of Ipuwer 2:13 and 4:4, also 6:16

“...There was a great cry in Egypt.” - Exodus 12:30

“It is groaning that is throughout the land, mingled with lamentations.” – Papyrus of Ipuwer 3:14

4. L'article d'Albert Guigui

La Bible dit vrai

Albert GUIGUI, Grand Rabbin de Bruxelles

Mis en ligne le 31/01/2006

Les récits bibliques ne seraient-ils que des mythes? Rien n'est moins sûr. Les preuves manquent? Evoquons donc le «Papyrus d'Ipouwer» face aux dix plaies d'Égypte.

Dans sa livraison datée du 16 décembre 2005, le Vif-l'Express a publié un dossier intitulé «*La Bible: le vrai et le faux*». Dans ce dossier, les articles de fonds visent à prouver de façon scientifique que les récits bibliques ne sont que des mythes et que rien ne vient corroborer l'authenticité de ces événements.

Il est dommageable qu'une revue qui se veut objective et à vocation informative ne donne la parole qu'à l'une des parties. Il est dommageable que face à ces articles, il n'y ait pas eu d'autres voies qui pourraient soutenir des thèses inverses. Ainsi le lecteur aurait pu se faire une idée de façon objective et totalement dépourvue de parti pris.

Dans l'article ayant comme titre: «*Les Hébreux ont-ils séjourné en Égypte?*», après avoir décrit sommairement l'histoire du peuple juif sous la domination égyptienne ainsi que la sortie d'Égypte et la conquête de la Terre promise, l'auteur se pose la question: «*Une pure légende? La cité de Pitom n'existait pas au milieu du Xe siècle avant l'ère chrétienne. Surtout, les archives égyptiennes, qui consignent tous les événements administratifs du royaume pharaonique - n'ont conservé aucun souvenir de cette présence juive. Rien non plus sur l'Exode, qui n'est pas davantage prouvé par les recherches archéologiques ou épigraphiques..... La fuite des Hébreux vers la Palestine paraît, en elle-même, peu vraisemblable...*»

Face à cet article qui nie de façon absolue et catégorique l'authenticité des récits bibliques, nous pouvons citer bien d'autres articles de scientifiques qui viennent étayer et conforter les passages bibliques.

Le professeur américain William Foxwell Albright - un savant de renommée universelle, à la fois théologien, historien, philosophe et archéologue - écrit:«*Dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances de la topographie de la partie orientale du delta, les précisions données par la Bible au sujet du début de l'exode (Exode, XII, 37; XIII, 20) sont absolument exactes, géographiquement parlant. Nos connaissances de la topographie et de l'archéologie nous fournissent un grand nombre de preuves du caractère historique du livre de l'Exode. Il faut que nous nous mettions dans la tête que l'attitude de scepticisme que certains prennent vis-à-vis des anciennes traditions historiques d'Israël n'est plus justifiée. Même la date du départ, au sujet de laquelle, on a si longtemps ergoté, peut être à présent fixée avec des risques d'erreurs minimes...*»

Ainsi donc, la bataille entre les scientifiques fait rage. Les controverses quant à l'historicité de ces événements dans la vie d'Israël n'en sont pas terminées pour autant. Par ailleurs, le manque de preuves ne témoigne pas nécessairement de l'authenticité d'un fait. Le lecteur méditera tout particulièrement cette formule énoncée par Vincent Michel: «*L'absence de preuve n'est pas la preuve de l'absence*». Qui dit que demain, des chercheurs ou des archéologues ne mettront pas la main sur des fouilles qui pourraient renverser nos données scientifiques actuelles? A-t-on mis un point final à la recherche scientifique et archéologique dans cette région du monde?

Dans le cadre de cet article, j'aimerais me focaliser sur un passage biblique qui a fait couler beaucoup d'encre. Il s'agit des chapitres du livre de l'Exode qui retracent les plaies, prélude à la sortie d'Égypte.

Les dix plaies d’Egypte

Dieu voulant forcer Pharaon à libérer les enfants d’Israël d’Egypte frappa l’Egypte d’une série de malheurs: les dix plaies. Ces plaies ont-elles existé? N’ont-elles pas existé?

Le Professeur Immanuel Velikovski va éclairer notre horizon d’un regard nouveau. Il utilise pour ce faire un papyrus appelé «Le Papyrus d’Ipuwer». Velikovski a été frappé par le parallèle qui existe entre les faits relatés dans ce manuscrit et ceux relatés par le texte biblique. Il analyse ce manuscrit dans ses livres «Les désordres des Siècles» et «Mondes en collision» et établit un parallèle entre les catastrophes décrites par le prêtre égyptien Ipuwer et le récit tel qu’il est rapporté dans le livre de l’Exode. Les ressemblances sont stupéfiantes.

Quelques mots pour expliquer ce qu’est le Papyrus d’Ipuwer. Ce papyrus du scribe égyptien Ipuwer fut découvert à Memphis. En 1828, le Musée de Leiden aux Pays-Bas acquit ce papyrus et le classa sous le numéro «Leiden 344». En 1909, il fut traduit et publié à Leipzig par l’un des plus grands égyptologues anglais, Sir Alan Gardiner, spécialiste de l’écriture hiéroglyphique sous le titre: «Les Admonitions d’un Sage égyptien selon le Papyrus Hiéroglyphique de Leiden».

Ce texte constitue la description triste et amère d’événements extraordinaires dont Ipuwer était témoin. C’est la version d’une grande catastrophe. La description des ruines et d’horreur.

Selon le Professeur Velikovski, qui retrace de nouveau la généalogie des rois d’Egypte, ce papyrus correspond de façon exacte à l’époque de la sortie d’Egypte, conformément à la date qui est acceptée par la tradition juive. Le papyrus d’Ipuwer serait donc un compte rendu exact «de ce qui s’est passé».

Nous comprenons dès lors la pression faite par certains scientifiques de ne pas publier l’ouvrage du professeur Velikovski même si des scientifiques renommés soutenaient ces thèses.

Afin d’être plus concrets et surtout pour éclairer nos propos, nous reproduisons ci-dessous une partie des similitudes entre les versets bibliques et la description faite par Ipuwer. Nous reproduisons quelques points de comparaison sans les explications fournies par le Professeur Velikovski lui-même. Car nous pensons que cela suffirait pour nous donner une idée claire de l’authenticité du texte biblique...

Exode. VII, 21: «Et il y eut du sang dans tout le pays d’Egypte».

Papyrus 2: 5-6: «La terre est couverte de plaies. Il y a du sang partout.»

Ex. VII, 21: «Le fleuve devient infect»

Papyrus 3: 10-13: «Ce sont nos eaux. Ceci est notre bonheur! Qu’allons-nous faire? Tout est en ruine!»

Ex. IX, 25: «Toute herbe des champs fut abattue par la grêle, et tout arbre des champs brisé».

Papyrus 4: 14: «Les arbres sont brisés.»

Papyrus 6:1. «On ne trouve plus ni fruits, ni légumes.»

Ex. IX, 23-24: «Des feux s’élancèrent sur le sol, et le Seigneur fit pleuvoir la grêle sur le pays. Elle était très forte».

Papyrus 2: 10: «C’est vrai, des portes, des colonnes, des murs ont été dévorés par les flammes.»

Ex. X, 15: «Et il ne resta plus de verdure soit aux arbres, soit en herbe des champs, dans tout le pays d’Egypte.»

Papyrus 5: 12: «En vérité, tout ce qui était encore visible hier a péri. La terre est aussi dénudée qu’après la coupe du lin».

Papyrus 6: 3: «En vérité, la semence a péri de toutes parts.»

Papyrus 6: 1: «Il est impossible de trouver ni fruits ni légumes.»

Ex. X, 22: «Moïse dirigea sa main vers le ciel, et il y eut obscurité de ténèbres dans tout le pays d’Égypte.»

Papyrus 9: 11 «La terre n’est pas éclairée».

Ex. XII, 29: «Ce fut au milieu de la nuit, et l’Éternel fit périr tout premier-né dans le pays d’Égypte, depuis le premier-né de Pharaon, assis sur son trône, jusqu’au premier-né du captif du fond de la geôle, et tous les premiers-nés des animaux..»

Papyrus 4:3: «En vérité, les enfants des princes sont écrasés contre les murs»

Papyrus 6:12: «Les enfants des princes sont précipités dans les rues.»

Ex. XII, 13: «Car il n’y avait pas de maison où il n’y avait pas de mort»

Papyrus 2:3: «Partout on voit ceux qui placent leur frère dans la tombe».

Ex. XII, 30: «Et ce fut une clameur immense dans l’Égypte».

Papyrus 3: 14: «Les soupirs se font entendre dans tout le pays, mêlés aux lamentations».

L’étude comparative du texte biblique et du manuscrit d’Ipuwer montre bien une description similaire des plaies. Et bien que le Papyrus détérioré ne fournisse aucune référence explicite au peuple d’Israël ni à Moïse, il décrit selon Velikovski trois phénomènes consécutifs: le soulèvement du peuple, la fuite des misérables et des pauvres et la mort du roi dans des circonstances inhabituelles. Ainsi les racines de l’Exode ne sont ni babyloniennes, ni grecques mais bien égyptiennes.

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5. THE ADMONITIONS OF IPUWER

(Translator : John A. Wilson)

(i 1) ... Door[keepers] say : “Let us go and plunder.

“...The laundryman refuses to carry his load... Bird[catchers] have marshaled the battle array... [Men of] the Delta marshes carry shields. ... (5) ... A man regards his son as his enemy. ... A man of character goes in mourning because of what has happened in the land. ... Foreigners have become people everywhere...

(ii 2)... ‘Why really, the [face] is pale. The Bowman is ready. Robbery is everywhere. There is no man of yesterday. ...

Why really, the Nile is in flood, (but) no one plows for himself, (because) every man says : “We do not know what may happen throughout the land !”

Why really, women are dried up, and none can conceive. Khnum cannot fashion (mortals) because of the state of the land.

Why really, poor men have become the possessors of treasures. He who could not make himself a pair of sandals is (now) the possessor of riches. ...

Why really, many dead are buried in the river. The stream is a tomb, and the embalming-place has really become the stream.

Why really, nobles are in lamentation, while poor men have joy. Every town says: “Let us banish many from us.

“Why really,... dirt is throughout the land. There are really none (whose) clothes are white in these times.

Why really, the land spins around as a potter’s wheel does. The robber is (now) the possessor of riches...

(10) Why really, the River is blood. If one drinks of it, one rejects (it) as human and thirsts for water.

Why really, doors, columns, and floor planks are burned up, (but) the flooring of the palace - life, prosperity, health ! - (still) remains firm. ...

Why really, crocodiles [sink] down because of what they have carried off, (for) men go to them of their own accord.

... (iii 1) [Why] really, the desert is (spread) throughout the land. The nomes are destroyed. Barbarians from outside have come to Egypt. ... There are really no people anywhere. ... (5) ...

Why really, they who built [pyramids, have become] farmers. They who were in the ship of the god are charged with forced [labor]. No one really sails north to [Byb]los today. What shall we do for cedar for our mummies ? Priests were buried with their produce and [nobles] were embalmed with the oil thereof as far away as Keftiu. (but) they come no (longer). Gold is lacking. ... How important it (now) seems when the oasis-people come carrying their festival provisions: reed-mats, ... fresh redmet-plants, (10)... of birds, and...

Why really, Elephantine, the Thinite nome, and the [shrine] of Upper Egypt do not pay taxes because of [civil] war... What is a treasury without its revenues for ? The heart of the king (must) indeed be glad when truth comes to him !” But really, every foreign country [comes]! Such is our welfare ! What can we do about it ? Going to ruin !

Why really, laughter had disappeared, and is [no longer] made. It is wailing that pervades the land, mixed with lamentation...

(iv 1)... Why really, the children of nobles are dashed against the walls. The (once) prayed-for children are (now) laid out on the high ground... (5) ...

Why really, the entire Delta marshland will no (longer) be hidden: the confidence of the Northland is (now) a beaten path. What is it that one could do ?

Behold, it is in the hands of those who did not know it, as well as those who knew it; foreigners are (now) skilled in the work of the Delta... (10) ...

Why really, all maid-servants make free with their tongues. When their mistresses speak, it is burdensome to the servants. ...

(v 10)... Why really, the ways [are not] guarded roads. Men sit in the bushes until the benighted (traveler) comes, to take away his burden and steal what is on him. He is presented with the blows of a stick and slain wrongfully. ... Ah, would that it were the end of men, no conception, no

(vi 1) birth ! Then the earth would cease from noise, without wrangling !...

Why really, grain has perished on every side... Everybody says : “There is nothing !” The storehouse is stripped bare; its keeper is stretched out on the ground. ...(5) ... Ah, would that I had raised my voice at that time - it might save me from the suffering in which I am !

Why really, the writings of the augurs enclosure are read. The place of secrets which was (so formerly) is (now) laid bare.

Why really, magic is exposed. Go-spells and enfold-spells are made ineffectual because they are repeated by (ordinary) people.

Why really, (public) offices are open, and their reports are read. Serfs have become the owners of serfs...

Why really, the writings of the scribes of the mat have been removed. The grain-sustenance of Egypt is (now) a come-and-get-it.

Why really, the laws (10) of the enclosure are put out of doors. Men actually walk on them in the highways. Poor men tear them up in the streets. ...

Why really, the children of nobles are abandoned in the streets. He who knows says : “Yes, (it is so) !” The fool says : “No, (it is not) !” It is fair in the sight of him who knows it not. ...

(vii 1). Behold now, the fire has mounted up on high. Its flame goes forth against the enemies of the land.

Behold now, something has been done which never happened for a long time: the king has been taken away by poor men.

Behold, he who was buried as a falcon (now lies) on a (mere) bier. What the pyramid hid has become empty.

Behold now, it has come to a point where the land is despoiled of the kingship by a few irresponsible men.

Behold now, it has come to a point where (men) rebel against the uraeus, the ... of Re, which makes the Two Lands peaceful.

Behold, the secret of the land, whose limits are unknown(able), is laid bare. The Residence (may) be razed within an hour. ... (5) ...

Behold, the (guardian-)serpent is taken from her hole. The secrets of the Kings of Upper- and Lower Egypt are laid bare. ... (10) ...

Behold, nobles' ladies are (now) gleaners, and nobles are in the workhouse. (But) he who never (even) slept on a plank is (now) the owner of a bed. ...

Behold, the owners of robes are (now) in rags. (But) he who never wove for himself is (now) the owner of fine linen. ...

Behold, he who knew not the lyre is (now) the owner of a harp. He who never sang for himself (now) praises the goddess of music. ... (viii 1) ...

Behold, the bald-headed man who had no oil has become the owner of jars of sweet myrrh.

(5) Behold, she who had not (even) a box is (now) the owner of a trunk. She who looked at her face in the water is (now) the owner of a mirror.... (10) ...

Behold, the king's men trash around among the cattle of destitute. ...

Behold, the king's men trash around among geese, which are presented (10) the gods instead of oxen.

... (ix 1) ...

Behold, nobles' ladies are growing hungry, (but) the king's men are sated with what they have done.

Behold, not an office is in its (proper) place, like a stampeded herd which has no herdsman.

Behold, cattle are (left) free-wandering, (for) there is no one to take care of them. Every man takes for himself and brands (them) with his name...

Behold, he who had no grain is (now) the owner of granaries. (5) He who had to get a loan for himself (now) issues it. ... (x 1)...

So Lower-Egypt weeps. The storehouse of the king is a (mere) come-and-get-it for everybody, and the entire palace is without its taxes. To it (should belong) barley, emmer, birds, and fish. To it (should belong) white cloth, fine linen, metal, and (5) ointment. To it (should belong) rug, mat, [flowers], palanquin, and every good revenue. ...

Remember (xi 1)... how fumigation is made with incense, how water is offered from a jar in the early morning.

Remember fattened ro-geese, terep-geese, and sat-geese, how the divine offerings are made to the gods,.

Remember how natron is chewed and how white bread is prepared by a man on the day of moistening the head.

Remember how flagstaffs are set up and a stela is carved, while a priest purifies the temples and the house of god is whitewashed like milk; how the fragrance of the horizon is made sweet, and how offering-bread is established.

Remember how (ritual) regulations are adhered to, how (religious) dates are distributed, how (5) one who has been inducted into priestly service may be removed for personal weakness - that is, it was carried out wrongfully. ...

... It shall come that he brings coolness upon the heart.

(xii 1) Men shall say : "He is the herdsman of all men. Evil is not in his heart. Though his herds may be small, still he has spent the day caring for them."...

Would that he might perceive their character from the (very first generation ! Then he would smite down evil; he would stretch forth the arm against it; he would destroy the seed thereof and their inheritance. ...(5)... (But) there is no pilot in their hour. Where is he today ? Is he then sleeping? Behold, the glory thereof cannot be seen. ..(10)...

... Authority, Perception, and Justice are with thee, (but) it is confusion which thou wouldst set throughout the land, together with the noise of contention. Behold, one thrusts against another. Men conform to that which thou hast commanded. If three men go along a road, they are found to be two men; it is the greater number that kills the lesser. Does then the herdsman love death ? So then thou will command that

(xiii 1) a reply be made : "It is because one man loves and another hates. That is, their forms are few everywhere." This really means that thou hast acted to bring such (a situation) into being, and thou hast spoken lies. ...

All these years are civil strife. A man may be slain on his (own) roof, while he is on the watch in his boundary house. Is he brave and saves himself ? - that means that he will live. ...(5)... Would that thou mightest taste of some of the oppressions thereof ! Then thou wouldst say :...

...(10)... But it is still good when the hands of men construct pyramids, when canals are dug, and when groves of trees are made for the gods.

But it is still good when men are drunken, when they drink miyet and their hearts are happy.

But it is still good when shouting is in the mouths (of men), when the notables of the districts are standing and watching the shouting

(xiv 1) from their houses, clothed in a cloak, purified already and firm bellied... (10)...

"...None can be found who will stand in their places.

...Every man fights for his sister, and he protects his own person. Is (it) the Nubians ? Then we shall make our (own) protection. Fighting police will hold off the barbarians. Is it the Libyans? Then we shall turn away. The Madjoi fortunately are with Egypt. How is it that every man kills his brother ? The military classes (xv 1) which we marshal for ourselves have become barbarians, beginning to destroy that from which they took their being and to show the Asiatics the state of land.

And yet all the foreigners are afraid of them. ...(10)...

That which Ipuwer said, when he answered the majesty of the All-Lord : "...To be ignorant of it is something pleasant to the heart. Thou hast done what is good in their hearts, for) thou hast kept people alive thereby. (But still) they cover up

(xvi 1) their faces for fear of the morrow.

"Once upon a time there was a man who was old and in the presence of his salvation, while his son was (still) a child, without understanding..."

6. Le papyrus Ipuwer

Je pense que cette traduction est celle de Gardiner dont se sert Velikovsky.

Source: <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/texts/ipuwer.htm>

The admonitions of Ipuwer

It is impossible to give a date for the composition of this document. The surviving papyrus (Papyrus Leiden 334) itself is a copy made during the New Kingdom. Ipuwer is generally supposed to have lived during the Middle Kingdom or the Second Intermediate Period, and the catastrophes he bewails to have taken place four centuries earlier during the First Intermediate Period.

On the other hand, Miriam Lichtheim, following S. Luria, contends that the 'Admonitions of Ipuwer' has not only no bearing whatever on the long past First Intermediate Period, it also does not derive from any other historical situation. It is the last, fullest, most exaggerated and hence least successful, composition on the theme "order versus chaos."

M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Volume I, p.150

Fringe historians often compare the content of this papyrus with Exodus, the second book of the Bible [1]. Similarities between Egyptian texts and the Bible are easily found, and it is reasonable to assume Egyptian influence on the Hebrews, given their at times close contacts. But to conclude from such parallelisms that the Ipuwer Papyrus describes Egypt at the time of the Exodus, requires a leap of faith not everybody is willing to make.

Lacunae in the papyrus text are marked by [...].

[

[. .] The door [keepers] say: "Let us go and plunder."

The confectioners [. . .].

The washerman refuses to carry his load [. . .].

The bird [catchers] have drawn up in line of battle [. . . the inhabitants] of the Delta carry shields.

The brewers [. . .] sad.

A man regards his son as his enemy. Confusion [. . .] another.

Come and conquer; judge [. . .] what was ordained for you in the time of Horus, in the age [of the Ennead . . .]. The virtuous man goes in mourning because of what has happened in the land [. . .] goes [. . .] the tribes of the desert have become Egyptians everywhere.

Indeed, the face is pale; [. . .] what the ancestors foretold has arrived at [fruition . . .] the land is full of confederates, and a man goes to plough with his shield.

Indeed, the meek say: ["He who is . . . of] face is as a well-born man."

Indeed, [the face] is pale; the Bowman is ready, wrongdoing is everywhere, and there is no man of yesterday.

Indeed, the plunderer [. . .] everywhere, and the servant takes what he finds.

Indeed, **the Nile overflows, yet none plough for it.** Everyone says: "We do not know what will happen throughout the land."

Indeed, the women are barren and none conceive. Khnum fashions (men) no more because of the condition of the land.

► *the Nile overflows, yet none plough for it:* The collapse of the Old Kingdom civilisation is generally attributed to a repeated failure of the Nile to inundate the flood plain. A few consecutive crop failures can result in many subsequent years of suffering, as all the grain that is grown and which is to serve as seed, will be consumed as food.

II

Indeed, poor men have become owners of wealth, and he who could not make sandals for himself is now a possessor of riches. Indeed, men's slaves, their hearts are **sad**, and magistrates do not fraternize with their people when they shout.

Indeed, [hearts] are violent, pestilence is throughout the land, blood is everywhere, death is not lacking, and the mummy-cloth speaks even before one comes near it.

Indeed, many dead are buried in the river; the stream is a sepulcher and the place of embalment has become a stream. Indeed, noblemen are in distress, while the poor man is full of joy. Every town says: "**Let us suppress the powerful among us.**" Indeed, men are like ibises. Squalor is throughout the land, and there are none indeed whose clothes are white in these times. Indeed, the land turns around as does a potter's wheel; the robber is a possessor of riches and [the rich man is become] a plunderer.

Indeed, trusty servants are [. . .]; the poor man [complains]: "How terrible! What am I to do?"

Indeed, the river is blood, yet men drink of it. Men shrink from human beings and thirst after water.

Indeed, **gates, columns and walls are burnt up**, while the hall of the palace stands firm and endures.

Indeed, the ship of [the southerners] has broken up; towns are destroyed and Upper Egypt has become an empty waste.

Indeed, **crocodiles [are glutted] with the fish they have taken, for men go to them of their own accord**; it is the destruction of the land. Men say: "Do not walk here; behold, it is a net."

Behold, men tread [the water] like fishes, and the frightened man cannot distinguish it because of terror.

Indeed, men are few, and he who places his brother in the ground is everywhere. **When the wise man speaks, [he flees without delay].**

Indeed, the well-born man [. . .] through lack of recognition, and the child of his lady has become the son of his maidservant.

III

Indeed, the desert is throughout the land, the nomes are laid waste, and **barbarians from abroad have come to Egypt.**

Indeed, men arrive [. . .] and indeed, there are no **Egyptians** anywhere.

Indeed, gold and **lapis lazuli**, silver and turquoise, carnelian and amethyst, Iahet-stone and [. . .] are strung on the necks of maidservants. Good things are throughout the land, (yet) housewives say: "Oh that we had something to eat!"

Indeed, [. . .] noblewomen. Their bodies are in sad plight by reason of their rags, and their hearts sink when greeting [one another]. Indeed, chests of ebony are broken up, and precious ssnDm-wood is cleft asunder in beds [. . .].

Indeed, the builders [of pyramids have become] cultivators, and those who were in the sacred bark are now yoked [to it]. None shall indeed sail northward to **Byblos** today; what shall we do for cedar trees for our mummies, and with the produce of which priests are buried and with the oil of which [chiefs] are embalmed as far as **Keftiu**? They come no more; gold is lacking [. . .] and materials for every kind of craft have come to an end.

The [. . .] of the palace is despoiled. How often do people of the oases come with their festival spices, mats, and skins, with

► *sad*: Lichtheim: *greedy*

► *Let us suppress the powerful among us*: John A. Wilson: *Let us banish many from us*. Lichtheim: *Let us expel our rulers.*



Ibis

► *Indeed, the river is blood, yet men drink of it. Men shrink from human beings and thirst after water*: Why really, the River is blood. If one drinks of it, one rejects (it) as human and thirsts for water. (Wilson)

► *gates, columns and walls are burnt up*: doors, columns, and floor planks are burned up (Wilson)

► *crocodiles [are glutted] with the fish they have taken, for men go to them of their own accord*: crocodiles [sink] down because of what they have carried off, (for) men go to them of their own accord. (Wilson)

► *When the wise man speaks, [he flees without delay]*: Lichtheim: "*The word of the wise has fled without delay*".

► *barbarians* : Lichtheim: *Foreign bowmen.*

Egyptians saw themselves as the pinnacle of creation: their land was The Land, their people were The People. In this their attitude was similar to that of other ancient (and not so ancient) peoples.

► *from abroad have come to Egypt*: Times of weak central power opened opportunities for foreigners to infiltrate the country in even larger numbers than ordinarily: The Nubian Medjay during the First Intermediate Period, the Hyksos during the Second. Still, they probably numbered in the thousands rather than in the hundred thousands.

► *Egyptians*: people (Wilson)

► *lapis lazuli*: Much coveted blue stone, imported from Asia.

► *Byblos*: This city on the Lebanese coast supplied cedar wood to the Egyptians since the Old Kingdom at least.

► *Keftiu*: Often identified as Crete.

► *The work of craftsmen and [. . .] are the profit of the palace*: Lichtheim: *The output of craftsmen is*

fresh rdmt-plants, grease of birds . . . ?
 Indeed, Elephantine and Thinis [...] of Upper Egypt, (but) without paying taxes owing to civil strife. Lacking are grain, charcoal, irtyw-fruit, m'w-wood, nwt-wood, and brushwood. **The work of craftsmen and [. .] are the profit of the palace.** To what purpose is a treasury without its revenues? Happy indeed is the heart of the king when **truth** comes to him! And every foreign land [comes]! That is our fate and that is our happiness! What can we do about it? All is ruin!
 Indeed, laughter is perished and is [no longer] made; it is groaning that is throughout the land, mingled with complaints.

IV

Indeed, every dead person is as a well-born man. Those who were Egyptians [have become] foreigners and are thrust aside. Indeed, hair [has fallen out] for everybody, and the man of rank can no longer be distinguished from him who is nobody. Indeed, [. .] because of noise; noise is not [. .] in years of noise, and there is no end [of] noise.
 Indeed, great and small [say]: "I wish I might die." Little children say: "He should not have caused [me] to live."
 Indeed, the children of princes are dashed against walls, and **the children of the neck** are laid out on the high ground.
 Indeed, those who **were in the place of embalmment** are laid out **on the high ground**, and the secrets of the embalmers are thrown down because of it.
 Indeed, that has perished which yesterday was seen, and the land is left over to its weakness like the cutting of flax.
 Indeed, the Delta in its entirety will not be hidden, and Lower Egypt puts trust in trodden roads. What can one do? No [. .] exist anywhere, and men say: "Perdition to the secret place!" Behold, it is in the hands of those who do not know it like those who know it. The desert dwellers are skilled in the **crafts** of the Delta.
 Indeed, citizens are put to the **corn-rubbers**, and those who used to don fine linen are beaten with . . . Those who used never to see the day have gone out unhindered; those who were on their husbands' beds, let them lie on **rafts**. I say: "It is too heavy for me," concerning rafts bearing myrrh. **Load them with vessels filled with [. . . Let] them know the palanquin.** As for the butler, he is ruined. There are no remedies for it; noblewomen suffer like maidservants, minstrels are at the looms within the weaving-rooms, and what they sing to the Songstress-goddess is mourning. Talkers [. .] corn-rubbers.
 Indeed, all female slaves are free with their tongues, and when their mistress speaks, it is irksome to the maidservants.
 Indeed, **trees are felled and branches are stripped off.**

V

I have separated him and his household slaves, and men will say when they hear it: "**Cakes are lacking for most children**; there is no food [. .]. What is the taste of it like today?"
 Indeed, magnates are hungry and perishing, followers are followed [. .] because of complaints.
 Indeed, the hot-tempered man says: "**If I knew where God is, then I would serve Him.**"
 Indeed, [Right] pervades the land in name, but what men do in

lacking ---

▶ *truth*: Lichtheim: *gifts*

▶ **Indeed, every dead person is as a well-born man. Those who were Egyptians [have become] foreigners and are thrust aside.**: Lichtheim: Those who were people are strangers whom one shows the way.
 ▶ **...the children of the neck (i.e. holding onto the neck of the carrying grown-up): The (once) prayed-for children (Wilson)**
 ▶ **on the high ground: burial ground above the flood plain.**
 ▶ **were in the place of embalmment:** Lichtheim: were entombed

▶ *crafts*: work (Wilson)
 ▶ *corn-rubbers*: Lichtheim: *grindstones*
 ▶ *rafts*: Lichtheim: *Boards*
 ▶ **Load them with vessels filled with [. . . Let] them know the palanquin.**: Lichtheim: *She is loaded down with jars filled with ---. [No longer] does she know the palanquin,*
 ▶ **trees are felled and branches are stripped off:** the wholesale destruction of trees causes serious fuel problems, as witnessed nowadays in the Sahel region of sub-saharan Africa

▶ **I have separated him and his household slaves:** Lichtheim: *And the servant abandons his household*
 ▶ **Cakes are lacking for most children:** Lichtheim: *Gone is the gain of abundance of children.*
 ▶ **If I knew where God is, then I would serve Him:** implying that he doesn't do so now.

trusting to it is Wrong.

Indeed, **runners are fighting over the spoil [of] the robber**, and all his property is carried off.

Indeed, all animals, their hearts weep; cattle moan because of the state of the land.

Indeed, the children of princes are dashed against walls, and the children of the neck are laid out on the high ground. Khnum groans because of his weariness.

Indeed, terror kills; the frightened man opposes what is done against your enemies. Moreover, the few are pleased, while the rest are . . . Is it by following the crocodile and cleaving it asunder? Is it by slaying the lion roasted on the fire? [Is it] by sprinkling for Ptah and taking [. . .]? Why do you give to him? There is no reaching him. It is misery which you give to him.

Indeed, slaves . . . throughout the land, and the strong man sends to everyone; a man strikes his maternal brother. What is it that has been done? I speak to a ruined man.

Indeed, **the ways are [. . .], the roads are watched**; men sit in the bushes until the benighted traveler comes in order to plunder his burden, and what is upon him is taken away. He is belabored with blows of a stick and murdered.

Indeed, that has perished which yesterday was seen, and the land is left over to its weakness like the cutting of flax, commoners coming and going in dissolution [. . .].

VI

Would that there were an end of men, without conception, without birth! Then would the land be quiet from noise and tumult be no more.

Indeed, [men eat] herbage and wash [it] down with water; neither fruit nor herbage can be found [for] the birds, and [. . .] is taken away from the mouth of the pig. No face is bright which you have [. . .] for me through hunger.

Indeed, everywhere barley has perished and men are stripped of clothes, **spice, and oil**; everyone says: "There is none." The storehouse is empty and its keeper is stretched on the ground; a happy state of affairs! . . .

Would that I had raised my voice at that moment, that it might have saved me from the pain in which I am.

Indeed, **the private council-chamber, its writings are taken away and the mysteries which were [in it] are laid bare**.

Indeed, **magic spells are divulged**; **smw- and shnw-spells** are frustrated **because they are remembered** by men.

Indeed, public offices are opened and their inventories are taken away; the serf has become an owner of serfs.

Indeed, [scribes] are killed and their writings are taken away.

Woe is me because of the misery of this time!

Indeed, the writings of the scribes of the cadaster are destroyed, and **the corn of Egypt is common property**.

Indeed, the laws of the council chamber are thrown out; indeed, men walk on them in public places, and poor men break them up in the streets.

Indeed, the poor man **has attained to the state of the Nine Gods**, and the erstwhile procedure of the **House of the Thirty** is divulged.

Indeed, the great council-chamber is a popular resort, and poor men come and go to the Great Mansions.

Indeed, **the children of magnates are ejected into the streets**;

► *runners are fighting over the spoil [of] the robber*: Lichtheim: *one runs and fights for the goods [of a man]. He is robbed*;

► *the ways are [. . .], the roads are watched*: the ways [are not] guarded roads (Wilson)

► *spice, and oil*: Lichtheim: *Unanointed with oil*

► *the private council-chamber, its writings are taken away and the mysteries which were [in it] are laid bare* the writings of the augurs enclosure are read. The place of secrets which was (so formerly) is (now) laid bare (Wilson)

► *magic spells are divulged*: Anybody who knew magic spells could use them, though overuse seems to have made them ineffective. (**Magic** has always shunned the light of day and becomes ineffectual when scrutinized with a critical mind. Strangely, this has never prevented people from believing in it).

► *smw- and shnw spells*: Go-spells and Enfold-spells (Wilson)

► *because they are remembered*: Lichtheim: *through being repeated*

► *the corn of Egypt is common property*: Wilson: *The grain-sustenance of Egypt is (now) a come-and-get-it*.

Corn in the ancient Egyptian context refers to wheat and/or barley. The storage of surplus grain and its redistribution was one of the corner stones of the Egyptian **economy**. Egypt was *not* a welfare state, distributing free grain.

► *has attained to the state of*: Lichtheim: *comes to the place*

► *Nine Gods*: The *ennead*, the totality of the gods of a locality, not necessarily amounting to exactly nine gods.

► *House of Thirty*: Tribunal, cf. *Hail Eater of entrails who came forth from the House of Thirty, I have not committed perjury*. from the Book of the Dead

the wise man agrees and the fool says "no," and it is pleasing in the sight of him who knows nothing about it. Indeed, those who were in the place of embalment are laid out on the high ground, and the secrets of the embalmers are thrown down because of it.

VII

Behold, the fire has gone up on high, and its burning goes forth against the enemies of the land.

Behold, things have been done which have not happened for a long time past; the king has been **deposed by the rabble**.

Behold, he who was buried as a **falcon** [is devoid] of biers, and what the **pyramid** concealed has become empty.

Behold, it has befallen that the land has been deprived of the kingship by a few **lawless men**.

Behold, men have fallen into rebellion against the **Uraeus, the [. .] of Re**, even she who makes the Two Lands content.

Behold, the secret of the land whose limits were unknown is divulged, and the Residence is thrown down in a moment.

Behold, Egypt is fallen to pouring of water, and he who poured water on the ground has carried off the strong man in misery.

Behold, the **Serpent** is taken from its hole, and the secrets of the Kings of Upper and Lower Egypt are divulged.

Behold, the Residence is afraid because of want, and [men go about] unopposed to stir up strife.

Behold, the land has knotted itself up with confederacies, and the coward takes the brave man's property.

Behold, the Serpent [. .] the dead: he who could not make a sarcophagus for himself is now the possessor of a tomb.

Behold, the possessors of tombs are ejected on to the high ground, while he who could not make a coffin for himself is now [the possessor] of a treasury.

Behold, this has happened [to] men; **he who could not build a room for himself is now a possessor of walls**.

Behold, the magistrates of the land are driven out throughout the land: [. .] are driven out from the palaces.

Behold, noble ladies are now on rafts, and magnates are in the labor establishment, while he who could not sleep even on walls is now the possessor of a bed.

Behold, the possessor of wealth now spends the night thirsty, while he who once begged his dregs for himself is now the possessor of overflowing bowls.

Behold, the possessors of robes are now in rags, while he who could not weave for himself is now a possessor of fine linen.

Behold, he who could not build a boat for himself is now the possessor of a fleet; their erstwhile owner looks at them, but they are not his.

Behold, he who had no shade is now the possessor of shade, while the erstwhile possessors of shade are now in the full blast of the storm.

Behold, he who was ignorant of the lyre is now the possessor of a harp, while he who never sang for himself now vaunts the Songstress-goddess.

Behold, those who possessed vessel-stands of copper [. .] not one of the jars thereof has been adorned.

transl. by Allen and Faulkner

► *the children of magnates are ejected into the streets*: Lichtheim: *there is much hatred in the streets*

► *deposed by the rabble*: Lichtheim: *robbed by beggars*

► *Falcon*: the pharaoh, son of Horus

► *pyramid*: pyramids were built from the third dynasty to the Middle Kingdom.

► *lawless men*: Lichtheim: *people who ignore custom*. Essentially, Egyptian [law](#) was customary law.

► *Uraeus*: The snake symbol of the ruler, worn on pharaonic [headdresses](#).

► *the [. .] of Re*: Lichtheim: *Stolen*] *is the crown of Re*

► *Serpent*: Wilson: *(guardian-)serpent*

► *he who could not build a room for himself is now a possessor of walls*: Lichtheim: *He who did not build a hut is an owner of coffers*.

► Behold, noble ladies are now on rafts, and magnates are in the labor establishment, while he who could not sleep even on walls is now the possessor of a bed: Wilson: Behold, nobles' ladies are (now) gleaners, and nobles are in the workhouse. (But) he who never (even) slept on a plank is (now) the owner of a bed.

Bedsteads were expensive furniture. Most people would have slept on the floor.

► *shade*: Lichtheim: shelter

► *Songstress-goddess*: goddess of music (Wilson)

► *vessel-stands*: Most vessels had rounded bottoms and were placed on circular vessel-stands to prevent them from falling over. Lichtheim: offering-tables



Limestone pot stand, 12th dynasty.
Source: [Petrie Museum website](#)

VIII

Behold, he who slept **wifeless through want** [finds] **riches**, while he whom he never saw stands making dole.

Behold, he who had no property is now a possessor of wealth, and the magnate praises him.

Behold, **the poor of the land have become rich**, and the [erstwhile owner] of property is one who has nothing.

Behold, **serving-men** have become masters of butlers, and he who was once a messenger now sends someone else.

Behold, he who had no loaf is now the owner of a barn, and his storehouse is provided with the goods of another.

Behold, he whose hair is fallen out and who had no oil has now become the possessors of jars of sweet myrrh.

Behold, she who had no box is now the owner of a coffer, and she who had to look at her face in the water is now the owner of a mirror.

Behold, [. . .].

Behold, a man is happy eating his food. Consume your goods in gladness and unhindered, for it is good for a man to eat his food; God commands it for him whom He has favored [. . .].

[Behold, he who did not know] his god now offers to him with incense of another [who is] not known [to him].

[Behold,] great ladies, once possessors of riches, now give their children for beds.

Behold, a man [to whom is given] a noble lady as wife, her father protects him, and he who has not [. . .] killing him.

Behold, the children of magistrates are [. . . the calves] of cattle [are given over] to the plunderers.

Behold, **priests transgress with the cattle of the poor** [. . .].

Behold, he who could not slaughter for himself now slaughters bulls, and he who did not know how to carve now sees [. . .].

Behold, **priests transgress with geese, which are given [to] the gods instead of oxen**.

Behold, maidservants [. . .] offer ducks; noblewomen [. . .].

Behold, noblewomen flee; the overseers of [. . .] and their [children] are cast down through fear of death.

[Behold,] the chiefs of the land flee; there is no purpose for them because of want. The lord of [. . .].

IX

[Behold,] those who once owned beds are now on the ground, while he who once slept in squalor now lays out a skin-mat for himself.

Behold, noblewomen go hungry, while the **priests** are sated with what has been prepared for them.

Behold, no offices are in their right place, like a herd running at random without a herdsman.

Behold, cattle stray and there is none to collect them, but **everyone fetches for himself those that are branded with his name**.

Behold, a man is slain beside his brother, who runs away and abandons him to save his own skin.

Behold, he who had no yoke of oxen is now the owner of a herd, and he who could find for himself no ploughman is now the owner of cattle.

▶ *wifeless through want*: Founding a household, which seems to have been almost synonymous with getting married required a modicum of wealth.

▶ *riches*: Lichtheim: *noblewoman*

▶ *the poor of the land have become rich*: In reality the poor do not become rich during social upheaval.

▶ *serving-men*: Lichtheim: *cooks*

▶ *priests transgress with the cattle of the poor* [. . .].: Lichtheim: *the serfs eat beef, The paupers -----*

▶ *priests transgress*: Lichtheim: *serfs eat*

▶ *geese, which are given [to] the gods instead of oxen*: Shortchanging and stealing from the gods was a mortal sin. *I have not purloined offerings* ([Negative confessions](#))

▶ *priests*: king's men (Wilson)

▶ *everyone fetches for himself those that are branded with his name*: Wilson: *Every man takes for himself and brands (them) with his name*.

Behold, he who had no grain is now the owner of granaries, and he who had to fetch loan-corn for himself is now one who issues it.

Behold, he who had no dependents is now an owner of serfs, and he who was [a magnate] now performs his own errands. Behold, the strong men of the land, the condition of the people is not reported [to them]. All is ruin!

Behold, no craftsmen work, for the enemies of the land have impoverished its craftsmen.

[Behold, he who once recorded] the harvest now knows nothing about it, while he who never ploughed [for himself is now the owner of corn; the reaping] takes place but is not reported. The scribe [sits in his office], but his hands [are idle] in it.

Destroyed is [. . .] in that time, and a man looks [on his friend as] an adversary. The infirm man brings coolness [to what is hot . . .] fear [. . . .]. Poor men [. . . the land] is not bright because of it.

X

Destroyed is [. . .] their food is taken from them [. . . through] fear of his terror. The commoner begs [. . .] messenger, but not [. . .] time. He is captured laden with goods and [all his property] is taken away. [. . .] men pass by his door [. . .] the outside of the wall, a shed, and rooms containing falcons. It is the common man who will be vigilant, the day having dawned on him without his dreading it. Men run because of [. . . for] the temple of the head, strained through a woven cloth within the house. What they make are tents, just like the desert folk.

Destroyed is the doing of that for which men are sent by retainers in the service of their masters; they have no readiness.

Behold, they are five men, and they say: "Go on the road you know, for we have arrived."

Lower Egypt weeps; the king's storehouse is the common property of everyone, and the entire palace is without its revenues. To it belong emmer and barley, fowl and fish; to it belong white cloth and fine linen, copper and oil; to it belong carpet and mat, [. . .] flowers and wheat-sheaf and all good revenues . . . If the . . . it in the palace were delayed, men would be devoid [of . . .].

Destroy the enemies of the august Residence, splendid of magistrates [. . .] in it like [. . .]; indeed, the Governor of the City goes unescorted.

Destroy [the enemies of the august Residence,] splendid [. . .]. [Destroy the enemies of] that erstwhile august Residence, manifold of laws [. . .]. [Destroy the enemies of] that erstwhile august [Residence . . .].

Destroy the enemies of that erstwhile august Residence [. . .] none can stand [. . .].

Destroy the enemies of that erstwhile august Residence, manifold of offices; indeed [. . .].

Remember to immerse [. . .] him who is in pain when he is sick in his body; show respect [. . .] because of his god that he may guard the utterance [. . .] his children who are witnesses of the surging of the flood.

XI

Remember to [. . . .]. . . shrine, to fumigate with incense and

► *Remember:* The things to remember are the

to offer water in a jar in the early morning.

Remember [to bring] fat r-geese, trp-geese, and **ducks** and to offer god's offerings to the gods.

Remember to chew **natron** and to prepare white bread; a man [should do it] on the day of wetting the head.

Remember to erect flagstaffs and to carve offering stones, the priest cleansing the chapels and the temple being plastered (white) like milk; to make pleasant the odor of the **horizon** and to provide bread-offerings.

Remember to observe regulations, to fix dates correctly, and to remove him who enters on the priestly office in **impurity of body**, for that is doing it wrongfully, it is destruction of the heart [. . .] the day which precedes eternity, the months [. . .] years are known.

Remember to slaughter oxen [. . .].

Remember to go forth purged [. . .] who calls to you; to put r-geese on the fire [. . .] to open the jar [. . .] the shore of the waters [. . .] of women [. . .] clothing [. . . .] to give praise . . . in order to appease you.

[. . .] lack of people; come [. . .] Re who commands [. . .]

worshipping him [. . .] West until [. . .] are diminished [. . .].

Behold, why does **he** seek to fashion [men . . .]? The frightened man is not distinguished from the violent one.

XII

He brings coolness upon heat; men say: "He is the **herdsman** of mankind, and there is no evil in his heart." Though his herds are few, yet he spends a day to collect them, their hearts being on fire.

Would that he had perceived **their nature** in the first generation; then he would have imposed obstacles, he would have stretched out his arm against them, he would have destroyed **their herds** and their **heritage**. Men desire the giving of birth, but sadness supervenes, with needy people on all sides. So it is, and it will not pass away while the gods who are in the midst of it exist. Seed goes forth into mortal women, but none are found on the road.

Combat has gone forth, and he who should be a redresser of evils is one who commits them; neither do men act as pilot in their hour of duty. Where is he today? Is he asleep? Behold, his power is not seen.

If we had been fed, I would not have found you, I would not have been summoned in vain; "Aggression against it means pain of heart" is a saying on the lips of everyone. Today he who is afraid . . . a myriad of people; [. . .] did not see [. . .] against the enemies of [. . .] at his outer chamber; who enter the temple [. . .] weeping for him [. . .] that one who confounds what he has said . . . The land has not fallen [. . .] the statues are burned and their tombs destroyed [. . .] he sees the day of [. . .]. He who could not make for himself [. . .] between sky and ground is afraid of everybody.

. . . if he does it . . . what you dislike taking.

Authority, knowledge, and truth are with you, yet confusion is what you set throughout the land, also the noise of tumult.

Behold, one deals harm to another, for men conform to what you have commanded. If three men travel on the road, they are found to be only two, for the many kill the few.

duties of the priests, first among them the pharaoh as High Priest, to their gods. In accordance with the magical thinking of the day (and which still persists among many believers) the meticulous fulfilment of duties brings with it the favour of the gods and thus the well-being of the pious.

▶ *ducks*: sat-geese (Wilson)

▶ *natron*: used for cleaning teeth, cf. [Personal hygiene and cosmetics](#)

▶ *horizon*: Lichtheim: *sanctuary*

▶ *impurity of body*: Priest had to observe a number of rules, like removing hair, wearing white sandals made of reeds etc.

▶ *he*: the creator god

▶ *herdsman*: The metaphor of divine herdsman or shepherd is frequently used in Egyptian literature.

▶ *their nature*: The evil in man was either unintentional or it came into being shortly after creation.

▶ *their herds*: Wilson: *the seed thereof*. Re would have destroyed his flawed creation had he known at the beginning.

▶ *heritage*: Lichtheim: *heirs*

XIII

Does a herdsman desire death? Then may you command reply to be made, because it means that one loves, another detests; it means **that their existences are few** everywhere; it means that you have acted so as to bring those things to pass. You have told lies, and the land is a weed which destroys men, and none can count on life. All these years are strife, and a man is murdered on his housetop even though he was vigilant in his gate lodge. **Is he brave and saves himself? It means he will live.**

When men send a servant for humble folk, he goes on the road until he sees the flood; the road is washed out and he stands worried. What is on him is taken away, he is belabored with blows of a stick and wrongfully slain. Oh that you could taste a little of the misery of it! Then you would say [. . .] from someone else as a wall, over and above [. . .] hot . . . years . . . [. . .]. [It is indeed good] when ships fare upstream [.] robbing them.

It is indeed good [. . .]. [It is indeed] good when the **net is drawn in and birds are tied up** [. . .].

It is [indeed] good [. . .] dignities for them, and the roads are passable.

It is indeed good when the hands of men **build pyramids**, when ponds are dug and plantations of the trees of the gods are made.

It is indeed good when men are drunk; they drink myt and their hearts are happy.

▶ *that their existences are few*: Lichtheim: *reducing their numbers*

▶ *Is he brave and saves himself? It means he will live*: Lichtheim: . *If he is brave he may save himself. Such is his life!*

▶ *net is drawn in and birds are tied up*: [Bird netting](#) was to some a leisure activity, to others a necessity.

▶ *build pyramids*: an activity which had completely ceased by the New Kingdom.

XIV

It is indeed good when shouting is in men's mouths, when the magnates of districts stand looking on at the shouting in their houses, clad in a cloak, cleansed in front and **well-provided within**.

It is indeed good when beds are prepared and the headrests of magistrates are safely secured. Every man's need is satisfied with a couch in the shade, and a door is now shut on him who once slept in the bushes.

It is indeed good when fine linen is spread out on New Year's Day [. . .] on the bank; when fine linen is spread out and cloaks are on the ground. The overseer of [. . .] the trees, the poor [.] in their midst like Asiatics [. . .]. Men [. . .] the state thereof; they have come to an end of themselves; none can be found to stand up and protect themselves [. . .].

Everyone fights for his sister and saves his own skin. Is it Nubians? Then will we guard ourselves; warriors are made many in order to ward off foreigners. Is it Libyans? Then we will turn away. **The Medjay are pleased with Egypt.**

▶ *well-provided within*: firm-bellied (Wilson)

▶ *The Medjay are pleased with Egypt*: The Madjoi fortunately are with Egypt. (Wilson); The Medjai are content with Egypt." (Lichtheim)

XV

How comes it that every man kills his brother? The troops whom we marshaled for ourselves have turned into **foreigners and have taken to ravaging**. What has come to pass through it is informing the Asiatics of the state of the land; all the desert folk are possessed with the fear of it. **What the plebs have tasted [. . .] without giving Egypt over [to] the sand**. It is strong [. . .] speak about you after years [. . .] devastate itself, it is the threshing floor which nourishes their houses [. . .] to nourish his children [. . .] said by the troops [.] fish [. . .] gum, lotus leaves [. . .]

▶ *foreigners and have taken to ravaging*: Wilson: *barbarians, beginning to destroy that from which they took their being*. [Foreigners](#) were seen as agents of chaos.

▶ *What the plebs have tasted [. . .] without giving Egypt over [to] the sand*: Lichtheim: *The experience of the people is that they say: "Egypt will not be given over <to> sand!"*

excess of food.

XVI

What Ipouwer said when he addressed the Majesty of the Lord of All: [. . .] all herds. It means that ignorance of it is what is pleasing to the heart. You have done what was good in their hearts and you have nourished the people with it. They cover their faces through fear of the morrow.

That is how a man grows old before he dies, while his son is a lad of understanding; he does not open [his] mouth to speak to you, but you seize him in the doom of death [. . .] weep [. . .] go [. . .] after you, that the land may be [. . .] on every side.

XVII

If men call to [. . .] weep [. . .] them, who break into the tombs and burn the statues [. . .] the corpses of the nobles [. . . .] of directing work.

[1] Influenced by the revisionist historians of the second half of the 20th century who could not find any archaeological proofs for the historicity of the earlier Bible stories, their value as historical records came to be doubted. Before that time most Egyptologists, having grown up in the Christian West, accepted these accounts as being, at least in part, historically correct.