

THE GREAT HYMN TO OSIRIS

On the Stela of Amenmose

Louvre C 286

A round-topped limestone stela, 1.03 × 0.62 m, of fine workmanship, dating from the Eighteenth Dynasty. In the lunette there are two offering scenes showing, on the left, the official Amenmose and his wife Nefertari seated before an offering table, and, on the right, a lady named Baket, whose relationship to Amenmose is not stated. Before Amenmose stands a son with his arms raised in the gesture of offering. Another son stands behind the couple, and more sons and daughters are seated below. A priest also performs offering rites before the lady Baket. Below the scenes is the hymn to Osiris in twenty-eight horizontal lines.

This hymn contains the fullest account of the Osiris myth extant in Egyptian, as distinct from Greek, sources. Allusions to the Osiris myth are very frequent in Egyptian texts, but they are very brief. It seems that the slaying of Osiris at the hands of Seth was too awesome an event to be committed to writing. Other parts of the story could be told more fully, especially the vindication of Osiris and of his son Horus, to whom the gods awarded the kingship of Egypt that had belonged to Osiris. The latter, though resurrected, no longer ruled the living but was king of the dead in the netherworld. The final part of the hymn praises the beneficent rule of Horus, and, since each living Pharaoh represented Horus, the praise is directed to the reigning king as well.

Publication: A. Moret, *BIFAO*, 30 (1931), 725-750 and 3 plates.

Translation: Erman, *Literature*, pp. 140-145.

(1) Adoration of Osiris by the overseer of the cattle of [Amun], [Amen]mose, and the lady Nefertari. He says:

Hail to you, Osiris,
Lord of eternity, king of gods,
Of many names, of holy forms,
Of secret rites in temples!
Noble of *ka* he presides in Djedu,¹
He is rich in sustenance in Sekhem,²
Lord of acclaim in Andjty,³
Foremost in offerings in On.⁴
Lord of remembrance in the Hall of Justice,⁵
Secret *ba* of the lord of the cavern,
Holy in White-Wall,⁶
Ba of Re, his very body.
Who reposes in Hnes,⁷
Who is worshiped in the *naret*-tree,
That grew up to bear his *ba*.⁸
Lord of the palace in Khmun,⁹
Much revered in Shashotep,¹⁰

Eternal lord who presides in Abydos,¹¹
 Who dwells distant in the graveyard
 Whose name endures in peoples' mouth.

Oldest in the joined Two Lands,
 Nourisher¹² before the Nine Gods,
 Potent spirit among spirits.
 Nun has given him his waters,
 Northwind journeys south to him,
 Sky makes wind before his nose,
 That his heart be satisfied.
 Plants sprout by his wish,
 Earth grows its food for him,
 Sky and its stars obey him,
 The great portals open for him.
 Lord of acclaim in the southern sky,
 Sanctified in the northern sky,
 The imperishable stars are under his rule,
 The unwearying stars are his abode.
 One offers to him by Geb's command,
 The Nine Gods adore him,
 Those in *dat* kiss the ground,
 Those on high¹³ bow down.
 The ancestors rejoice to see him,
 Those yonder are in awe of him.

The joined Two Lands adore him,
 When His Majesty approaches,
 Mightiest noble among nobles,
 Firm of rank, of lasting rule.
 Good leader of the Nine Gods,
 Gracious, lovely to behold,
 Awe inspiring to all lands,
 That his name be foremost.
 All make offering to him,
 The lord of remembrance in heaven and earth,
 Rich in acclaim at the *wag*-feast,
 Hailed in unison by the Two Lands.
 The foremost of his brothers,
 The eldest of the Nine Gods,
 Who set Maat throughout the Two Shores,
 Placed the son on his father's seat.
 Lauded by his father Geb,
 Beloved of his mother Nut,

Mighty when he fells the rebel,
 Strong-armed when he slays (10) his foe.
 Who casts fear of him on his enemy,
 Who vanquishes the evil-plotters,
 Whose heart is firm when he crushes the rebels.

Geb's heir (in) the kingship of the Two Lands,
 Seeing his worth he gave (it) to him,
 To lead the lands to good fortune.
 He placed this land into his hand,
 Its water, its wind,
 Its plants, all its cattle.
 All that flies, all that alights,
 Its reptiles and its desert game,
 Were given to the son of Nut,
 And the Two Lands are content with it.
 Appearing on his father's throne,
 Like Re when he rises in lightland,
 He places light above the darkness,
 He lights the shade with his plumes.¹⁴
 He floods the Two Lands like Aten¹⁵ at dawn,
 His crown pierces the sky, mingles with the stars.
 He is the leader of all the gods,
 Effective in the word of command,
 The great Ennead praises him,
 The small Ennead loves him.

His sister was his guard,
 She who drives off the foes,
 Who stops the deeds of the disturber
 By the power of her utterance.
 The clever-tongued whose speech fails not,
 Effective in the word of command,
 Mighty Isis who protected her brother,
 Who sought him without wearying.
 Who roamed the land lamenting,
 Not resting till she found him,
 Who made a shade with her plumage,
 Created breath with her wings.
 Who jubilated, joined her brother,
 Raised the weary one's inertness,
 Received the seed, bore the heir,
 Raised the child in solitude,
 His abode unknown.

Who brought him when his arm was strong
Into the broad hall of Geb.

The Ennead was jubilant:
"Welcome, Son of Osiris,
Horus, firm-hearted, justified,
Son of Isis, heir of Osiris!"
The Council of Maat assembled for him
The Ennead, the All-Lord himself,
The Lords of Maat, united in her,
Who eschew wrongdoing,
They were seated in the hall of Geb,
To give the office to its lord,
The kingship to its rightful owner.
Horus was found justified,
His father's rank was given him,
He came out crowned by Geb's command,
Received the rule of the two shores.

The crown placed firmly on his head,
He counts the land as his possession,
Sky, earth are under his command,
Mankind is entrusted to him,
Commoners, nobles, sunfolk.¹⁶
Egypt and the far-off lands,
What Aten (20) encircles is under his care,
Northwind, river, flood,
Tree of life, all plants.
Nepri gives all his herbs,
Field's Bounty¹⁷ brings satiety,
And gives it to all lands.
Everybody jubilates,
Hearts are glad, breasts rejoice,
Everyone exults,
All extol his goodness:
How pleasant is his love for us,
His kindness overwhelms the hearts,
Love of him is great in all.

They gave to Isis' son his foe,
His attack collapsed,
The disturber suffered hurt,
His fate overtook the offender.

The son of Isis who championed his father,
Holy and splendid is his name,
Majesty has taken its seat,
Abundance is established by his laws.
Roads are open, ways are free,
How the two shores prosper!
Evil is fled, crime is gone,
The land has peace under its lord.
Maat is established for her lord,
One turns the back on falsehood.
May you be content, Wennofer!¹⁸
Isis' son has received the crown,
His father's rank was assigned him
In the hall of Geb.
Re spoke, Thoth wrote,
The council assented,
Your father Geb decreed for you,
One did according to his word.

An offering which the king gives (to) Osiris Khentamentiu, lord of Abydos, that he may grant an offering of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, ointment and clothing and plants of all kinds, and the making of transformations: to be powerful as Hapy, to come forth as living *ba*, to see Aten at dawn, to come and go in Rostau,¹⁹ without one's *ba* being barred from the necropolis.

May he be supplied among the favored ones before Wennofer, receiving the offerings that go up on the altar of the great god, breathing the sweet northwind, drinking from the river's pools: for the *ka* of the overseer of the cattle of [Amun], [Amen]mose, justified, born of the lady Henut, justified, and of his beloved wife, [the lady Nefertari, justified].

NOTES

1. Busiris.
2. Letopolis.
3. The Ninth Nome of Lower Egypt.
4. Heliopolis.
5. Literally, "the Two Justices" (or, "the Two Truths"), the name of the hall in the netherworld in which the judgment of the dead takes place.
6. Memphis and its nome.
7. Heracleopolis Magna.
8. According to the tradition of Heracleopolis the tomb of Osiris was located in that town, and the sacred *naret*-tree grew over the tomb and sheltered the *ba* of Osiris.
9. Hermopolis.

10. Hypselis.
11. The hymn enumerates the chief cult centers of Osiris from north to south, beginning with Busiris, his foremost northern center of worship, and ending with Abydos, his main cult center in Upper Egypt.
12. *df* here, and again in line 20, is abundance of food personified as a divinity.
13. I.e., those buried in the high ground of the desert tombs.
14. *šw* is written but *šwt* must have been intended. Note the wordplay on *šw(t)*, "shade," and *šwt*, "plumes."
15. Though written without the divine determinative, the word *im* has probably already assumed the connotation of a divinity. The divine determinative is also lacking in the two occurrences of *df*, "Abundance," where the personification is clear.
16. The population of Egypt and mankind as a whole.
17. See note 12.
18. A name of Osiris.
19. A name for the necropolis and specifically that of Giza.

TWO HYMNS TO THE SUN-GOD

From a Stela of the Brothers Suti and Hor

British Museum 826

In the course of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the rise to prominence of Amun of Thebes resulted in his assimilation to the supreme god, the sun-god Re. Furthermore, the conceptual dominance of sun worship had turned the sun-god into the all-embracing creator-god who manifested himself in many forms and under many names. Thus he absorbed Amun and Horus, and he was Atum, Harakhti, and Khepri. And his visible form, the sun-disk (Aten) became yet another manifestation of the god himself. The hymns to the sun-god of the twin brothers Suti and Hor, who lived in the reign of Amenhotep III, address the god in these various forms, and they accord a prominent place to the Aten, the most recently evolved personification of the god. In the first hymn the sun-god is addressed as Amun, Harakhti, Re, and Khepri; in the second hymn he is Aten, Khepri, and Horus.

The hymns are inscribed on a rectangular stela in door form, of granite and measuring 1.44 × 0.88 m. The central portion of the surface is carved to resemble a round-topped stela. In the lunette are the standing figures of Anubis and Osiris who are adored by the brothers Suti and Hor and their wives. The figures of the worshiping couples have been erased. Below the figures are twenty-one horizontal lines of text. The first hymn ends in the middle of line 8. The second runs from the middle of line 8 to near the end of line 14. The remaining lines consist of personal statements and prayers of the two brothers.

Publication: *Hieroglyphic Texts*, Part VIII (1939), pp. 22-25 and plate xxi. A. Varille, *BIFAO*, 41 (1942), 25-30. *Urk. IV*, 1943-1944.

Fragment of a duplicate text: H. M. Stewart, *JEA*, 43 (1957), 3-4.

Translation: J. Sainte Fare Garnot, *CRAIBL* 1948, pp. 543-549, and *JEA*, 35 (1949), 63-68. J. A. Wilson in *ANET*, pp. 367-368. Held.

Übersetzung, pp. 328-331. G. Fecht, *ZÄS*, 94 (1967), 25-50. References to older studies will be found in the literature cited.

First hymn

(1) Adoration of Amun when he rises as Harakhti by the overseer of the works of Amun, Suti, (and) the overseer of the works of Amun, Hor. They say:

Hail to you, Re, perfect each day,
 Who rises at dawn without failing,
 Khepri who wearies himself with toil!
 Your rays are on the face, yet unknown,
 Fine gold does not match your splendor;
 Self-made you fashioned your body,
 Creator uncreated.
 Sole one, unique one, who traverses eternity,
 'Remote one',¹ with millions under his care;
 Your splendor is like heaven's splendor,
 Your color brighter than its hues.
 When you cross the sky all faces see you,
 When you set you are hidden from their (5) sight;
 Daily you give yourself at dawn,
 Safe is your sailing under your majesty.
 In a brief day you race a course,
 Hundred thousands, millions of miles;
 A moment is each day to you,
 It has passed when you go down.
 You also complete the hours of night,
 You order it without pause in your labor.
 Through you do all eyes see,
 They lack aim when your majesty sets.
 When you stir to rise at dawn,
 Your brightness opens the eyes of the herds;
 When you set in the western mountain,
 They sleep as in the state of death.

Second hymn

Hail to you, Aten of daytime,
 Creator of all, who makes them live!
 Great falcon, brightly plumed,
 Beetle who raised himself.
 Self-creator, uncreated,
 Eldest Horus within Nut,
 Acclaimed (10) in his rising and setting.
 Maker of the earth's yield,
 Khnum and Amun of mankind,
 Who seized the Two Lands from great to small.
 Beneficent mother of gods and men,