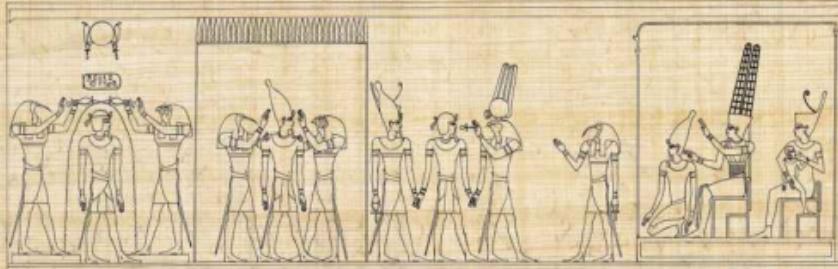


# HUGH NIBLEY

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF HUGH NIBLEY: VOLUME 16



# THE MESSAGE OF THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI AN EGYPTIAN ENDOWMENT

SECOND EDITION





THE COLLECTED WORKS OF HUGH NIBLEY, VOLUME 16

THE MESSAGE OF THE  
JOSEPH SMITH  
PAPYRI  
AN EGYPTIAN ENDOWMENT

HUGH NIBLEY  
SECOND EDITION

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# Key to Abbreviations

1QS	<i>Rule of the Community (Manual of Discipline)</i>
ÄA	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
APOT	Robert H. Charles, ed., <i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i>
ArOr	<i>Archiv Orientální</i>
ASAE	<i>Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
BAOA	Bibliothèque d'archéologie orientale d'Athènes
BD	Book of the Dead
BE	Bibliothèque égyptologique
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français</i>

	<i>d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BiOr</i>	<i>Bibliotheca orientalis</i>
BM	British Museum
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
CT	Coffin Text, as appearing in Adriaan de Buck, <i>The Egyptian Coffin Texts</i>
CWHN	The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley
FERE	Fondation égyptologique reine Élisabeth
<i>IE</i>	<i>Improvement Era</i>
IFAO	Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JEOL</i>	<i>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap (Gezelschap) Ex orientे lux</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>

<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Joseph Smith Papyrus (Papyri)</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts—Abteilung Kairo</i> (also published under variant title <i>Mitteilungen des deutschen Instituts für ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo</i> )
<i>MIFAO</i>	<i>Mémoires publiés par les membres de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire</i>
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>OMRO</i>	<i>Oudheidkundige mededeelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden</i>
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i>
<i>OTP</i>	James H. Charlesworth, ed., <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
P.	<i>Papyrus</i>
PG	J.-P. Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae</i>

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162 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1857–  
86)
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cursus completus: Series latina,  
221 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1844–  
64)
- PO René Graffin and François Nau, eds.,  
Patrologia orientalis, 48 vols.  
(Paris: Librairie de Paris, Firmin-  
Didot, 1903–).
- PSBA *Proceedings of the Society of  
Biblical Archaeology*
- PT Pyramid Texts
- RdE *Revue d'égyptologie*
- REHR *Religions en Égypte hellénistique  
et romaine: Colloque de  
Strasbourg, 16–18 mai 1967*  
(Paris: Presses Universitaires de  
France, 1969)
- RHR *Revue de l'histoire des religions*

- RT *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes*
- TB Babylonian Talmud
- UGAÄ Kurt Sethe and Hermann Kees, eds.,  
Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und  
Altertumskunde Ägyptens, 15 vols.  
(Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896–1939)
- Wb Adolf Erman and Hermann  
Grapow, *Wörterbuch der  
ägyptischen Sprache*
- ZÄS *Zeitschrift für ägyptische  
Sprache und Altertumskunde*
- ZDMG *Zeitschrift der deutschen  
morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

# **Introduction to the Second Edition**

## **The Nature and Purpose of This Book**

When Hugh Nibley first wrote *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, he wrote it for an audience that understood things both Egyptian and Latter-day Saint. It was an audience that at the time did not exist. For the bemused audience that did find the book, many failed to comprehend it. Many of Nibley's readers have supposed that, like Nibley's other works, it was designed to be read straight through and have expressed frustration at the difficulty of doing so. Only the first few chapters are designed to be read

in this manner. The rest of the book is a commentary on a particular text, Papyrus Louvre N. 3284, which Nibley introduced in his early chapters. If the reader desires to know a bit more about a particular passage in the text, he or she should go to the appropriate place in the commentary.

Other readers have supposed that the book must be primarily apologetic in nature. If some sections are apologetic, it is to clear away some common misconceptions. The book is mainly an attempt to understand a specific text: The Book of Breathings Made by Isis. That text is neither the Book of Abraham nor the source of the Book of Abraham, as Nibley himself clearly demonstrated. Some individuals were under the delusion that it was, and so Nibley had to show that it is not. Nibley points out that others spend time arguing that the Book of Breathings is not the Book of Abraham but

then spend no time investigating what the document actually is. For Nibley, the Book of Breathings itself is interesting and deserves to be investigated for what it is rather than what it is not, a trap that some Egyptologists still fall into.

Although the book is a commentary, Nibley's treatment is slightly different from most Egyptological commentaries. The typical Egyptological commentary focuses on issues of paleography, grammar, and vocabulary. Nibley deals with some of those issues but focuses mainly on what the text means, for, as he argues in his third chapter, only when we understand what a text means can we say that we have actually translated it.

## **What We Have Changed**

The job of an editor is to make bad authors look good and to get out of the way of good

authors. Since Hugh Nibley was a very good author and had a great command of the English language, we need to explain the numerous changes we have made in this new edition of Nibley's 1975 *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*.

First, we have returned the Egyptian transliterations to the standard transliteration system, which Nibley himself normally used. When Nibley quoted from older writers who lived before the standard transliteration came into being (e.g., Brugsch, Chabas, or de Horrack) or who simply refused to follow the standard (e.g., Budge), we have inserted, where necessary, the correct transliteration in brackets.

Second, we have checked all the citations in the more than four thousand footnotes. I myself have checked over half of them. Since Nibley made his own translations from all foreign languages except where noted, we

have given him wide latitude in rendering his translations, although we have standardized spellings and capitalization to accord with our own style (with the exception of those quotations originally in English—thus some inconsistencies in spelling remain). Many of the citations in the first edition had been checked in 1972 by Stephen E. Robinson, then Nibley's student assistant. The source-checking process for this edition began in 1988 and went through 1992 and then began again in 2001. Except for the education it has given the source checkers, the process of checking the footnotes has been, for the most part, unnecessary. Analysis of a random chapter showed that of its almost seven hundred citations, Nibley was completely accurate 94 percent of the time, and in more than half of these remaining forty cases, one could explain the problem as a typographical error. Nibley is more accurate than most

Egyptologists whose footnotes I have checked, and several times I have been amazed at how his translations of passages have correctly interpreted the grammar of Egyptian while the standard Egyptological translations have not. In this edition, as in other editions of the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, notes have been expanded to include full bibliographic information, and abbreviations have been either expanded or standardized and are given in the list of abbreviations. The content has also been checked and adjusted if necessary. Despite our best efforts, there may still be mistakes, and in the end Nibley is responsible for his own footnotes, but readers should expect to find that the source is where Nibley says it is and that it says what he said it said.

Third, nearly all the illustrations have been either redrawn or new photographs provided. In the original edition, the artwork

was done by Hugh Nibley, his young daughter Martha, and another illustrator, whose name we have been unable to discover. While checking the sources of the artwork has caused some of us to marvel at Nibley's artistic ability to stitch together accurately freehand illustrations of scenes split between separate photographic plates in disparate locations of a printed volume, we have decided to replace the illustrations in the interests of consistency, clarity, and accuracy. The illustrations have been supervised by Michael P. Lyon, who has spared no effort in their preparation.

Fourth, early in the editing process, we discovered many pages of Nibley's draft manuscript containing significant portions of text or notes that Nibley had deleted. These deletions have been restored to their proper place except where the editors agreed that Nibley had good reason for dropping the text

(in most cases because the passage had been moved elsewhere). The new material has received the same level of source checking and editing as the rest of the work.

Fifth, the greatest changes occur in the second chapter, where typesetting considerations have led us to abandon Nibley's original interlinear presentation. Originally, Nibley presented the papyrus in interlinear translation in part because of accusations that he could not read Egyptian. Nibley wanted to allow the reader to look over his shoulder and follow the entire process. Since there is no longer any question that Nibley could read Egyptian (I visited him shortly before his death and watched him read Egyptian and half a dozen other languages, at sight), there seemed to be little reason to use the interlinear approach. The new presentation should be both easier to follow and clearer than the old.

Throughout the changes, we have tried to remain true to Nibley's intent, sometimes preserving Nibley's readings of the ambiguous hieratic even though we might have preferred to resolve the ambiguity differently.<sup>1</sup>

Sixth, Nibley's descriptive entries in the table of contents were incorporated as headings into the text to allow the reader to follow his thematic organization.

What we as editors have not done, except in rare cases in footnotes, is to update Nibley. To do so would have been to make the work the editors' rather than Nibley's.

## **What Has Changed in the Field**

It is fair, however, to alert the reader to the major changes in the field since the first edition appeared in 1975. When Nibley published his work on the Joseph Smith Papyri, comparatively few contemporary

Egyptian religious texts had been published. Since that time, more than a thousand Greco-Roman period Egyptian religious texts have been published, and hundreds of Greco-Roman period Egyptian religious texts have been reinterpreted. A true second edition would take this material into account, but it would be an almost unrecognizably different book, and it would not be Nibley's. Nibley used most of the contemporary Egyptian religious texts available to him, but he relied heavily on an approach to Egyptian religion that flattens the subject chronologically and geographically. Thus the Pyramid Texts are used to elucidate texts from two and a half millennia later. Nibley's approach to the subject was and is common among most Egyptologists, even though a more chronologically and geographically refined approach might have some advantages.

Four major developments in the study of

the Joseph Smith Papyri have occurred since Nibley published the first edition: (1) It is now known that the person who identified the papyri as having red ink was Oliver Cowdery rather than Joseph Smith, and he may have been referring to a different papyrus than the one Nibley thought he was. Still, there is no reason to assume that Papyrus Joseph Smith I + XI + X is the source of the Book of Abraham. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has had no official position on the issue, and most members of the church do not believe that it is. The Egyptologists are adamant that it is not, and so everyone seems to be in agreement on that issue. (2) Important studies of the various types of Books of Breathings indicate that the version in the Joseph Smith Papyri is a copy of the Book of Breathings Made by Isis, which is only one of several different types of Books of Breathings.<sup>2</sup>

Nibley used the older terminology for the various Books of Breathings, which we have not updated. (3) Further research into the family of the owners of the Joseph Smith Papyri seems to indicate no connection with the Soter family and a different relationship to other owners of the Book of Breathings Made by Isis than the vague ones posited by Nibley.<sup>3</sup> (4) In connection with the work on the family of the owners of the papyri, the Joseph Smith Papyri are now dated about three hundred years earlier than supposed by Nibley.<sup>4</sup> In some cases we have altered Nibley's text slightly to allow for the earlier possibility, although we have kept his dating arguments as they were.

In all of this, Nibley was asking the right questions and answering both to the best of his ability and to the best of anyone's ability at that time. Although we can provide better answers now, Nibley did a respectable job

at the time. Nibley's period piece remains a treasure trove of useful information and insights.

## What Nibley Got Right

It is also useful to know that Nibley was ahead of his time on some Egyptological subjects. Nibley's long work with comparative religion sensitized him to recognize certain ritual patterns, and thus he saw in the Book of Breathings an initiation text at a time when the only Egyptologists who thought that initiation existed in ancient Egypt were Walter Federn, Claas Bleeker, and Gertrud Thausing,<sup>5</sup> who were definitely on the margins of the discipline. Since that time, the topic of initiation has become mainstream in the discipline,<sup>6</sup> although some Egyptologists still dislike the term and the subject.

Another subject on which Nibley stood at

the forefront was his realization that the so-called funerary texts were not necessarily funerary but were used by the living. This point has also become mainstream.<sup>7</sup> Not only have the so-called funerary texts been found in nonfunerary contexts, but almost all of the so-called funerary equipment has been found in context of use by the living.<sup>8</sup> It is increasingly clear to a number of Egyptologists that there is no separate Egyptian funerary religion and that little if anything is gained by attaching the label “funerary” to a text, object, or practice. Nibley’s work presupposes such a stance.

## Acknowledgments

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manner of small details, most especially the indexes. Finally, I would like to thank Hugh Nibley for writing this book, which launched me into my own study of ancient Egypt in the first place. I hope my editorial work on this volume can partially repay the debt.

John Gee  
22 August 2005  
Provo, Utah

## Notes

1. Since one of the editors has published his own version, the interested reader can compare the readings in Michael Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*, Studies in the Book of Abraham 2 (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002).
2. Marc Coenen, “Books of Breathings: More Than a Terminological Question,” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 26 (1995): 29–38; and Marc Coenen, “An Introduction to the *Document of Breathing Made by Isis*,” *RdE* 1/9 (1998): 37–45.
3. L. Kákosy, “The Soter Tomb in Thebes,” in *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, ed. S. P. Vleeming (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 61–67; K. Van Landuyt, “The Soter Family: Genealogy

and Onomastics,” in *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, 69–82; François R. Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2002).

4. Marc Coenen, “The Dating of the Papyri Joseph Smith I, X and XI and Min Who Massacres His Enemies,” in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 2:1103–15.
5. Walter Federn, “The ‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts: A New Approach,” *JNES* 19/4 (1960): 241–57; Claas J. Bleeker, “Initiation in Ancient Egypt,” in *Initiation*, ed. C. J. Bleeker (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 49–58; Gertrud Thausing and Traudl Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch* (Kairo: Österreichisches Kulturinstitut Cairo, 1969); Gerturd Thausing, *Sein und Werden: Versuch einer Ganzheitsschau der Religion des Pharaonenreiches* (Vienna: Institut für Völkerkunde der Universität Wien, 1971).
6. Reinhard Grieshammer, “Zum ‘Sitz im Leben’ des negativen Sündenbekenntnisses,” in *XVIII. Deutscher Orientalistentag* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1974), 19–25; Reinhold Merkelbach, “Ein ägyptischer Priestereid,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 2 (1968): 7–30; Ludwig Koenen, “Die Unschuldsbeteuerungen des Priestereides und die römische Elegie,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 2 (1968): 31–38; Edward F. Wente, “Mysticism in Pharaonic Egypt?” *JNES* 41/3 (1982): 161–79; Jan Assmann, “Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt,” in *Religion*

*and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt* (New Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar, 1989), 135–59; Jean-Marie Kruchten, *Les annales des prêtres de Karnak (XXI–XXIII<sup>e</sup> dynasties) et autres textes contemporains relatifs à l'initiation des prêtres d'Amon* (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1989); Robert K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1993), 150 n. 678; John Gee, “The Requirements of Ritual Purity” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1998), 51–311; Jan Assmann, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien. Band 1: Totenliturgien in den Sargtexten des Mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2002), 322–24; John Gee, “Prophets, Initiation and the Egyptian Temple,” *Journal for the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 31 (2004): 97–107.

7. Grieshammer, “Zum ‘Sitz im Leben’ des negativen Sündenbekentnisses,” 19–25; Mordechai Gilula, “Hirtengeschichte 17–22 = CT VII 36m-r,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 29 (1978): 21–22; Wente, “Mysticism in Pharaonic Egypt?” 161–79; Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 62–64; Stephen Quirke, *The Cult of Ra: Sun Worship in Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 54–58.
8. Geraldine Pinch, “Redefining Funerary Objects,” in *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century*, 3 vols. (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2003), 2:443–47.

# Explanation

This book had to be written because a great fuss was being made about a scrap of papyrus (fig. 1). Some people were endlessly dinning into the ears of the public that what was written on that small and battered strip proved beyond a doubt that Joseph Smith was a fraud because he thought that it contained the Book of Abraham, whereas it contains nothing of the sort. But who said he thought so? They did. Though they were unable to furnish any statement from the Prophet to that effect, they assumed it must be so because somebody in Kirtland tried to connect the two documents. (But if the overzealous brethren who made this

attempt thought they could show that they were smarter than Joseph—and that was their idea—they were quickly disabused, and the project was dropped before it got beyond the second line of hieratic characters.) The doughty crusaders against the authenticity of the Book of Abraham, who wanted to pin the whole thing on Joseph Smith without making any serious attempt to look into the matter, often protested that they were animated by one motive only: an unqualified and overmastering love of truth. Yet, strangely, their impassioned project never got beyond the purely negative point of proclaiming the fraudulence of the Book of Abraham and its author. None of them could care less about what the papyrus in question had to offer in its own right—and it is, in fact, a most singular document. It was the Latter-day Saints who kept asking, day after day: What does the thing actually say?



Figure 1. Hugh Nibley examines a photograph of Joseph Smith Papyrus I, surrounded by his note cards and manual typewriter, December 1969.

They have a right to know, but who can tell them? The student of Greek begins his career firm in the knowledge that *en archē ēn ho logos* means, “In the beginning was the word” (John 1:1); so much for the translation, but where has it gotten us? Dr. Faustus wore himself out trying to explain that verse and finally gave up.<sup>1</sup> And the Book of Breathings is quite as enigmatic as the Gospels. The reader perusing the translation of it in chapter 2 below may well wonder if

someone isn't pulling his leg. But if he broods over the text he may soon begin to sense that something strange is going on and seem to hear the ringing of familiar bells. This suggests that he look a little farther and expand the field of his reading. First of all, he will find that our little Book of Breathings does not stand alone; there are three classes of Breathings books, all of which cast light on the Joseph Smith version—which happens to belong to class 2, by far the most important of the lot. But the Books of Breathings of that class are extremely limited in the time and place of their production (making it relatively easy to place any one of them); if the items in them that pique Mormon curiosity are not mere coincidences, we must look farther. So we go back in time and are soon simply swamped by Egyptian writings containing the now familiar motifs. From these we have

included, in chapter 4 of this book, a text four hundred years older than the Joseph Smith Papyrus, and another a good thousand years older than that one, as examples in which the same rites and ordinances are both unusually well preserved and presented in the same order as in the Book of Breathings.

The exercise can be carried back to the Pyramid Texts, the oldest large body of religious writings to survive. This large and disorganized collection does not allow for a neat overall comparison, but all the main themes are there—and no others—indicating that the story begins as it ends, with the same plot and characters. If we take all the topic headings assigned to the various Pyramid Texts by Raymond Faulkner in 1969, we find that they fall readily and completely into six main categories: namely, (1) the importance of a primordial written document on which the rites are based; (2) purification

(including anointing, lustration, and clothing texts); (3) creation (the common resurrection and awakening texts); (4) garden (including tree and ritual-meal motifs); (5) travel (protection, “ferryman,” combat, and Osirian texts); and (6) what Faulkner calls “ascension” texts (including victory, coronation, admission to the heavenly company, and Horus texts).<sup>2</sup> These six themes are basic to the mysteries everywhere.

But the system which begins with the Pyramid Texts or earlier does not culminate in the Book of Breathings; we must look forward as well as backward in time and, in so doing, discover that our Book of Breathings stands squarely on the dividing line between the old Egyptian religion and the early Judeo-Christian teachings and practices which retain so much of the Egyptian tradition. In the appendixes of this

handbook, the reader will find half a dozen such writings, selected from hundreds, which demonstrate how consistently the scenario of the Book of Breathings was carried forward in time, clear traces of it surviving in the rites and customs of many religious groups to this day.

Latter-day Saints believe that their temple ordinances are as old as the human race and represent a primordial revealed religion that has passed through alternate phases of apostasy and restoration which have left the world littered with the scattered fragments of the original structure, some more and some less recognizable, but all badly damaged and out of proper context. The early fathers of the church gave such an explanation for the disturbingly close resemblances between Christianity and other, notably Egyptian, beliefs and practices—all are the remnants of another age. Beginning in the twentieth

century, an army of scholars, following the lead of Sir James Frazer, has been diligently at work, first collecting thousands of scattered pieces of earlier customs and folktales and then trying to put them together, like the pieces of jigsaw puzzles, to see whether they all come from a few basic systems or even go back to a single, all-embracing “pattern.” Whatever the end result may be, it is perfectly clear by now that the same *sort* of thing has been going on for a very long time and in virtually all parts of the world.



Figure 2. Tom Kuyayashva, 93 years old, and J. Virgil Bushman, 21 April 1957, Hotevilla, Arizona.

Offhand, one may say that Joseph Smith could have gotten his ideas from any or many of a great number of sources, ancient and modern. Here is an illustration. On Easter Day in 1954 at about noon, I was standing with Brother J. Virgil Bushman (1889–1969, fig. 2), that doughty missionary to the Hopis, before the house of the celebrated Tewaqueptewa in Old Oraibi, when a small delegation of leading men from the village came up and informed us that they had just learned from the local Protestant missionaries how the Mormons got a lot of their stuff. It seems that when the famous chief Tuba (1810–87) became a Mormon, Jacob Hamblin took him to Salt Lake City to marry his wives in the temple there.<sup>3</sup> While the chief was in town, Joseph Smith (1805–44)—none other—took him aside and

interrogated him very closely, prying the tribal secrets out of him; from what Chief Tuba told Smith, he proceeded to write the Book of Mormon, establish the temple ordinances, and found the church. And that, sir, is why the Hopi traditions are so much like those of the Mormons.<sup>4</sup>

The point is, that would be quite a plausible explanation had the two men been contemporaries or had either ever been in Salt Lake; Joseph Smith just *might* have gotten his knowledge that way. There are, in fact, countless tribes, sects, societies, and orders from which he *might* have picked up this and that, had he known of their existence. The Near East in particular is littered with the archaeological and living survivals of practices and teachings which an observant Mormon may find suggestively familiar. The Druzes would have been a gold mine for Smith. He has actually been charged

with plundering some of the baggage brought to the West by certain fraternal orders during the Middle Ages—as if the Prophet must rummage in a magpie's nest to stock a king's treasury! Among the customs and religions of mankind there are countless parallels, many of them very instructive, to what the Mormons do. But there is a world of difference between Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* and the book of Isaiah, or between the Infancy Gospels and the real Gospels, no matter how many points of contact one may detect between them. The Latter-day Saint endowment was not built up of elements brought together by chance, custom, or long research; it is a single, perfectly consistent, organic whole, conveying its message without the aid of rationalizing, spiritualizing, allegorizing, or moralizing interpretations.

But what about the Egyptian rites? What

are they to us? They are a parody, an imitation, but, as such, not to be despised. For all the great age and consistency of their rites and teachings, which certainly command respect, the Egyptians did not have the real thing, and they knew it. They were, as I. E. S. Edwards puts it, like “a people searching in the dark for a key to truth and, having found not one but many keys... retaining all lest perchance the appropriate one should be discarded.”<sup>5</sup> Or, in the words of Abraham, “Pharaoh, being a righteous man,” was ever “seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign” (Abraham 1:26), for he “would fain claim [the priesthood]” (Abraham 1:27). If the Egyptian endowment was but an imitation, it was still a good one, and we may be able to learn much from it, just as we may learn much about the early

church from the vagaries of the gnostics. But it is not for a moment to be equated with the true and celestial order of things.

Thinkers calling themselves modern affect to see in rites and ordinances purportedly going back to the days of Adam a horrid antithesis to all that dynamic, progressive thinking which is the hallmark of the modern emancipated intellect. Yet the ancient picture is anything but static. In the Egyptian rites everything is in motion; the Egyptians respect the Heisenberg principle, for they never try to make any two temples, tombs, texts, vignettes, or reliefs exactly alike. It is the modern world that mass-produces on fixed and static patterns. Every system, no matter how dynamic, must have certain unchanging constants to give it structure: with Einstein, it was the speed of light; with the Egyptians, it was the unchanging identity of the individual. Life was an endless series

of exciting episodes through which the individual passes, undergoing many changes to match every changing environment; but he never loses his identity. It is our modern, dynamic faith that binds the individual to a single stereotype and gives him only one life, chopped off at both ends as neatly as a piece of dough in an ITT bakery.<sup>6</sup> In the more exalted realms of higher thought, however, modern thinking moves steadily closer to the Egyptians. For, just as it is not possible for us to visualize the incredible forces and particles of a universe describable only in terms of mathematics, so the Egyptians wisely did not attempt to visualize the ultimate but stuck to models to explain themselves. The whole Egyptian ritual cycle is figurative: “Behold, all things have their likeness” was their motto, “both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens

above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me” (Moses 6:63). Everything can be described, when necessary, in terms of something else—but never in the absolute, for “all truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence” (D&C 93:30).

The Mormon endowment, like the Egyptian, is frankly a model, a presentation in figurative terms. As such, it is flexible and adjustable; for example, it may be presented in more languages than one and in more than one medium of communication. But since it does not attempt to be a picture of reality, but only a model or analogue to show how things work, setting forth the pattern of man’s life on earth with its fundamental whys and

wherefores, it does not need to be changed or adapted greatly through the years; it is a remarkably stable model, which makes its comparison with other forms and traditions, including the more ancient ones, quite valid and instructive. It is not the purpose of this book to make the Latter-day Saint temple endowment more “meaningful” to the reader —nothing could do that. Those who have been to the temple hundreds of times know that “age cannot wither . . . nor custom stale [its] infinite variety.”<sup>7</sup> What these few bits of added information do is to supply a new dimension to the experience, along with the assurance that a wealth of newly found records confirms the fundamental thesis of its antiquity and genuineness.

At present, a large and steadily growing number of Egyptologists are laying increasing emphasis on the importance of the initiation motif in the ritual texts of the

Egyptians, hitherto held to be exclusively funerary in nature. Many Egyptologists may protest that the compiler of this book has been partial to that school, and he pleads guilty; the idea that the Book of Breathings is a temple text is borrowed from scholars whose authority is at least equal to that of the opposing faction and whose position becomes stronger every day. But here we run into a strange impasse indeed. For it turns out by the nature of things that the most eminent Egyptologists cannot qualify either to question or to test our thesis. The whole purpose of this book is to compare two scenarios, the Egyptian and the Mormon; but the writer has been careful throughout to describe and discuss only *one* of them, preserving complete silence on the other. Though often sorely tempted to point out some really stunning parallels between the two disciplines, he has been restrained both

by the admonition of the prophets and the consideration that what is glaringly obvious to him hardly needs to be called to the attention of any adult practicing Latter-day Saint, while to take up and discuss such matters with outsiders would only perplex and confuse them. Thus, our learned critic finds himself in the position of a one-armed violinist, while the writer claims impudent immunity from attack.

But in spite of the latter's shortcomings, there is really nothing much to argue about, since his opinions are quite worthless. The purpose of a commentary is not to gratify the reader with the opinions of someone with a degree (running to the concordances for a "doctrinal" type of commentary), but to provide him with information to help make up his own mind and to remind him that all has not yet been said on a particular subject. Of course, the maker of a commentary is

bound to supply some evidence that the information he imparts is not of his own invention—hence the perpetual appeal to the opinions and observations of others and the bothersome business of bibliography.

Actually, the documentation of the book is minimal, our purpose being not to prove a case but to state one, confining comments to well-known themes and confirming plausibility from the most readily available sources and studies.

## Notes

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* 1210–37.
2. Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).
3. [The Salt Lake Temple was completed in 1893—eds.]
4. [For more information on Nibley's dealings with the Hopis, see "The Home Dance: Hugh Nibley among the Hopis," in Boyd J. Petersen, *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life* (Salt Lake City: Kofford Books, 2002), 276–87—eds.]
5. I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 15.

6. [ITT stands for International Telephone and Telegraph.  
The bakery still exists in Provo, Utah, under the name of  
IBC Baking Company—eds.]
7. William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* 2.2.

## Chapter 1

# What Manner of Document?

## What the Book of Breathings Is *Not*

### Not the Source of the Book of Abraham

Under a reproduction of the first column of the Joseph Smith manuscript of the Book of Breathings (usually designated as JSP XI) appearing in the journal *Dialogue*, two eager investigators published the simple and damning statement: “Joseph Smith used this as the basis for the Book of Abraham.”<sup>1</sup> This is impressively direct and uncompromising but also stimulating to the critical mind: Joseph Smith used it? *How* did he use it? That is, or should be, the first question

occurring to anyone whose wondering eye compares two damaged lines of hieratic writing (only eighteen characters in all) with the five teeming chapters of the Book of Abraham. How would anyone go about employing those eighteen characters as the “basis” for that remarkable book? What does “basis” mean anyhow? The authors have insisted loud and long that they know *exactly* how Joseph Smith did the trick,<sup>2</sup> and yet they have never had the good grace to tell the public how he did it—it remains a secret locked in their own bosoms.

How easily the best of scholars may fall into such a trap appears from the title of Professor Klaus Baer’s indispensable study subtitled “A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham.”<sup>3</sup> There would be nothing wrong with Baer’s subtitle if he had been good enough to explain to his readers why it is apparent to him that this

text is the source of the Book of Abraham. Yet aside from the heavily loaded title itself, he never mentions the issue that he has raised and that, indeed, was bound to become the main interest of his article. Neither he nor his fellow polemicists have bothered to ask the most obvious and unavoidable questions their accusation raises: How on earth could Joseph Smith or anybody else have derived a condensed and detailed account of fifty pages from fewer than twenty hieratic signs? How could such signs have suggested a history, let alone contain it? Why must a hard-working author derive his whole book from fewer than two dozen signs when thousands were at his disposal?

The usual questions about the papyri may be easily gotten out of the way:

Is the Book of Abraham a correct translation of Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X? No, *the Book of Breathings is not the Book*

## *of Abraham!*

Does it pretend to be? No, it was never put forward as such. The facsimiles were published, along with explanations of what they depicted, but at no time was any Egyptian text put forward as the original of the Book of Abraham.

But didn't Joseph Smith *think* he was translating the Book of Abraham from those papyri? I am not a mind reader, but it is hard to see how Joseph Smith could have thought he was deriving the book from such an impossible source; after all, *he knew* where it came from, because he produced it. He might have wanted to fool people into thinking that he had translated it from these particular papyri, but if so, why did he never put forth such a proposition?

Doesn't the text of the Book of Abraham appear in a number of manuscripts in columns running parallel with characters

from the Book of Breathings? Yes, the texts were paired when the brethren at Kirtland were invited to try their skill at translation. In 1835 the Prophet's associates, miffed by his superior knowledge and determined to show him up, made determined efforts to match up the finished text of the Book of Abraham with characters from Joseph Smith Papyrus XI. But they never got beyond the second line of characters—*if* they were really trying to translate, they soon demonstrated that it simply didn't work. When at that very time they turned savagely against Joseph Smith and told every scandalous thing they could invent about him, none of them ever made mention of his involvement in any of these frustrated exercises.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever exercises, discreet or indiscreet, the brethren in Kirtland may have engaged in, the Prophet Joseph himself has supplied

us with the most conclusive evidence that the manuscript today identified as the Book of Breathings, Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X, was *not*, in his opinion, the source of the Book of Abraham. For he has furnished a clear and specific description of the latter: “The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies, is [1] beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and [2] a small part red, ink or paint, [3] in perfect preservation.”<sup>5</sup> Consider the three points in order.

First, the Abraham document was beautifully written, and some of the surviving Joseph Smith Papyri are indeed nicely and clearly written and accompanied by well-drawn vignettes (see color plates 1–7). Such are fragments II through VIII as classified in the *Improvement Era* reproductions.<sup>6</sup> If the Book of Breathings text was the only manuscript Joseph possessed, it

is just possible that the thrill of having such a treasure could have carried him away to the extent of regarding it as a thing of beauty. But he had a sizable collection of handsome Egyptian documents, compared with which the hastily written and clumsily retouched characters of the *Breathings* text, in their crowded and uneven lines, can by no stretch of the imagination be called beautifully written. Even the reserved Professor John Wilson, while noting that some of the Joseph Smith Papyri were rather prettily written, comments on the coarse appearance of XI and X, the Book of *Breathings*.<sup>7</sup>

In the second place, the text which Joseph Smith relates, directly or indirectly, to Abraham contained the rubrics, or brief notations in red ink, common to Egyptian manuscripts. He is plainly describing a real manuscript and a rather typical one; and since no one could read it, there is no reason

why he should not have described it correctly. Hence the fact that there is not the slightest indication of rubrics in Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X—not so much as a speck of red ink, though such rubrics are common in the other Joseph Smith manuscripts—is alone enough to disqualify it as a candidate for the Abraham source. This is no mistake of preservation, moreover, for the longest of all Books of Breathings (one closely associated, as we shall see, with this one) is also free of rubrics—apparently an intentional omission.<sup>8</sup>

Third, “the record of Abraham and Joseph” was in a state of “perfect preservation,” while the Book of Breathings is the most badly damaged of all the Joseph Smith Papyri. That it was already damaged in Joseph Smith’s day is indicated by a number of things. For example, four large pieces are missing; they are not parts

destroyed by the process of minute and gradual flaking, which is still going on and which leaves marks on the glue of the mounting paper, but chunks containing sizable portions of several lines each, such as could have broken off only before the document was mounted. If they had broken off after the mounting, why were not the precious pieces returned to their proper place? Instead of that, they were used to fill in gaps in another damaged document, Joseph Smith Papyrus IV, three of them being glued in upside down! Obviously, they were not recognized as parts of our Breathings text. Yet the paper on which the latter was mounted bears the handwriting of Joseph Smith, and the drawings, maps, and texts on the backs of the mounting papers of all the surviving papyri clearly indicate that the work was done in Kirtland, where Wilford Woodruff reports in 1836 that the papyri

were on display in the temple as its greatest treasure.<sup>9</sup> How could anyone fail to identify the four broken-off pieces unless they were already broken off and jumbled up at the time the document was found? The damage could have been done during Michael Chandler's frantic search for "diamonds or valuable metal" in the New York customs house.<sup>10</sup> A study of the mounted manuscripts shows that there are places where bits of papyrus fibers have flaked off, leaving either filaments of fiber or the imprint of such in the glue, while there are other gaps in the manuscript where the backing paper has always been blank, with no papyrus glued to it, showing that these parts of the text were missing at the time of mounting.

When in 1835 the brethren made attempts to "translate" the first two lines in terms of the Book of Abraham (if that is what they were doing, though it is exceedingly

doubtful), they had the characters copied out for them by a single scribe in a bold and rather skillful hand, thus sparing wear and tear on the original; it is significant that when this scribe comes to those places in the manuscript which are today a blank, he also leaves a blank in his copy, which has been filled in by another hand with thin and awkward characters which are far too many for the spaces indicated and definitely the wrong characters. This is another indication that the text was damaged from the first.

Indeed, unlike the other Joseph Smith Papyri, this one contains clumsy ancient retouching over places where the papyrus fiber flaked off centuries ago. In short, if any of the papyri is *not* in a state of "perfect preservation," the Book of Breathings is it.

Then too, it is significant that in his description of the Abraham text, Joseph Smith fails to mention what would have been

the most striking thing about it had it been the same as the Book of Breathings—namely, the full-page drawing immediately adjoining the text. Since this is an illustration to the Book of Abraham, it has naturally been assumed that the text that follows the drawing could only be that of the Book of Abraham—even the brethren at Kirtland assumed that. But that fails to take into account the common Egyptian practice of matching vignettes with texts in general and with Book of Breathings texts in particular. In his edition of the Book of Breathings based on Papyrus Louvre N. 3279, Jean-Claude Goyon warns the student that the vignettes that accompany the text “have often only a very remote connection with the substance (*le développement*) of the writing” (cf. p. 77, fig. 16).<sup>11</sup> For example, illustration 2 of this Breathings text actually belongs “to the illustrations of the *Chapters of the Gates of Hades*, in the *Book of the*

*Dead,*" and it is only "as an exception" that "the title of the text [under illustration 4] corresponds to the drawing that adorns" it.<sup>12</sup>

Following a well-known Egyptian practice (most conspicuous in the Amduat), the Book of Abraham twice refers its reader back to an illustration of some ritual object it is talking about. When we read, "And that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record" (Abraham 1:12), or "That you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures at the beginning" (Abraham 1:14), the language clearly implies that the reader does not have the picture before him, but must be referred back to "the commencement of this record," to "the figures at the beginning." Abraham's text may have belonged on the same roll as the Book of Breathings and Facsimile 1, or it

may have been placed differently in the original document composed by Abraham, but if so, it must in either case be sought in the section that has obviously been cut off from the Book of Breathings.

For a demonstration of the strange practice of putting the illustrations to one story with the text of another, we need look no further than the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings itself, where the scene depicted so vividly in the facsimile is nowhere mentioned in the text that immediately follows. Only by matching up the fibers of the writing and the drawing is it possible to show that the two presentations, which at first glance have nothing to do with each other, were actually side by side on the same strip of papyrus.<sup>13</sup>

Since Joseph Smith actually possessed quite a number of perfectly preserved, beautifully written Egyptian manuscripts adorned with rubrics, there is no reason to

doubt that he was describing such a document as the source of “the record of Abraham and Joseph.” And there can be no doubt whatever that the manuscript he was describing was and is an entirely different one from that badly written, poorly preserved little text, entirely devoid of rubrics, which is today identified as the Book of Breathings. One cannot insist too strongly on this point since it is precisely the endlessly repeated claim that the Book of Breathings has been identified as the very source of the Book of Abraham on which the critics of Joseph Smith have rested their whole case,<sup>14</sup> oblivious to the howling absurdity of insisting that the book was produced in a manner in which, as they tirelessly demonstrate, no book could possibly be produced, ever!

## **Not an Ordinary Funeral Text**

From the first, experts explaining to the world the facsimiles in the Book of Abraham have gone all out to emphasize above all else the perfectly commonplace nature of those documents, which can be found, in Professor James Henry Breasted's ringing words, in "unnumbered thousands" in the tombs of Egypt and the museums of the world.<sup>15</sup> Aside from the irrelevance of such a proposition (for, as Egyptologists are confessing in increasing numbers today, familiarity with a phenomenon does not guarantee that it is understood), it has now become apparent, thanks to the diligent researches of the Dutch scholar Bruno Stricker, that our Joseph Smith Book of Breathings is one of a very special and limiteds and uniquely valuable class of documents clustering around a single priestly family of Upper Egypt in the first century A.D.

The story, as Stricker tells it, begins in January 1820, when an English traveler, Sir Frederick Henniker, crossed the river from Luxor to the West Bank to watch some native excavations taking place over there. “I was standing by,” Sir Frederick reports in 1823, “when the resurrection men found a sepulchre; they offered me the haul, unopened, for four guineas. It proves to be Grecian-Egyptian, the first of its kind hitherto discovered.”<sup>16</sup> He got his money’s worth; the complex of three chambers yielded fourteen coffins. “There can be no doubt,” writes Stricker, “that Henniker had the fortune to behold with his own eyes the opening of the tomb out of which more than six museums have acquired their Roman-Egyptian mummies.”<sup>17</sup>

An inscription “on the principal coffin” identified its occupant as one “Soter, the Son of Cornelius Pollius...and an archon of

Thebes." That title can mean six or seven different things, according to Stricker, but always denotes a very important person.<sup>18</sup> He was head of the family, and the mummies found with or near him (the site of the tomb has never since been located)<sup>19</sup> include his daughter Sensaos (an important Book of Breathings was included with her remains when she was brought to the Leiden Museum in 1828)<sup>20</sup> and her brother Petemenophis; there was another brother-sister pair, Tphous and her brother Phaminis, and a pair of sisters, Sensaos (another one) and Tkauthi, buried in a single coffin which is now in Berlin. There is a lady Cleopatra Candice and an unnamed member of the family, another Soter (now in Leiden), and another Petemenophis. It is all a very cozy family group.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1820 and 1830 the Leiden Museum also acquired, from the same

cemetery, the mummy of one Horsiese, priest of Amon-Re at Thebes, who deserves special mention for being buried with no fewer than four Books of Breathings and for providing us with a priceless date for determining the time when the family flourished, for he was buried in the year A.D. 64, at the age of 83, having been born in the tenth year of the reign of Caesar

Augustus.<sup>22</sup> Horsiese was the son of Hor and the lady Qaiqai and also the owner of

Papyrus Louvre N. 3291, which matches our Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X very

closely.<sup>23</sup> The Joseph Smith version, as is now well known, belonged to another Hor, the son of Wosirwer (*Wsîr-Wr*) and

Taykhebyt; and the recurrence of the same rare family names in virtually identical documents, all found in the same limited area and nowhere else and belonging to the same time period, puts the Joseph Smith Book of

Breathings in a family economy package that establishes its approximate date without trouble. The only discovery place mentioned in any reports is the cemetery in Thebes, near the village of Sheikh Abd-el-Qurna on the west bank opposite Luxor—both Soter and Horsiese had been important officials at Thebes. There is only one cast of characters in the drama, and the owner of the Joseph Smith Papyri was a member of it. The site of the tomb of Horsiese is still unknown today.

Sir Frederick, after impatiently unwrapping the mummy of Soter on the spot (it became lost, while the coffin finally ended up in the British Museum), departed from the scene, relinquishing the rest of his prizes to “a Piedmontese traveller” by the name of Antonio Lebolo, who “appeared on the scene, and is known to us from the accounts of [Giovanni] Belzoni and others as a special collector and agent of the French

Consul and antiquities dealer [Bernardo] Drovetti.”<sup>24</sup> Drovetti had assembled a store of mummies at Turin, and to these one of the Soter family was added by Lebolo, who seems to have taken complete charge of the whole operation of distributing the important findings. The curator of the Turin Museum, reporting on the acquisition in 1824, writes: “This mummy was found by a Piedmontese traveller, Signore Lebolo, in a deep sepulchre near ancient Thebes, … near … the Arab village of Gournah. The form of the tomb is not different from that of the others which are found there in large numbers, except that instead of being dug simply into the rock or earth, it was at its lower depth constructed of bricks and entirely decorated inside with various pictures.” He goes on to report that there were found “twelve or thirteen coffins of wood, some better preserved than others, … ornamented with

symbolic figures” and with portraits of their dead owners.<sup>25</sup> This tomb, plainly, was something extra. Worthy of note is that the number of mummies, which Sir Frederick as an eyewitness and owner had counted as fourteen, is now reduced to “twelve or thirteen”—which was it? The curator naturally got his information from Lebolo, and Lebolo knew how to juggle figures.

The Prussian general Heinrich von Minutoli, who collected extensively in Egypt for the Berlin Museum, complained bitterly of the way Lebolo cheated him in the purchase of mummies from Soter’s tomb, among other things keeping a gilt or golden crown for himself.<sup>26</sup> The changing of the report from fourteen to “twelve or thirteen” mummies may be explained by Lebolo’s keeping for himself in Trieste “what might have been the finest mummy of all...but which, so far as I know [writes Stricker] has

in more than a hundred years received no special mention by anyone.”<sup>27</sup> It simply dropped out of sight. In a letter published in James Clark’s book, William Dawson cites evidence to the effect that Lebolo and a fellow Italian undertook “clandestine excavation for their own account” while ostensibly working for others; that they “made a murderous attack upon Belzoni” (a rash enough enterprise since Belzoni was one of the strongest men in the world), and “endeavored to obtain by fraud” some of Belzoni’s loot.<sup>28</sup>

When Michael H. Chandler later told Lebolo’s story in Kirtland, the number of the mummies was again reduced by one, and we are asked to believe that Lebolo, after employing “four hundred and thirty-three men, four months and two days (if I understand correctly)” —that is Joseph Smith’s judicious aside—upon discovering

“several hundred mummies in the same catacomb; about one hundred embalmed after the first order,” was content to take only *eleven mummies* as the whole of his plunder!<sup>29</sup> Why, after months of labor and vast expense, our hero chose to keep only eleven of the hundreds of mummies, including a hundred first-class ones he had dug up—and, moreover, whatever became of all the others—we are never told. As to the four months of work preceding the great discovery, Stricker notes that Lebolo appeared on the scene only after Sir Frederick had left—which is to say, he was not present before or during the excavations but showed up promptly for the sale and distribution.<sup>30</sup> He was not the man to let hundreds of mummies slip through his fingers. Yet instead of hundreds of mummies on his hands, Lebolo had only eleven, and in the end “the whole” of his collection, willed

to his distant nephew, consisted of just four mummies.<sup>31</sup>

Dawson in his letter has Lebolo himself discovering, “in 1818, a pit-tomb at Gernah (?)” (which is very probably the way he would tell it) and distributing mummies to “Baron Minatoli(?), … Frederic Gailliand(?), … Giovanni Anastasi(?)” and keeping one for himself, while “an account of these mummies was written by Quintino di San Guilia(?)”.<sup>32</sup> Since he is so uncertain about so many things (the question marks are his), one need not feel bound by Dawson’s strict date of 1818 for the finding of the mummies. That his sources and Stricker’s are speaking of the same find, there can be no doubt: Stricker’s Drovetti, San Quintino, d’Anastasy, von Minutoli, and Frédéric Caillaud would hardly come together again after the early 1820s to let Lebolo trick them on a second deal. By the same token,

Michael Chandler's story tells of the same operation. It is strange that the name of the hero appears in the *History of the Church* only as Sebolo; <sup>33</sup> we will charitably take that as the misreading by a typesetter or someone else of an "L" for an "S"—for if Chandler, who claimed to be Lebolo's nephew and only heir, did not even know how to pronounce his name, there is something wrong.

There is something wrong anyway in his story. According to Chandler, Lebolo, on his way to Paris, merely put in at Trieste and there died after ten days' illness in 1832. <sup>34</sup> According to others, Trieste was his base of operations—he shipped the Minutoli collection from there, and there were the mummies he secretly kept back for his own collection, including, as we have noted, perhaps the finest of all. By all accounts, he was acting as agent for and by authority of

Drovetti, consul general of France in Egypt, while also acting as diligent purveyor of antiquities for the Turin Museum and other collectors.<sup>35</sup>

So, here, Lebolo was on his way to Paris with a load of stuff, and yet “he made a will of the whole” to his distant nephew, Michael Chandler.<sup>36</sup> By what authority could he will *the whole* to Chandler since he was only the agent for it? Chandler would have to produce the will to prove ownership—did anyone ever see it? According to Chandler, the will was dated 1832, but is there any evidence that Lebolo was alive after 1823?<sup>37</sup> Dawson does not think so. Stricker finds that there was great interest in these particular mummies all over Europe in the early 1820s, but by 1830 it had died out.<sup>38</sup> What is Lebolo doing bringing *the collection* from Egypt a decade after it had been distributed among half a dozen museums?

Were there two such finds? Whether we follow Stricker or Dawson, the catalogues and reports of museums have Lebolo's collection all safely tucked away by 1830. The story that Lebolo did not find the stuff until 7 June 1831 may well be Chandler's own. Was the will probated while Chandler was in Philadelphia and the mummies in Dublin? No. As he tells it, his "friends" in Dublin simply sent them on to New York. (Who paid the staggering freight? There must have been arrangements.) In New York in 1833, Chandler simply "paid the duties and took possession of the mummies." How could he claim them? He opened them right there in the customs house and was "no little chagrined" when he couldn't find a trace of "diamonds or valuable metal."<sup>39</sup> His behavior is hardly more edifying than his Uncle (?) Tony's.

While he was still in the customs house,

“he was immediately told...that there was no man in that city who could translate his roll: but was referred, by the same gentleman (a stranger) to Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., who... had previously translated similar characters.”<sup>40</sup> Note how Chandler avoids embarrassing questions by simply calling his informant “a stranger”; he didn’t bother to get the stranger’s name, yet on his authority went all the way to Kirtland to consult Joseph Smith, of whom, he says, he had never heard before. And this just to get his roll read—though all he thought of up to then was diamonds and gold, and he was greatly upset at not finding them. This is the way Chandler told his story to the Latter-day Saints later.

“From New York, he took his collection on to Philadelphia [he lived in Philadelphia and went to New York only to pick up the mummies]...and from thence came on to

Kirtland, as before related, in July.” On to Kirtland! That is how he puts it—a beeline to Kirtland; and after just two and a half years he finally got there (July 1835)! Joseph Smith’s asides—“if I understand correctly,”<sup>41</sup> and “Mr. Chandler is responsible for the English of the above certificate, and I do not feel at liberty to edit it”<sup>42</sup>—are warnings not to take Chandler’s story, published in the *Messenger and Advocate* under the signature of Oliver Cowdery,<sup>43</sup> uncritically.

Chandler’s mention of eleven mummies as Lebolo’s original loot from the tomb fits nicely with the “twelve or thirteen mummies” that Lebolo reported and with the fourteen mummies which Sir Frederick Henniker saw taken out since it is known that Lebolo, in the process of overseeing the distribution of the mummies, kept choice items back for himself.

But is the Joseph Smith text of the right age to belong in the Soter-Horsiese family? Early texts and early mummies are sometimes found in much later tombs. Thus Lebolo claimed that one of the famous Choachyte texts, discovered by him at the same time and place that he acquired the mummies, was found with Soter. Stricker believes he was fibbing, “supposedly to make the business more interesting (*pikanter*), ”<sup>44</sup> since the Choachyte texts belong to a “totally different time.” Stricker also believes that certain mummies assigned to the tomb of Soter by others belong to a later date.<sup>45</sup>

P. Bremner-Rhind (312 B.C.)	Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys (II cent. B.C.)	P. Joseph Smith XI	P. Rhind I-II (9 B.C.)	P. Leiden I 32 (A.D. 53)	P. Berlin 3030 (I-II cent. A.D.)
ä	ä	ä	ä	ä	ä
ö	ö	ö	ö	ö	ö
œ	œ	œ	œ	œ	œ
ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø

The picture is indeed confusing, but by good fortune, four of the ten photographs in the third volume of Georg Möller's *Hieratische Paläographie* are from Books of Breathings, and by comparing these and other texts supplied by Möller to the Joseph Smith characters, we can determine the date of the latter with confidence. Let us take

from Joseph Smith Papyrus XI, column 1, the signs that are both clearly written and peculiar (all the others being debatable):

- (1) In lines 2 (middle) and 6 (end), the loaf-over-bird combination (*tʒ*) is matched most closely in Papyrus Leiden I 32.<sup>46</sup>
- (2) The milk-jug (*my*) at the end of line 2 matches I 32 with one rival, Papyrus Rhind II.<sup>47</sup>
- (3) In line 3, the hand symbol showing no triangle is found *only* in I 32.<sup>48</sup>
- (4) The retouch of the face (*hr*) in line 3 indicates an earlier document in use at a later time; the peculiar figure matches Papyrus Berlin 3030.<sup>49</sup>
- (5) In line 3, the heart symbol with the dot above it is duplicated *only* in I 32.<sup>50</sup>
- (6) The hill sign ending line 3 is a type found *only* in I 32.<sup>51</sup>
- (7) The sail ideogram in line 4 is found *only* in I 32.<sup>52</sup>
- (8) The papyrus-document sign next to it is matched *only* in I 32 and less so by 3030.<sup>53</sup>
- (9) The scribe's palette beginning

line 5 is found *only* in I 32 and 3030.[54](#)

(10) The untidy roadway sign in lines 5 and 7 is lopsided and has dots over it, a combination found *only* in I 32.[55](#)

The reader with access to Möller can continue the game for himself and rediscover the closest resemblance between the handwriting of the Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X and the Papyrus Leiden I 32 Book of Breathings, with the Papyrus Berlin 3030 Breathings text (first to second century A.D.) tagging along for retouches. This places the original Joseph Smith manuscript circa A.D. 60 or a little later.

Chandler's dating of the Lebolo find to 1831 was necessary to establish his own ownership of the mummies; a gap of eight or ten years would never do. The will to which he makes pointed reference would have to have been probated before that, and so he must have it that Lebolo stayed alive until

1832, he taking possession of the mummies shortly after that “in the winter or spring of 1833.”<sup>56</sup> The tracing of the mummies from the various museums that received them takes them all back through the same half-dozen collectors to the excavation of January 1820.

A definitely authentic note is Chandler’s report that when he opened two of his mummies, he found “something rolled up with the same kind of linen [as they were wrapped in], saturated with the same bitumen.”<sup>57</sup> This fits perfectly with the directions contained in the first column of Joseph Smith Papyrus XI for wrapping up the papyri with the mummy and is confirmed by descriptions of the finding of the Sensaos Papyrus (P. Leiden T 33): “at the side of the mummy, outside the right arm,” it being “folded and flattened” (Henniker described the papyrus found on Sensaos’s father, Soter,

as being “folded flat”). Stricker finds this information to be of considerable importance, these being the only instances in which the original depositing of the papyri is described.<sup>58</sup> It confirms Chandler’s description, and vice versa, and is another reason for seeing a close connection between the Joseph Smith and the other Breathings papyri. Horsiese had fully five papyri placed on his person. Two of them were Books of Breathings of class 1 and two were of class 2,<sup>59</sup> while the fifth was a lengthy version of the important Book of Wandering through Eternity, which is virtually another version of the Breathings texts.<sup>60</sup> What we are faced with here is an important type of Egyptian communication which has been lying neglected in our museums “for over a century,”<sup>61</sup> of which the Joseph Smith manuscript is a precious example.

## **Not Primarily a Funeral Text**

The most important thing about the Book of Breathings from the Latter-day Saint point of view is that it is far more than a funeral text, though, as Goyon observes, “it is possible that at some time (*à une certaine époque*) the (second) Book of Breathings... may have been recited in the course of funeral ceremonies.”<sup>62</sup>

In Egyptian, almost any word or expression designating a place or state not of this world *can* be equated with the word *necropolis*, and so the general public has always thought of the Egyptians as people with a graveyard fixation. Yet long ago, Richard Lepsius, Adolf Erman’s teacher, suggested that the purpose of the Book of the Dead was to prepare the *living* for the hereafter.<sup>63</sup> Some other funerary texts, it was later noted, also contain prescriptions which plainly apply to the living as well as the

dead.<sup>64</sup> Eberhard Otto now discovers in the Coffin Texts that “the magical content of the spells can also benefit the living” and that at least the mythical material “seems to have been adapted only in a very secondary way as funeral texts,”<sup>65</sup> while Walter Federn draws the surprising conclusion that “many, if not all, of the Coffin Texts were primarily used in *this* life.”<sup>66</sup> Hellmut Brunner goes so far as to state that the Pyramid Texts themselves have nothing to do with a royal funeral,<sup>67</sup> and according to Albertyna Szczudłowska, it was only as an afterthought that important Middle Egyptian texts were later “copied for funeral purposes on the papyrus.”<sup>68</sup> Papyrus Leiden T 32, largest of the Breathings texts, contains a “summing-up of the relevant cultic activities” of the owner during his *lifetime*.<sup>69</sup>

But if the mortuary use of at least some important texts is secondary, what was their

original primary function? They were temple texts used in the performance of ordinances—"an inventory of the holiest mysteries," the saving ordinances, which were "carried out or witnessed" by both the living and the dead.<sup>70</sup> After noting that only two types of monuments survive from Egypt's glorious past—namely, tombs and temples, Alexandre Moret goes on to show that in Egypt, tomb and temple are virtually identical in form and function.<sup>71</sup> Joachim Spiegel points out that "the themes which are touched upon in the separate steps of the temple cult were in fact the very same as those in the corresponding places within the pyramid," while the "formulas employed...had the same content and the same relative positions."<sup>72</sup> After Pepy I, he notes, the inscriptions found in royal tombs are definitely taken from the temple ritual.<sup>73</sup> Moret calls attention to a "perfect

resemblance” between the funeral rites, the temple rites, and the daily toilet of the Pharaoh,<sup>74</sup> and Aylward Blackman in some remarkable studies illustrates that fact in detail, showing how the business of awakening, washing, dressing, etc., of the king, carried out during the ceremonies of mummification, by way of preparing the dead to arise refreshed in the next world, “closely resembles the daily service performed in *all* Egyptian temples in historic times.”<sup>75</sup>

Since the 1950s, writes Gertrud Thausing, the Egyptian Book of the Dead has been ready for a new interpretation, a need which has become increasingly urgent with the remarkable accumulation of information regarding the whole scope of the human past that has come forth since World War II.<sup>76</sup> We should now see that work as “*a vade mecum* for the *Zwischenzeit*,” the transition of the

soul between worlds; it is not only a funerary text but “a book of the living for conducting initiations here on earth.” It is perfectly natural that rites designed to obtain a state of blessedness for an initiate in the hereafter should be repeated impressively for the last time at his funeral as an ultimate initiation, for where do the things of the eternities come into sharper focus than at a funeral? Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and Books of the Dead all instruct one in the way of the initiate in both worlds, all employing the same language and imagery for living as for dead, according to Thausing.<sup>77</sup> As Thausing puts it, “The way of the soul in the other world corresponds to the steps in an earthly initiation through which the hierophant had to pass in the temple during the years of his training.”<sup>78</sup> “How can a mortuary ritual be an initiatory ritual?” asks Professor S. G. F. Brandon, assuring us in

reply that “the paradox disappears on analysis,” since “a mortuary ritual may serve to initiate...into a new form of life.”<sup>79</sup> In fact, an Egyptian word for burial (*bs*) means “to initiate one into the mysteries.”<sup>80</sup> As his ultimate objective, the dead requests “permission to enter into the holy of holies of the temple of Heliopolis” on the grounds that as an “elder” he has been initiated into the deepest secrets of the temple.<sup>81</sup>

Two of the most important new directions in Egyptology, according to Brunner, are the study of temple inscriptions and the examination of the nature and function of the Egyptian temple itself.<sup>82</sup> “Elements heretofore viewed as stereotypes of Ptolemaic temple decoration,” for example, “turn out...to be exceedingly important elements in understanding the ‘Grammar of the Temple.’” Who would imagine that at this late date there has not yet appeared a

*complete* publication of the inscriptions of any Egyptian temple, or that as yet systematic publications even for the great temple of Karnak are almost completely lacking?<sup>83</sup> Today, however, more attention is being paid to temple rites, especially in view of the present emphasis among students of all religions on the nature and importance of the idea of *initiation* in ancient religion.<sup>84</sup>

Paul Barguet, defending the traditional view against the rising tide of “initiationism,” insists that nothing in the Book of the Dead indicates initiation for the *living*.<sup>85</sup> Well, that is hardly where one would expect to find such; and Barguet is quick to add in a footnote, “That is not to say that there was no initiation in Egypt; on the contrary, the formulas of chapters 112–15 prove” that there was. He calls attention to chapters describing rites performed both by and for the living but explains that the living

initiates, since they were required to possess special knowledge (as all initiates are), must have been priests.<sup>86</sup> But the question is not about the rank of the hierophants, but only whether the living were initiated into the ordinances, which they were.

“To maintain,” writes Federn, “that precisely ancient Egypt should not have known some kind of initiation—and initiation rites, like the rest of the world—is plainly absurd, and irreconcilable with the existence there of a hierarchy.” He goes on to suggest that the “initiation” texts of the Book of the Dead are a development from the earlier “transformation” texts of the Coffin Texts.<sup>87</sup> That is merely a question of modern terminology, however, since initiation, as a process of transition, always requires a change of identity. Conspicuous in the Egyptian rites is the identification of the initiate with the king, and as such with the

god's son and finally with the god himself. If the funeral and temple rites are the same, both were originally performed for the benefit of the king, and in both the individual initiate is both a priest and a king, the imagery of the coronation predominating throughout.<sup>88</sup>

It has often been noted how closely the Egyptian funeral rites follow those of the coronation; and the regular temple ceremonies, we now learn, were nothing but "a small concentrate of the coronation ceremonies."<sup>89</sup> In the Books of Breathings, the rites performed by and for both living and dead are the same for individual Egyptians as they were for Pharaoh himself, though there is ample indication that it was not always so.<sup>90</sup> Also, since all major rites had to coincide in time with the beginnings and endings of cosmic cycles—solar, lunar, and astral—as well as the seasonal cycles of

life and vegetation, they are all interrelated to the point of identity within the cosmic pattern.<sup>91</sup> There is, François Daumas points out, “a profound and essential association between the rites prescribed by the cult and the rhythm of the universe,” the structure of the temple and its ordinances being “inserted into the very order of the cosmos.”<sup>92</sup>

Significantly, Stricker, in his study of the Breathings texts, lays the strongest emphasis on their concern with the cosmic phenomena of the winter solstice.<sup>93</sup>

If the Egyptians ritualized all the historic doings of Pharaoh as they did all the great periodic phenomena of nature, involving the entire human race in the major ceremonies, then it becomes pointless to draw the line between this world and the beyond.<sup>94</sup>

Indeed, the contemplation of this unbroken continuity of life “from eternity to eternity” is the very purpose and function of the

temple. What we have in the greatest of all the *Breathings* texts—that of Horsiese, according to Stricker—is a *cultic autobiography* of a priest of Amon-Re at Thebes, concerned as much with rites performed by the living Horsiese as for the dead one.<sup>95</sup> As in the case of the related Papyrus Salt 825, we are here “in the presence of a fundamental ceremonial,” the recognition of which marks “a veritable renewal of religious studies and a new attempt to discover under the apparent forms the mentality of those to whom the myths, the gods, and the rites were a reality.”<sup>96</sup>

## **Not a Mere Talisman against Foul Odors**

The Joseph Smith Book of *Breathings* opens with a statement of advantages to be gained from possession of the book and knowledge of its contents. Among these is no

mention either of breathing or a sweetened atmosphere; the author has higher things in view.

The Egyptian rites and ordinances with which we are concerned can only be comprehended as part of a very large picture. The word *snsn* itself is used in the Breathings texts with a number of different but related meanings, emphasizing now one aspect of the discourse and now another, broadening the picture and clarifying rather than confusing it. Preoccupation with breathing in a funerary situation is understandable enough, and almost any Egyptian funeral text could safely be called a “Book of Breathings,” since all deal with renewal of life and resurrection of the flesh, both of which for the Egyptian mean breathing first of all.<sup>97</sup>

Some of the most important chapters of the Book of the Dead are entitled “For Giving a

Breeze to NN in the Realm of the Dead.”<sup>98</sup> The Egyptian associated life, light, air, breath, and everything good in a single symbol, the *nfr*-sign, showing the heart and respiratory passages,<sup>99</sup> including the esophagus, for the breathing pipes were also the way of nourishment: in a single intake one absorbs life, breath, nourishment, health, vigor—everything good.<sup>100</sup> The aim of the mysteries is “to give life and joy through the nose, and joy to the heart with the aroma of *ibr*-ointment, supplying the king with the fragrance of the mighty ones.”<sup>101</sup> The commonest epithets of divinity depict the deity either as the provider of air, *sqr hty.t*, “who causes the heart (windpipe) to breathe,” or as himself, wind, air, breath of life.<sup>102</sup>

For the Egyptians, the giving of breath is endowment with life in the widest sense (fig. 3). Thus, Georges Posener notes, the king is

petitioned “to give the breath of life to him who suffocates” and spare the life of a servant, for he is “the creator of the air,” whose own mouth “bears breath to humans.”<sup>103</sup> Yet there is no known representation of Pharaoh bestowing breath or life symbols on anyone, while there are thousands depicting gods doing the same. Why is that? Because in his breath-giving capacity the king is wholly divine, absorbed in the person of the life-giving god; he is the creator, “Khnum,...who puts the breath of life in every man’s nose,”<sup>104</sup> who “created the animals by the breath of his mouth, and breathed forth the flowers...of the field.”<sup>105</sup> As the Apis-bull, he is also “the living breath” of Ptah the creator;<sup>106</sup> he is Horus of Edfu, who “puts breath into the nose of the dead”;<sup>107</sup> he is he who announced to them in the underworld, “I bring light to the darkness...: who sees me shall breathe, let

him breathe who exalts my appearance!”<sup>108</sup> —to which they reply, “We breathe when we see him; may the king N breathe when he sees him.... We breathe, rejoicing in Sheol (Quererts).”<sup>109</sup> Because, as Osiris, he is brought back to life “as he smells the air of Isis,” who, as she fans him with her wings, says, “I put wind into his nose.”<sup>110</sup> He is able to restore others to life: “Your throats breathe when you hear the word of Osiris.”<sup>111</sup> For he himself is the greater breather: “Osiris breathes, Osiris breathes, in truth Osiris breathes, his members have truly been rejuvenated”;<sup>112</sup> “thou breathest out the air that is in thy throat into the noses of men. How divine is that from which mankind lives! It is all united in thy nostrils, the tree and its foliage, the rushes,...the grain, barley, and fruit trees.... Thou art the father and mother of humanity, who live by thy breath.”<sup>113</sup> The Book of Breathings is not

to be dismissed, as it has been, as a mere talisman against stinking corpses; it is a sermon on breathing in every Egyptian sense of the word.



Figure 3. The *ba*-bird giving life and breath (the *ankh* and sail) to the mummy of the vizier Paser, while Anubis “causes [his] flesh to be established so that [his] blood vessels may prosper” (Theban Tomb 106, ca. 1290–1250 B.C.).

The *Berlin Dictionary* (usually simply called the *Wörterbuch*, abbreviated *Wb*) gives a wealth of meanings for the word *snsn*, all of which fall under two categories. First, there is the idea of air and breath in all its permutations: to smell, breathe; to exude an odor; to inhale air or the breath of life; *der Odem*, the breath of life itself; the stench of a corpse.<sup>114</sup> In charge of this department is the goddess Merit, identified with Maat, who enjoys considerable prominence in our Book of Breathings. Supervising the functions of esophagus and windpipe, she supplies both nourishment and breath of life (one actually eats and breathes her) and in that capacity enjoys a relationship of peculiar intimacy with every individual, even as she hangs on the kingly and priestly breast as a pectoral that both embraces and is embraced by the royal person.<sup>115</sup> In this sense “the son of Atum-Re says, He hath begotten me by his

nose: I came forth from his nostrils. Place me upon his breast, that he might embrace me with his sister Maat.”<sup>116</sup> *Snsn* is the air that infuses and pervades: “Thy nostrils inhale (*nšp*) the air, thy nose breathes (*snsn*) the north wind,...thy throat gulps in air, thou incorporatest life into thy body.”<sup>117</sup> Isis and Nephthys prevent decay and evil odor by fanning with their wings, but that is also the favorable wind which enables the dead to progress by ship on his or her journey in the hereafter.<sup>118</sup>

But breathing is only half the story. It is significant that the clear statement of the purpose of the *snsn* papyrus, as given in its introductory lines, makes no mention whatever of breathing! This bids us consider the broader and more venerable ritual background of the word. The rites set forth in the Shabako document—an early coronation drama—culminate when the new king “unites

himself with the royal court and mingles (*snsn*) with the gods of Ta-tenen.”<sup>119</sup> Kurt Sethe finds the expression for “mingle with” (*snsn r*) in the Pyramid Texts also, and it means, according to him, *sich zu jemand gesellen*. He duly notes that “the writing is commonly used in later times for *snsn*, ‘inhale,’ being mistakenly regarded as a reduplication of *sn*, ‘to kiss.’”<sup>120</sup> Another document going back to the earliest times uses the same word in the same way, telling how “Maat came down from heaven in their times and united herself to those who dwell upon the earth”; or, in another version: “Maat came down [to earth] in their time and mingled with (*snsn hn*) the gods”; or, in yet another: “Maat came from heaven to earth and mingled (*snsn.n=s*) with all the gods.”<sup>121</sup> Otto renders the word *mingled* (appearing as both *snsn=s* and *snsn.n=s*) as *sie verbünderte sich mit* and indeed, in the

last sentence the word is written simply with the picture of two men shaking hands.<sup>122</sup> One is reminded of the ritual joining of heaven and earth by the winds,<sup>123</sup> or the joining of the two banks of the Nile by the Two Ladies.<sup>124</sup>

This picture of Maat mingling freely with mankind in the “golden age” before the fall forcibly brings to mind Psalm 85:11: “Truth [’emet, possibly cognate with the Egyptian *Maat*] shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness [*maat* is the Egyptian word for righteousness] shall look down from heaven.” But even more relevant is the less familiar verse that precedes it: “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed” (Psalm 85:10). For *snsn*, as we have seen, means “kiss.” There is nothing more intimate than breath, and one and the same Egyptian word (*hm*) can mean odor, nose, nostril, smell, sniff, breathe,

perfume, caress, and love.<sup>125</sup> The queen of Egypt became pregnant “when the aroma of Amon penetrated all her members.”<sup>126</sup> *Snsn*, then, is indicative of the closest and most intimate association. In the Thirteenth Dynasty King Neferhotep prays “that I may associate (*snsn*) with all the gods,”<sup>127</sup> which is quite in order when one remembers that *sn* is the Egyptian word for “brother” and is written with the two-pronged harpoon or spear,<sup>128</sup> being also the common root for “two” in the Semitic languages (compare our “twain,” “twin,” etc.; the one-pronged harpoon was always the sign for “one”). The reduplicate *snsn* makes a verb of it and also acts as an intensive, like the second form in Arabic. This idea of twinship or brotherhood is apparent when a god comes down to his temple and his *ba* fuses (*snsn*) with his “form,” meaning his image in the temple.<sup>129</sup>

According to the *Wörterbuch*, *snsn*,

written either with the “bolt-s” — or the two-pronged harpoon ↓, can mean to join a company or unite with a group (formed by reduplicating the word *sn*, “brother”); to unite, fraternize, become a friend of; hence to join the company of the gods (said of the dead); to reach heaven and mingle with the stars; to enter a bond of brotherhood; to marry with; to unite oneself with the king, or to praise or honor a king or god—hence praise, honor; to unite oneself with one’s image (said of a god coming to his temple); to unite oneself with the light. The two main ideas of *snsn*, breathing and joining, meet and fuse in such meanings as “fragrance, light, air, as joining themselves to something”; hence adornment, things adorning the body; to invest another object or fuse with it, as of a person with the stars or a god with his image, crowns, or vestments; incense suffusing the body; or

crowns joining together to make one.<sup>130</sup> The Pyramid Text designation of *snsn* as a consuming fire calls forth the vivid image of the pharaoh or the blessed spirit invested and suffused with flames which carry him up to heaven.<sup>131</sup>

*Snsn* is, then, a very flexible word which remains nonetheless remarkably true to its basic meaning. This can be seen in a passage from the Book of Wandering through Eternity (the companion piece to the Book of Breathings, as we have noted): “Thy nose breathes (*snsn*) the north wind,... thou kissest (*snsn*) Osiris in the great Golden House,... thou passest the gates of the gods of the *qry.w* (chambers of the underworld) and unitest thyself to (*snsn m*) the company of the saved.”<sup>132</sup> Here, breathing, embracing, and fraternizing are all expressed by the same word, with strong emphasis on initiation.

# The Unique Importance of the Book of Breathings

## Its Timing

Not long ago, Giuseppe Botti declared that “the Book of Breathings is without doubt the most important exponent of the funerary literature which flourished especially at Thebes about the first and second centuries after Christ.”<sup>133</sup> Two things in particular contribute to that importance—the timing and the packaging of the text.

Consider first the *timing*. Coming from the first century A.D., our Breathings texts are not only “the last religious texts of heathen inspiration to come forth in Egypt,” but they are also “the last example of the use of hieratic script,” that standard vehicle of religious thought which goes back to the earliest times in Egypt.<sup>134</sup> Here alone the main idea of Egyptian religion from the

Pyramid Age down to the rule of the Byzantines can be traced in an unbroken line,<sup>135</sup> for the simple reason that only at the end of the tale can the whole tale be told.

“The ideas and beliefs expressed in it [the Book of Breathings] are not new,” as E. A. Wallis Budge observed; “indeed, every one of them may be found repeated in several places in the religious works of the ancient Egyptians....All the gods mentioned...are found in the oldest texts.”<sup>136</sup> Though found in Thebes, the manuscripts refer often and unmistakably to their Memphite-Heliopolitan origins at the beginnings of Egyptian civilization.<sup>137</sup> Containing “elements taken from the *Pyramid Texts*, the *Book of the Dead*, along with phrases and concepts already met with on the steles and sarcophagi of the Middle and New Kingdoms,” and coming last of all in the line of such documents, the Book of Breathings is

the great time binder, wrapping everything up right back to the beginning.<sup>138</sup> Hence Stricker can characterize the Breathing's book of Horsiese as resembling "an inventory of the sacrosanct mysteries which were carried out in the great religious centers of Egypt, carefully worked out by priests from the experience and the records of an unbroken heritage that went back to prehistoric times.... Here are in fact the most secret secrets of Egypt brought together, perhaps schematically arranged, and in a scope that renders the project a mine of information for the study of cultic topography."<sup>139</sup> At Esna, according to E. A. E. Reymond, "we find... clear evidence of the adoption of traditions of some ancient places by temples of late date... preserved and revived by actual use in the temple ritual."<sup>140</sup> Studies of the latest period of Egyptian religion tend more and more to

show “how tenaciously the Egyptian traditions preserved their ritual background even in their transition to the Greek medium.”<sup>141</sup> If the Book of Breathings, the latest of all native Egyptian documents, is written in “an archaizing Middle Egyptian,” it shows a firm grasp of ancient traditions.<sup>142</sup>

There has always been a natural tendency to give older Egyptian texts unchallenged priority of value over younger ones. But a number of studies have demonstrated the weakness of such a position. Thus Erich Winter’s investigations at Philae have surprised everyone by showing how “the preservation of older religious concepts and philosophical views” enabled the later periods to carry on with what they had and make solid and original contributions of their own;<sup>143</sup> what Winter found was not the expected intellectual paralysis of a late and decadent age, but “vigorous intellectual

activity" inspired by continued contemplation of the age-old ordinances.<sup>144</sup> It has been the practice to dismiss monotonous and repetitive reliefs and inscriptions as just more-of-the-same, as mere dull, unimaginative repetition; but many scholars today are pointing out that that will not do—that only by careful examination of each detail, no matter how tedious and trivial the task may seem, can we realize what was really going on and achieve a new respect for the documents and monuments of the late periods.<sup>145</sup>

Stricker points out that in Egyptian the latest texts may well be the best, just as the Masoretic is a good text precisely because it is the last, its author being in a position to sum up and use and select from all that has gone before; by the mere mechanical process of collecting and preserving, a conscientious late text like Papyrus Leiden T 32 can give

us what we can find nowhere else: a selection containing all that is vital and enduring in the whole vast tradition.<sup>146</sup> Instead of being marked by poverty, the Late Period is remarkable for the richness of its documents, according to László Kákosy, who cites as shining examples chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, the Rhind Papyrus (both very closely related to the Book of Breathings), and finally the Book of Breathings itself.<sup>147</sup> And instead of being mindlessly and mechanically thrown together, the elements contained in the Book of Breathings are “skillfully worked together” to form a meaningful whole.<sup>148</sup>

## Its Packaging

Consider next the *packaging* of our treasure. If the late date of the Breathings papyrus paradoxically enhances its value, its extremely brief scope, which has caused it in

the past to be easily brushed aside as a mere amulet or charm, is another blessing in disguise. For the object was to convey a life-saving message in the smallest possible scope; it was an “attempt to sum up in a relatively short text all the formulas essential to a normal existence, comparable to our earth-life, after death,” to embrace in one small and handy booklet “all the texts essential for the salvation of the soul.”<sup>149</sup>

The limiting of space to bare essentials, Nathaniel Reich observes in commenting on one of the shortest of the Breathings texts, “is precisely what makes this small text more important than some of the larger ones of its kind.”<sup>150</sup> In all of Egyptian literature “no other text can be found,” according to Stricker, “which in such a compact form contains such a great number of items concerning Egyptian religious practices (*gödsdienst*)” as the Breathings text Leiden

T 32.<sup>151</sup> That abbreviation is the established rule for such texts is apparent from their appearance on various steles, in all of which “only the beginning of the text is given, being ever abruptly cut off with a concluding formula.”<sup>152</sup> The same peculiarity appears in the writing on late mummy cases, in which only the beginning characters of some words are written.<sup>153</sup>

The passion for saving everything inevitably leads to vast, unwieldy accumulations of stuff, and from the first the Egyptians display a parallel genius for summarizing and condensing in their determination to retain everything but avoid being crushed under the weight of accumulating baggage. The Egyptians seem always to have had this mania for repackaging, the signs of a busy abbreviating and epitomizing being apparent from the very beginning and gaining momentum steadily

down through the centuries.<sup>154</sup> The Book of the Dead itself is only “a supplementary aid,” according to Barguet, confined, for all its impressive bulk, to stating the absolute minimum and getting by with statements only long enough to be recognizable.<sup>155</sup> The progressive compression within the Book of the Dead itself may be seen in chapter 64, entitled “a formula [chapter] for knowing the other formulas for going out by day in a single formula.” The text of a funerary writing known as the Amduat, the venerable predecessor of the Book of Breathings, appears in a version anciently designated as *shwy*, meaning a list drawn up to present “a summary of essentials.”<sup>156</sup> Such a summary was in turn epitomized in a still briefer table of contents, which eventually came to be accepted as the official text of the Amduat itself.<sup>157</sup> The Book of Wandering through Eternity, a writing which has actually been

identified with the Book of Breathings, attempts to jam together in its closing lines every conceivable good wish and every indispensable requirement for the dead in the next world.<sup>158</sup> Even the longest Book of Breathings, Papyrus Leiden T 32, is, as we have noted, a miracle of condensation. “There is no other Egyptian text which contains such a great number of items concerning Egyptian religious service in so condensed a form.”<sup>159</sup>

Hence we may well be suspicious when Budge explains the brevity of the Book of Breathings by suggesting that the Egyptians had become bored by the old Book of the Dead “with its lengthy Chapters and conflicting statements” that few people understood.<sup>160</sup> Since when were the Egyptians repelled by long religious texts (which they were not required to read) or by contradictory statements, or since when does

the process of high-pressure condensation render texts more instead of less understandable?

More convincing is Émile Chassinat's explanation, put forward again by Goyon, that the very brief Books of Breathings were meant for the poor who could not afford long and expensive funerary texts.<sup>161</sup> As Reich explains it: "The poverty of the party which caused the abbreviation of the usually very elaborate text of the various kinds of the Book of the Dead forced the writer of our small papyrus leaf to condense or to select those wishes which were most desirable for the departed with respect to their supposed importance for the life to come."<sup>162</sup> Granted the advantages of such abbreviation for texts of class 1, is this the reason for our highly condensed class 2 Breathings texts? If so, why are they found only on the mummies of important and affluent people who could

afford much better? And why are they the only funerary texts of their time, superseding all other mortuary literature and completely supplanting the Book of the Dead, so that in time “the Book of Breathings” came to be “a general term for funerary literature?”<sup>163</sup> Poverty can hardly explain a practice of abbreviation which found universal acceptance among all classes.

A better explanation for the extremely condensed form of the text is suggested by Philippe Derchain’s accounting for the same characteristic in Papyrus Salt 825. This document, long known to Egyptologists but brushed aside as a late and trivial piece of magic, is now shown to be a ritual text of the first magnitude. Its importance was overlooked because of the nature of its composition—a few notes dashed off by a priest “in a very concise and sometimes obscure form” to serve as a prompter during

certain ceremonies, a “sorte d’aide-mémoire” as Derchain puts it, to make sure that everything would go off in the proper order.<sup>164</sup> The Egyptians did not read from the large and ornate scrolls in their ceremonies, but only from small pages held in the hand like note cards; moreover, the texts were “perfectly familiar” to the learned reader, who needed the notes only to jog his memory with minimal jottings as he went through the long ceremonies.<sup>165</sup>

Given a choice between the magnificent Leiden T 32 Book of Breathings and the brief and battered Joseph Smith version, this sentimental writer would, after some hesitation, choose the latter. Both are condensations, but the shorter version in just two pages, measuring only five by seven inches, mentions in proper order every step of a long and elaborate course of initiation, introducing all “the elements necessary and

sufficient for overcoming the great obstacles” to eternal salvation.<sup>166</sup> But what is more, this little text was really used. The hastily scribbled and highly personalized writing was for one man’s eyes alone; the text was found clutched to the owner’s breast in death as his most treasured possession; and indeed, the document itself informs us that it is a highly secret and personal thing of immense value to the owner and to no one else. This is, moreover, no finely written and eye-satisfying ceremonial scroll, such as the other funeral texts of the same collection or the other Books of Breathings; it is frayed and battered, not only at the edges but on the surface, where various characters have been rather clumsily re-inked to restore them.

Column 1 of the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings is written in a bold, free hand, with all the room in the world to spare, but by the fourth column the scribe is in trouble

and badly crowded for space. This, like the ill-formed characters, indicates that the writer was no professional scribe, who would never have made such an elementary miscalculation. The plain evidence that it was actually used over a period of time makes this a very rare document indeed among funeral texts. Stricker asks whether all 696 cultic operations listed in Papyrus Leiden T 32 were actually carried out or attended by the dead; he decides that they were not and that we will never know which of the rites were actually performed.<sup>167</sup> It is a different story with the Joseph Smith Papyrus: here we have the clearest indication as to which of the many ordinances received priority and were actually carried out—not once, but often—by the subject.

What we have in the Joseph Smith Papyrus, then, is the most intimate and

private version of “a final codification of the religious and magic literature that was transmitted down from the predynastic time,”<sup>168</sup> skillfully summarizing and epitomizing the whole Egyptian religious heritage in such a manner as to preserve the original concepts virtually unchanged. That marvelous Egyptian conservatism that would never allow anything to be lost and defied any “development of social and ethical thought”<sup>169</sup> assures that our text contains those “basic ideas which belong to the constants of Egyptian thought” and which never changed.<sup>170</sup>

## **Jewish and Christian Ties**

But that is only half the story. If all the past was neatly packaged, it was not for the purpose of bundling it away out of sight and mind forever; the effect was, rather, to give it a new lease on life, for this very bundle was

picked up by the Jews and Christians in Egypt to become part of their own heritage. It is being increasingly noted that authentic Egyptian elements turn up in Judeo-Christian sources, and one may now well ask whether an important bridge between the two was not the Book of Breathings. The first scholars to study that document were impressed by its high moral tone and strong resemblance to the Bible, noting that it “bears the imprint of an essential religious feeling and contains moral maxims whose striking agreement with the precepts of the Jewish lawgiver and with those of the Christ has already been pointed out by Egyptologists.”<sup>171</sup> If the salient features of Egyptian cult and doctrine remain constant, the religious life of Egypt had nonetheless its moments of fresh inspiration and new direction. One such creative period was that which brought in the Books of Breathings, beginning with the Amduat,

which “introduces a new epoch of Egyptian ideas concerning the next world,”<sup>172</sup> putting the ancient and uncorrupted Pyramid and Coffin Texts, etc., to new uses.<sup>173</sup> The Breathings texts, continuing the same tradition, nonetheless contain elements of originality on their own.<sup>174</sup> Common to the Amduat and the Breathings texts is a metric structure, which Stricker can stoutly affirm is nothing in the world “but the old parallelismus membrorum of the Hebrew poetry.”<sup>175</sup>

In the late period, Kákosy observes, the Greek- and Aramaic-speaking inhabitants of Egypt became increasingly attached to the old Egyptian cult of the dead and its rites;<sup>176</sup> he bids us compare the otherworld pictures of the Greek apocalypses of Enoch and Peter found buried with a Christian of the ninth century at Akhmim with the descriptions found buried with his ancestors of pharaonic

times to see how little they have changed.<sup>177</sup> Stricker links up the Egyptian mysteries—which reached Greece “in hoary antiquity,” where they “reached a peak of importance and had profound influence on the cult of rising Christianity”—with the Book of Breathings, noting that the list of mystery cult centers given by the Greek Epiphanius in his *Panarion* is the same list that occurs in Papyrus Leiden T 32.<sup>178</sup> And just as the Book of Breathings was written by Isis and goes back ultimately to the cult of the creator-god Ptah at Memphis, so the inscriptions scattered throughout Greece in praise of the virtues of Isis have now been traced to an original in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, showing that in the Book of Breathings we are dealing with no late innovations or foreign intrusions.<sup>179</sup>

The Jewish and Christian Enoch literature contains striking affinities with the Egyptian

teachings,<sup>180</sup> and in his examination of this literature Matthew Black points out that much of it was composed to serve as funerary texts and is actually found in graves, and that the subject matter has to do “with the theme of life after death, a fact which accounts for their presence in a place of Christian burial.” Also, the state of the manuscripts “suggests that these texts were transcribed, possibly even in haste, for the sole purpose of inclusion in the grave of a relative or friend.” Moreover, Black finds a definite “unity of theme” in all such writings.<sup>181</sup> From this it would appear that the whole idea of a special text like the Book of Breathings, written as a personal possession of the deceased and buried with him as a *vade mecum* to the next world, carries right over into the Christian economy. What is more, the *content* of such documents remains the same, as a perusal of the Jewish

and Christian documents included in the appendixes of this book should make clear.[182](#)

## Classification of Breathings Texts

### Stricker's Classification

The various Breathings texts form a single family, which Stricker has classified under three main divisions. His class 1 is “a cycle of texts” to which scholars first gave the name *Que mon nom fleurisse*; this includes some lengthy composite texts containing sections with titles of their own, conspicuous among which is the Egyptian designation “First Book of Breathings” and a sign long misread as “Second Book of Breathings.”[183](#) Of this class, Chassinat wrote, “The things reported, the concepts presented, are identical in all of them [the manuscripts], but the form in which they are expressed varies almost to infinity...according to the caprice

or personal beliefs of the scribe and the resources of the buyer.”<sup>184</sup> So great is the variety and freedom of the texts of class 1 that, according to Goyon, it is impossible to discover which version or versions may come closest to the original.<sup>185</sup>

The Joseph Smith Book of Breathings belongs to Stricker’s class 2 of documents, which the Egyptians entitled “The Book of Breathings Made by Isis for Her Brother Osiris.”<sup>186</sup> Stricker lists over a dozen texts of this category, including Papyri Louvre N. 3284 and 3291, edited by Philippe-Jacques de Horrack; the Kerasher text of the British Museum (no. 9995), edited with a full-scale color reproduction by Budge; and Papyri Berlin 3135 and 3030 and Rhind II, published by Möller in his *Hieratische Paläographie*. It is most fortunate for us that the Joseph Smith Papyrus belongs to this class, all the members of which are very

much alike, thus presenting us with something like a “standard text” and obviating the necessity of constantly deciding between conflicting readings.<sup>187</sup> All the texts of class 2 contain lists of ordinances brief enough to be carried out at one time and place, possibly within a single day; and what is more important, all contain the same formulas in the same order. Here, if anywhere, is our practical handbook of ordinances, and not in class 1, whose prescriptions are so numerous and so varied that it is impossible to imagine anyone performing them all on a single occasion. Nor is class 3 of much help, for though it contains some of the same formulas as occur in the other two classes, there are so very few of them and they are so disorganized, being simply thrown together in any order to serve as mere ornamental appendages to the owners’ names, that no one today would

dignify any of them with the name of a Book of Breathings had the ancient scribes not marked them with that ill-fitting title.<sup>188</sup>

## Ties with Abraham?

Its late timing makes both possible and necessary the condensed and selective packaging of our Book of Breathings: it gives us all the essentials in the handiest form. Tendencies “prevalent in all late Upper Egyptian Temples,” Reymond observes, “create from the actual temple a real archive of Egyptian traditions.”<sup>189</sup> It is at the temple that all things are brought together. It is an interesting coincidence that from the first, the Joseph Smith Papyri were displayed in a place of honor in the temple, first in Kirtland and then in Nauvoo—“not ownly the hieroglyphicks,” wrote Wilford Woodruff in Kirtland, “but also many figures that this precious treasure contains are

calculated to make a lasting impression upon the mind.”<sup>190</sup>

The Saints were taught to associate some of these documents (now missing) with Abraham. That seems a spectacular leap until we consider the broader picture. It can be easily shown by matching up the cut edges and fibers of the papyri that the text of the Joseph Smith “Breathings” Papyrus (JSP XI; see color plate 2) was written on the same strip of material as Facsimile 1 (see color plate 1) and immediately adjoined it. Though, as we have seen, the two do not obviously go together (see p. 33, fig. 5); we have demonstrated at considerable length that the lion-couch scene in Facsimile 1 could conceivably be used to illustrate an important episode from the life of Abraham, described in the book of Abraham but not found in the Bible or in any sources available to Joseph Smith or his

contemporaries.<sup>191</sup> It has to do with Abraham's legendary involvement in rituals of royal succession in which he had the honor of serving as a sacrificial substitute for a king or pharaoh. There is much traditional evidence that Abraham actually did find himself in such a situation, and there is no dearth of evidence to show that the Egyptians did engage in such practices.

Whether this points specifically to Abraham or not, the situation depicted in Joseph Smith Papyrus I (Facsimile 1) belongs to that type of Egyptian initiatory ordinances which go back to the coronation and creation. So do the other two facsimiles, which also belong with the Book of Breathings. The same props and characters that appear in Facsimile 3, for example, adorn the first page of the Kerasher Book of Breathings in the British Museum, a "presentation scene."<sup>192</sup> In Papyrus Rhind II Thoth clutches the

Breathings document firmly and conspicuously in his right hand, as the initiate's passport (fig. 4).

But what about Facsimile 2, the well-known round "hypocephalus"? As far as we can tell, it would seem that all Books of Breathings were meant to serve as hypocephali, being placed under either the head or the feet of the mummy and in some cases under both.<sup>193</sup> A Book of Breathings made for the child Soter (possibly one of the archon's family) and studied by Jean-François Champollion bore the inscription, in Greek, *hypo tēn kephalēn*, "under the head," from which Champollion derived the word "hypocephalus," by which all such round head-cushions as our Facsimile 2 are now designated.<sup>194</sup> As the concluding act of the Egyptian burial ceremony, a priest standing by the coffin would read the Book of Breathings, and then, just as the lid came

down, he would deposit the book under the head of the dead person, exactly as if it were a hypocephalus;<sup>195</sup> or, following alternate instructions, it would be placed “on the left hand near the heart.”<sup>196</sup> One Breathing text was even meant “to produce a flame under the head of the *ba*,”<sup>197</sup> that being also the principal and peculiar function of a hypocephalus.



Figure 4. Thoth holds up the written certificate, a Book of Breathings, as he introduces its owner, Tanous, to Osiris (who looks like Anubis). The Demotic caption above reads: “An image of a woman

before whom is an image of Thoth holding a document. An image of Osiris" (Papyrus Rhind II, 9 B.C.). © The Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland.

Thus, though the Book of Breathings does not contain the text of the Book of Abraham, as we have seen, it does have direct ties with the three facsimiles which Joseph Smith interprets as relating to Abraham and which belong to just such ordinances as Abraham is supposed to have been involved in. Lest it appear that we are stretching things beyond the limit, we refer the reader to Stricker's lengthy discussion showing how the Breathings rites belong to the celebration of the death and resurrection of the god (the Sun) at the winter solstice, which he demonstrates with significant parallels from early Jewish and Christian sources. "We ask ourselves," Stricker concludes, "whether there existed in Egypt institutions

comparable to those of the Jews" —that is, with regard to human sacrifice of the firstborn, as indicated by "the behavior of Abraham with his son Isaac."<sup>198</sup> It is, to say the least, an interesting coincidence that the most thorough studies ever made of that limited class of documents to which the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings belongs conclude by calling attention to a possible relationship between them and the sacrificial activities of one man among the ancients—Abraham.

## An Egyptian “Endowment”?

The scholars who have dealt specially with the “Breathings” texts do not hesitate to recognize in them initiation rituals. What the Egyptians were looking for was not unlike what the Mormons call an “endowment.”

The word *endowment* that was chosen to designate the temple ordinances contains,

historically and legally, two main ideas: that of the bestowal of something valuable on a person and “the permanent usufruct of such goods in installments and upon the fulfillment of certain specified conditions.”<sup>199</sup> It is the greatest of gifts, but we cannot cash it in this life—it is only for the “spiritual minded,” “having nothing to do with temporal things”;<sup>200</sup> it pays off only at certain times and places and upon the exact fulfillment of certain conditions. No people were more willing to invest their means and energies in obtaining an endowment—a hope and a promise—than the Egyptians. The purpose of the following study is to consider what specific steps were involved in the bestowing and receiving of such an endowment according to the Book of Breathings. How closely they resemble the Latter-day Saint endowment the reader must decide for himself, for from this point on we

intend to say nothing of the latter.

One may well ask why we bother with the ancient Egyptians, a people who were denied the priesthood. Consider well the situation:

Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry. (Abraham 1:26–27)

What was the “order” that this good man sought earnestly to imitate? Not the principle of patriarchal succession, certainly, which requires no diligent effort of imitation, but simply acceptance. It was a procedure, a body of law and ordinance; for when imitated without authority, though with the best intention in the world, it merited the label of “idolatry.” Abraham has described the nature of these idolatrous activities, which were impressive enough to convince his own father of their validity. He used the familiar motif of Facsimile 1 as an illustration of the rites; and this picture was found on the same roll of papyrus as our Book of Breathings, making it perfectly clear that the ordinances of the latter are among the idolatrous rites to which he refers. Though unauthorized and corrupt (see Abraham 1:5–14), they nonetheless began as an earnest and devout imitation of the order of “the first

generations," which the Egyptians venerated as the time of the *p3.wt*. Throughout the world we find such imitations and derivations, all corrupt and all unauthorized, but all quite instructive. Since the best and oldest of these are Egyptian, it is to them that we turn for a check on the Prophet Joseph. Is he making it all up? That is what we must decide.

But, granted its mind-expanding scope, is the Egyptian experience at all relevant to the modern world? The answer is no; and neither is Mormonism relevant to the distracted modern world, which has no concern with the things of the eternities and will soon be forgotten.

Those who have sought to use the Joseph Smith Papyri as a weapon against the Prophet have uniformly relied on the old-fashioned *mythological* interpretation of everything, inherited by the Egyptologists of

the nineteenth century from the literary classical scholarship of another day. In all their explanations either of Joseph Smith or of the Egyptian sources, the American critics have stuck faithfully to the old scenario, apparently quite unaware of the developments of the last half a century, which, in the words of Professor Hornung, have “wrenched our thinking out of its accustomed, all-too-accustomed track”<sup>201</sup> and which today call for a fundamental reexamination and reevaluation of the records.<sup>202</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1.</sup> Grant S. Heward and Jerald Tanner, “The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: Translations and Interpretations: The Source of the Book of Abraham Identified,” *Dialogue* 3/2 (1968): 93 illus. 1.
- <sup>2.</sup> Discussed by Hugh W. Nibley, “The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers,” *BYU Studies* 11/4 (1971): 350–54.
- <sup>3.</sup> Klaus Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation

of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham,”  
*Dialogue* 3/3 (1968): 109–34.

4. Nibley, “Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers,” 359–99.
5. *History of the Church*, 2:348. [The author of this passage in the *History of the Church* is actually Oliver Cowdery. Even so, Nibley’s point may still be valid—eds.]
6. Jay M. Todd, “Background of the Church Historian’s Fragment,” *IE*, February 1968, 40a–40g.
7. John A. Wilson, “The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: Translations and Interpretations: A Summary Report,” *Dialogue* 3/2 (1968): 68, it being written “in a hieratic hand coarser than that of Document B [a Book of the Dead manuscript].”
8. Bruno H. Stricker, “De Egyptische mysteriën: Pap. Leiden T 32,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 48. Jean-Claude Goyon, in *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 1, finds the presence of rubrics in the Breathings P. Louvre N. 3279 “surprising.”
9. Cited in Dean C. Jessee, “The Kirtland Diary of Wilford Woodruff,” *BYU Studies* 12/4 (1972): 371.
10. *History of the Church*, 2:349. This incident is described more fully later in this chapter.
11. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 2; see also 6.
12. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 3, 7.
13. See below, the portion of this chapter titled “Ties with Abraham?” pp. 28–30.

14. Heward and Tanner, “Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri,” 92–98.
15. James Henry Breasted, letter to Franklin S. Spalding, in Franklin S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator: An Inquiry* (Salt Lake City: Arrow Press, 1912), 25.
16. In Bruno H. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” *OMRO* 23 (1942): 31.
17. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 31.
18. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 35. The family names are all native Egyptian, with the sole exception of Soter.
19. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 30, 35.
20. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 30–31.
21. Described by Stricker in “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 31–34.
22. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 48–49.
23. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 34 (1953): 13. At least, P. Louvre N. 3291 bears the rare name of Qaiqai and belonged to a Horsiese.
24. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 31–32.
25. In Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 31–32.
26. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 33–34.
27. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 34.
28. James R. Clark, *The Story of the Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 77.
29. *History of the Church*, 2:238–39.

30. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 31–32.
31. *History of the Church*, 2:349.
32. Clark, *Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, 77–78.
33. *History of the Church*, 2:348.
34. *History of the Church*, 2:349.
35. Clark, *Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, 77; and Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 31.
36. *History of the Church*, 2:349.
37. [Lebolo died on 19 February 1830; his lengthy will does not mention the mummies—eds.]
38. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 30.
39. *History of the Church*, 2:349.
40. *History of the Church*, 2:349.
41. *History of the Church*, 2:350.
42. *History of the Church*, 2:235 n.
43. *History of the Church*, 2:350 n.
44. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 35.
45. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 34.
46. Georg Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912), 3:66 no. XVIII.
47. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 49 no. 509.
48. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 10 no. 115.
49. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 6 no. 80.
50. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 16 no. 179.
51. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 30 no. 319.
52. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 36 no. 379.
53. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 50 no. 522.
54. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 52 no. 537.

55. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 30 no. 326.
56. *History of the Church*, 2:349.
57. *History of the Church*, 2:349.
58. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 46 and n. 1.
59. This system of classification is explained later in this chapter.
60. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 49. On the Book of Wandering (Journeying) through Eternity, see Hugh W. Nibley, “What Is ‘The Book of Breathings’?” *BYU Studies* 11/2 (1971): 164.
61. Jean Capart, review of “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” by Bruno H. Stricker, *CdE* 36 (1943): 265.
62. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 2.
63. Walter Federn, “The ‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts: A New Approach,” *JNES* 19 (1960): 245.
64. For example, Leonard H. Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 1; Hans Schack-Schackenburg, *Das Buch von den zwei Wegen des seligen Toten* (*Zweiwegebuch*) (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903), 9.
65. Eberhard Otto, “Sprüche auf altägyptischen Sargen,” *ZDMG* 102 (1952): 191–92.
66. Federn, “‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts,” 250, emphasis in original.
67. Hellmut Brunner, *Grundzüge einer Geschichte altägyptischen Literatur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), 23.
68. Albertyna Szczudłowska, “Liturgical Text Preserved on

- Sękowski Papyrus," *ZÄS* 98 (1970): 80.
69. Stricker, "Egyptische mysteriën," *OMRO* 31 (1950): 50.
70. Stricker, "Egyptische mysteriën," 52.
71. Alexandre Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique* (Paris: Leroux, 1902), 116, 122–30.
72. Joachim Spiegel, "Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide," *ASAE* 53 (1956): 341.
73. Spiegel, "Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide," 346.
74. Alexandre Moret, *Le rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte* (Paris: Leroux, 1902), 178.
75. Aylward M. Blackman, "The House of the Morning," *JEA* 5 (1918): 162, emphasis added.
76. Gertrud Thausing and Traudl Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch (Papyrus Reinisch) der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Cairo: Österreichisches Kulturstift, 1969), 3.
77. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 70.
78. Gertrud Thausing, "Die Ausdrücke für 'Ewig' im Ägyptischen," in *Mélanges Maspero*, ed. Pierre Jouguet (Cairo: IFAO, 1935–38), 40.
79. S. G. F. Brandon, "The Significance of Time in Some Ancient Initiatory Rituals," in *Initiation*, ed. Claas J. Bleeker (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 41.
80. Jan Bergman, *Ich bin Isis* (Uppsala: Berlingska, 1968), 231; Claas J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals: Enactments*

*of Religious Renewal* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 45.

81. Kurt Sethe, “Die Sprüche für das Kennen der Seelen der heiligen Orte,” *ZÄS* 57 (1922): 11; BD 114–16.
82. Hellmut Brunner, review of *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptischen Tempelreliefs der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, by Erich Winter, *AfO* 23 (1970): 118.
83. Brunner, review of *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptischen Tempelreliefs*, 118–19. [This is still true a quarter of a century later—eds.]
84. For some examples, see Nibley, “What Is ‘The Book of Breathings?’” 175–79.
85. Paul Barguet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens* (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 24–25, citing BD 18–19, 72, 135, 163. On general opposition to the initiation thesis, see Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 6.
86. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 25.
87. Federn, “‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts,” 247.
88. For a treatment of this theme, see Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 92–120.
89. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 89. The temple rites themselves are “a symbolic repetition of the coronation,” according to Wolfgang Helck, *Die Ritualszenen auf der Umfassungsmauer Ramses’ II. in Karnak* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968), 1:74.
90. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 46.
91. Paul Barguet, review of *The Pyramid of Unas: Texts Translated with Commentary*, by Alexandre Piankoff,

- RHR* 177 (1970): 67; Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 88–89; Peter Munro, “Bemerkungen zu einem Sedfest-Relief in der Stadtmauer von Kairo,” *ZÄS* 86 (1961): 73.
92. François Daumas, “Sur trois représentations de Nout à Dendara,” *ASAE* 51 (1951): 399–400.
93. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 37 (1956): 49–56; cf. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 34 (1953): 13–17.
94. Erik Hornung, *Geschichte als Fest* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), 19.
95. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 50.
96. Philippe Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051): Rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1965), 1:3.
97. Erik Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 8–11.
98. BD 54–59.
99. Eberhard Otto, *Gott und Mensch nach den ägyptischen Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1964), 54.
100. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 186–93.
101. Hermann Junker, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae* (Vienna: Hölder, 1910), 2.
102. Otto, *Gott und Mensch*, 149–52, 159–61.
103. These and other pertinent quotations appear with appropriate citations in Georges Posener, *De la divinité du pharaon* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1960), 66.

104. Theodor Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris* (Prague: Orientalisches Institut, 1940–41), 2:111.
105. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, 2:141.
106. Émile Chassinat, “La mise à mort rituelle d’Apis,” *RT* 38 (1916–17): 44–45.
107. Walter Wreszinski, “Das Buch vom Durchwandeln der Ewigkeit nach einer Stele im Vatikan,” *ZÄS* 45 (1908–9): 111; cf. 112, 115–17, 122.
108. Alexandre Piankoff, “Le Livre des Quererts,” *BIAFO* 41 (1942): 9.
109. Piankoff, “Le Livre des Quererts,” *BIAFO* 42 (1944): 33.
110. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis*, 1:81–82.
111. Piankoff, “Le Livre des Quererts,” *BIAFO* 41 (1942): 7 and pls. 1–3.
112. Piankoff, “Le Livre des Quererts,” *BIAFO* 43 (1945): 19.
113. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis*, 2:151.
114. *Wb* 4:171–74.
115. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 186, 190.
116. CT 80, in Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935–61), 2:35–36.
117. Wreszinski, “Buch vom Durchwandeln der Ewigkeit,” 115.
118. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 198–205.
119. Kurt Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen* (1928; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms,

1964), 73 line 64.

120. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen*, 76.
121. Eberhard Otto, “Das ‘goldene Zeitalter’ in einem ägyptischen Text,” in *REHR*, 103.
122. Otto, “Das ‘goldene Zeitalter’ in einem ägyptischen Text,” 103.
123. CT 162, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:395–99.
124. CT 167, 169–72, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:21, 30, 32, 40–46.
125. The word *hm*, examined by Victor Loret, in “La racine *hm*,” *RT* 14 (1893): 106–20.
126. Discussed by Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis*, 1:46.
127. Cited in Max Pieper, *Die grosse Inschrift des Königs Neferhotep in Abydos: Ein Beitrag zur ägyptischen Religions- und Literaturgeschichte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), 10.
128. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd rev. ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 514, sign-list T22.
129. Constant de Wit, “Inscriptions dédicatoires du temple d’Edfou,” *CdE* 36 (1961): 58, notes this common concept.
130. *Wb* 4:172–73.
131. Winfried Barta, “Zum Goldnamen der ägyptischen Könige im Alten Reich,” *ZÄS* 95 (1969): 88.
132. Wreszinski, “Buch vom Durchwandeln der Ewigkeit,” 115, 119.
133. Giuseppe Botti, “Il Libro del Respirare e un suo nuovo

esemplare nel papiro demotico N. 766 del Museo Egizio di Torino,” *JEA* 54 (1968): 223.

134. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 47. The Breathings text P. Leiden T 32 can, “along with Pap. Bremner Rhind,...be designated as the most outstanding homogeneous source of information on Greco-Roman Hieratic writing”; Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 48.
135. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 51–53.
136. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerāsher and Netchemet* (London: British Museum, 1899), 33.
137. Thus Turin P. Demotico N. 766, in Botti, “Il Libro del Respirare,” 225, is Memphite in content, and the facsimiles of the JSP repeatedly refer to Heliopolis.
138. Botti, “Il Libro del Respirare,” 223.
139. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 52–53.
140. E. A. E. Reymond, review of *Le temple d’Esna: Esna III*, by Serge Sauneron, *BiOr* 28 (1971): 319.
141. Dieter Müller, “I Am Isis,” review of *Ich bin Isis*, by Jan Bergman, *OLZ* 67 (1972): 130.
142. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 51.
143. Vilmos Wessetzky, review of *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptischen Tempelreliefs der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, by Erich Winter, *OLZ* 66 (1971): 459.
144. Wessetzky, review of *Untersuchungen zu den*

*ägyptische Tempelreliefs*, 458.

145. Eberhard Otto, review of *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opèt, à Karnak*, by Constant de Wit, *BiOr* 28 (1971): 41–42; for others, see Nibley, “What Is ‘The Book of Breathings?’” 175–77.
146. Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 51.
147. László Kákosy, “Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion,” *ZÄS* 97 (1971): 95.
148. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 82.
149. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 86; Budge, *Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerāsher and Netchemet*, 33.
150. Nathaniel J. Reich, “An Abbreviated Demotic Book of the Dead: A Palaeographical Study of Papyrus British Museum 10072,” *JEA* 17 (1931): 86.
151. Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 52.
152. Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” 50–51.
153. Kákosy, “Selige und Verdammte,” 99.
154. For references, see Nibley, “What Is ‘The Book of Breathings?’” 162–64.
155. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 11–12.
156. Erik Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963–67), 3:55; Siegfried Schott, *Die Schrift der verborgenen Kammer in Königsgräbern der 18. Dynastie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958), 341, 369.
157. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 344, 346–47, 354, 365–70.

158. Wreszinski, “Buch vom Durchwandeln der Ewigkeit,” 122.
159. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 52.
160. Budge, *Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerāsher and Netchemet*, 33.
161. Émile Chassinat, “Le Livre Second des Respirations,” *RHR* 31 (1895): 316; Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 86.
162. Reich, “Abbreviated Demotic Book of the Dead,” 86.
163. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 43, citing Spiegelberg.
164. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:19.
165. Louis Speleers, *Textes des Cercueils du Moyen Empire égyptien* (Brussels: n.p., 1946), ix. P. Salt 825 is actually “a very mediocre copy of a more ancient ritual” (see Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:133), containing older texts and ancient commentaries to explain them (see Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:135) and employed “as a memory aid [or mnemonic device] by a ritualist who knew his business” and who had access to other books indicated in his text, the latter being “nothing but a guideline through a collection of liturgical works which seems to have been abundant” (see Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:136).
166. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 76, describing that papyrus.
167. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 52.
168. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 41, of

Breathings texts in general.

169. Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (1948; reprint, New York: Harper, 1961), 59. The Egyptian, “unlike other people, always carried the shell of his egg around with him; ... everywhere we find... reminiscences of prehistoric times”; Kurt Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter* (1930; reprint, Nendeln, Liecht.: Krauss, 1966), 1.
170. Quotation is from Derchain, *Papyrus Salt* 825, 1:111. The rites preserved in the Breathings literature are those which had been celebrated “for countless ages” by the priests; Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 52.
171. Philippe-Jacques de Horrack, “Le Livre des Respirations d’après les manuscrits du musée du Louvre,” in *Oeuvres diverses*, ed. Philippe Virey and Gaston Maspero, BE 17 (Paris: Leroux, 1907), pls. 7–11.
172. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 3:ix.
173. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:xi.
174. Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 51.
175. Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” 52.
176. Kákosy, “Selige und Verdammte,” 95.
177. László Kákosy, “Probleme der ägyptischen Jenseitsvorstellungen in der Ptolemäer- und Kaiserzeit,” in *REHR*, 68.
178. Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 53.
179. Müller, “I Am Isis,” 118, 129.
180. Kákosy, “Probleme der ägyptischen

Jenseitsvorstellungen,” 68; Marc Philonenko, “La cosmogonie du ‘Livre des secrets d’Hénoch,’” in *REHR*, 109–10.

181. Matthew Black, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 8.
182. For examples of this carryover, see the following articles in *REHR*: Françoise de Cenival, “Les associations dans les temples égyptiens d’après les données fournies par les papyrus démotiques,” 5–19; Philippe Derchain, “Le démiurge et la balance,” 31–34; Herbert Donner, “Elemente ägyptischen Totenglaubens bei den aramäern Ägyptens,” 35–44; J. Gwyn Griffiths, “The Tradition of Allegory in Egypt,” 45–57; and Kákosy, “Probleme der ägyptischen Jenseitsvorstellungen,” 59–68.
183. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 41; Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 76.
184. Chassinat, “Livre Second des Respirations,” 314.
185. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 76. A Breathings text has been discovered among the tomb inscriptions of the famous Petosiris, in Gustave Lefebvre, “Textes du tombeau de Petosiris,” *ASAE* 20 (1920): 219–22; and a “similar text” is P. Sękowski, in Albertyna Szczudłowska, “Pyramid Texts Preserved on Sękowski Papyrus,” *ZÄS* 99 (1972): 25.
186. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 42.
187. Because of the gratifying uniformity of the class 2 texts, extensive collations of which yield only minor

differences, I confine myself in this study to the following important papyri: JSP XI and X; the Kerasher Papyrus (P. BM 9995), in Budge, Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerāsher and Netchemet, 33–38 and facsimiles; P. Berlin 3135, first column in Georg Möller, Hieratische Lesestücke für den akademischen Gebrauch (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1927–35), 3:32, and second column in Möller, Hieratische Paläographie, 3: Tafel XI; P. Berlin 3030, col. 6, in Möller, Hieratische Paläographie, 3: Tafel X; P. Louvre N. 3279, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*; P. Louvre N. 3284 (collated with P. Louvre N. 3166, 3158, and 3121), in de Horrack, “*Livre des Respirations*,” pls. 7–11; and P. Louvre N. 3291, in de Horrack, “*Livre des Respirations*,” pls. 12–13.

- 188. Stricker, “*De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos*,” 41–43.
- 189. Reymond, review of *Temple d’Esna: Esna III*, by Sauneron, 319.
- 190. In Jessee, “*Kirtland Diary of Wilford Woodruff*,” 371.
- 191. Referring to Hugh W. Nibley, “A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price,” *IE*, January 1968–May 1970, portions reprinted in *Abraham in Egypt*, CWHN 14:74–218, 319–81.
- 192. See Hugh W. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 436–37 fig. 74.
- 193. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 83; Stricker, “*De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos*,” 46–47.
- 194. Chassinat, “*Livre Second des Respirations*,” 317 n. 1.

195. Siegfried Schott, “Nut spricht als Mutter und Sarg,” *RdE* 17 (1965): 86.
196. JSP XI 1/5–6.
197. Schott, “Nut Spricht als Mutter und Sarg,” 83.
198. Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 34 (1953): 13–17, and Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 37 (1956): 49–56; quotation is from p. 52. For a treatment of related themes, see Nibley, “New Look,” *IE*, January–July 1969, October 1969–January 1970, March–April 1972, portions reprinted in *Abraham in Egypt*, CWHN 14:163–218, 319–81.
199. [Source unidentified—eds.]
200. *History of the Church*, 5:2; 6:319.
201. Erik Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 251; English translation in Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. John Baines (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 255.
202. Among others, Munro, “Bemerkungen zu einem Sedfest-Relief,” 74; Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 3; Brunner, review of *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptischen Tempelreliefs*, 118; Helck, *Ritualszenen auf der Umfassungsmauer Ramses' II*, 1:1.

## Chapter 2

# Reproduction and Translation of Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X



Figure 5. Placement of the fragments of Joseph Smith Papyri I, XI, and X according to their relative position on the original scroll of Hor. The numbers on the top indicate the columns of the text.



Figure 6. JSP XI col. 1 (see color plate 2). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Column 1, Lines 1–2

## Column 1, Lines 1–2

1408. 三甲晉 -  
1408. 2 三甲晉 -  
4. 9 丁 月 X 𠂔 一 𠂔 口 焱 [ . . . . . ] 1  
1408. 1 三 甲 晉 月 𠂔 6 焱 [ . . . . . ] 2

1 [...] *h*]nw<sup>1</sup> n py<sup>2</sup> š wr<sup>3</sup> Hnsw  
[...] ms.n<sup>4</sup> Tʒy-hy-biʒ.t<sup>5</sup> mʒ ‘-hrw mitty

## TRANSLATION

### What to Do with This Document: Instructions for Wrapping and Sealing

1 [...] inside (of) the lake great (of) Khonsu  
[...] born of Taykhebyt, Jusjpgied,  
likewise

### Column 1, Lines 3–4



## TRANSLITERATION

3 *m-h[t hf] ‘.wy*<sup>6</sup> ‘.wy=f hr<sup>7</sup> hʒty=f iw m qr-  
*is mi md ʒ.t* <sup>8</sup> *tʒ š‘y sns sn ir.n* <sup>9</sup> *nty*

## TRANSLATION

3 after clasped his (two) arms upon his  
breast being as wrap-  
ped like a book (*or* roll);<sup>10</sup> the Book of  
Breathings<sup>11</sup> being written according to  
what is

## Column 1, Lines 5–7



### TRANSLITERATION

5 *m ss.wwy*<sup>12</sup> *hnw bnr n-im=s*<sup>13</sup> *m ss-nsw rdi.tw rmn*  
*iʒby=f mtr*<sup>14</sup> *hʒty=f iw irw pʒ n tʒy=f qri's m gs*<sup>15</sup> *bnr ir ir.tw n=f mdʒ.t tn hr*

## TRANSLATION

5 in (the sacred) writings (books) on both  
inside and outside in linen (of) the king.  
One places (*or* is placed) his left arm  
vicinity of his heart, this having been done  
for his  
wrapping on (the) outer side. If one makes  
for him this book, then

## Column 1, Lines 8–9



## TRANSLITERATION

8 *snsn=f mi b3[.w] ntr.w* <sup>16</sup> *r nh̄ hn* <sup>‘</sup>  
*d.t*

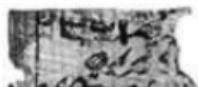
## TRANSLATION

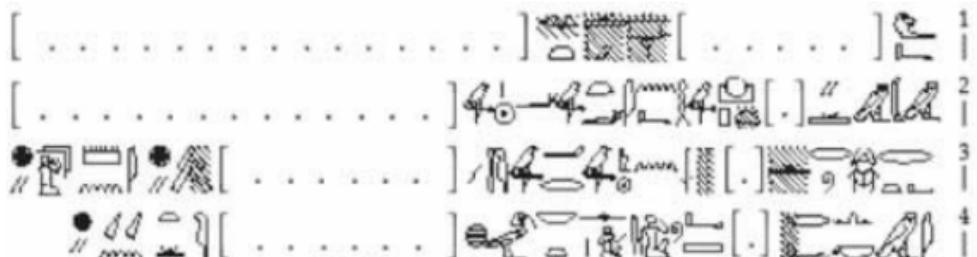
8 he breathes like souls (of the) [...] gods  
for time and  
eternity.



Figure 7. JSP XI col. 2 (see color plate 2). ©  
Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

## Column 2, Lines 1–4





## TRANSLITERATION

1 *hʒt- ‘ m* <sup>17</sup> [... *snsn*].*w ir.t* [...]  
*m whmy* <sup>18</sup> [...] *ʒh.t hn ‘ it=f* <sup>19</sup> *R ‘* [...]  
*rdi.t hprw* <sup>20</sup> [...] *nn n Wsir Hr mʒ ‘ hrw*  
 [...] <sup>21</sup>  
*im̄i=k rdi* [...] ‘*s s s nb* <sup>22</sup> *ʒh* [...] *hh n sp*  
<sup>23</sup>

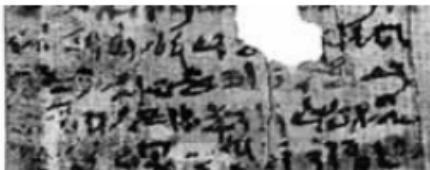
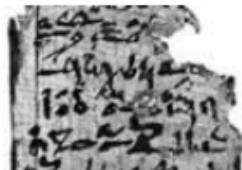
## TRANSLATION

### Nature and Purpose of the Book

1 Beginning of [...]s which...made [...] anew [...] the horizon along with his father, Re, [...] to cause to happen [...] things for the Osiris Hor, Jusjpgied [...] Do not let any man read it! It is beneficial

[...] countless times.

## Column 2, Lines 5–8



5	.....	.....	.....
6	.....	.....	.....
7	.....	.....	.....
8	.....	.....	.....

### TRANSLITERATION

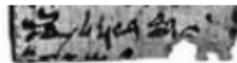
5 *hy Hr mʒ ‘-hrw ms.n Tʒy* <sup>24</sup>[...] *w ‘b*  
*ph.wy=k*  
*m twr.t* <sup>25</sup> *hr-ib=k m bd* [...] *mʒ ‘-hrw ms.n*  
*Tʒy-hy-bi ʒ.t* <sup>26</sup> *mʒ ‘-hrw m šdy.(t) twy nty*  
[...] *sw ‘b.tw=k* <sup>27</sup> *Wʒd.t*  
*Nhb.t m wnw.t fdw.t nt grh wnw.t* [...] *Tʒy-*  
*hy-bi ʒ].t mʒ ‘-hrw ‘q=k r wsh.t*

### TRANSLATION

## Purification Rites

5 Hail, Hor, Jusjpgied, born of Tay[khebyt  
...] with washing, thy back  
with cleansing water, thine inward parts  
with *bd* (soda) [...] Jusjpgied, born of  
Taykhebyt, Jusjpgied, in the (these)  
standing waters of [...] have made thee  
pure Edjo (*W3dy.t*, Uto)  
and Nekhbet in the fourth hour of the night,  
[...] hour [...] Jusjpgied, that thou  
mayest enter into the broad Hall

## Column 2, Lines 9–12



9  
[ . . . . . ] [ . . . . . ]  
10  
[ . . . . . . . . . ] [ . . . . . . . . . ]  
11  
[ . . . . . . . . . ] [ . . . . . . . . . ]  
12

Hieroglyphic text corresponding to the transcription above, showing columns of signs.

## TRANSLITERATION

9 *mʒ̩ty* <sup>28</sup> *iw=k w'b.tw* <sup>29</sup> *r hww* [...] *Wsir*  
*Hr mʒ̩-hrw q=k*  
*r dwʒ.t [m] w'b wr sw'b.tw=k* [...] <sup>30</sup> *m*  
*wsh.t* <sup>31</sup>  
*Św* <sup>32</sup> *iw=k [hr]* <sup>33</sup> *mʒ̩ ʒ R' m htp=f* [...]  
*[iw h] .wt=k q=k r ʒh.t hn' R'* [...]

## TRANSLATION

9 of the Two Maats since thou hast been  
cleansed from all defilement [...] The  
Osiris Hor, Jusjpgied. Thou enterest  
into the *duat* in perfect (great) purity,  
which [...] have washed thee...in the  
great Hall (Court) of Shu.

## Rebirth

Thou art about to behold Re in his coming  
down, [...] thy body (members). Thou enterest (*or* that  
thou mayest enter) the horizon in  
company with Re [...]



Figure 8. JSP X col. 3 (see color plate 3). ©  
Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

## Column 3, Lines 1–3

[ ... ] 1  
[ ... ] 2  
[ ... ] 3

### TRANSLITERATION

1 [...] *Hr m3'-hrw ms.n T3y-[hy-bi 3.t...mn]*  
rn=k dd *h3.t=k rwd* 34 *hr* 35 [...]

[...] ‘nh bȝ=k hr <sup>36</sup> Imn rn[p ...] hȝ.t=k  
hr Wsir sns=k r nh[h ...]  
[...] sntr <sup>37</sup> m hr.t [hrw ...] qs=k irw <sup>38</sup> mi  
qi=k hr tp-tȝ iswr=k <sup>39</sup> m [...]

## TRANSLATION

### Creation and Resurrection

1 [...] Hor, Jusjpgied, born of Tay[khebyt...  
Abiding (is)] thy name, firm and enduring  
thy flesh (corpse), hale (is)  
[...] living is thy *ba* in the presence of  
Amon. (Ever) youthful is thy body  
(corpse) in the presence of Osiris. Thou  
breathest henceforth for time  
[...] incense as the requirements of each  
[day... .] thy bones, like thy very  
form(s) upon the earth: Thou drinkest  
with

### Column 3, Lines 4–7



## TRANSLITERATION

4 [...] *sn.w hn<sup>c</sup>* [...] *h]w* 40 *tw=k* 41 *Inp irw=f*  
*nd=k nn hsf* [*tw=k*] 42 *m r3.w* [...]  
 [...] *sp-2 wr nb Hmnw sš=f n=k š<sup>c</sup>* *snsn.w*  
*m db<sup>c</sup>.w=f ds=f sns*  
 [...] *tw.t=k hr tp-t3 m-m* 43 *'nh.w iw=k*  
*ntry hn<sup>c</sup> b3.w ntr.w ib=k ib n R<sup>c</sup> h<sup>c</sup>.t=k*  
 [...] *Wsir Hr m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw Imn r-m=[k]* 44 *r<sup>c</sup>*  
 [*nb*] *m pr R<sup>c</sup> whm=k 'nh wp n=k Wp-*  
*w3.wt*

## TRANSLATION

4 [...] (offering) bread, along with [...]  
 Anubis [gu]ards thee; he is (*lit.* makes) thy  
 security.

## **Preparation for a Journey: Learning and Testing**

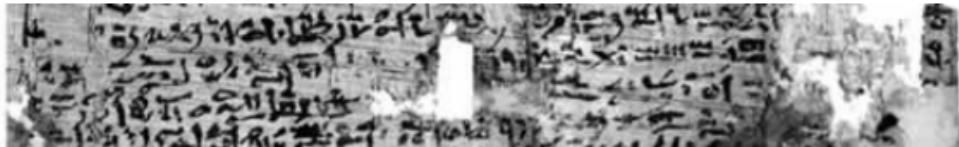
**4 There is no turning [thee] away from the gates**

[...] the Most High (twice great), Lord of Hermopolis, has written for thee a book of breathings with his own fingers so that [...] may go on breathing

[...] thy form (as) upon the earth among the living, thou being deified along with the *bas* of the gods. Thy heart is the heart of Re; thy

[... Osi]ris Hor, Jusjpgied! Amon (is) at [thy] side constantly ([every] day), in the Temple (House) of Re. Thou repeatest life. Wepwawet reports to thee

### **Column 3, Lines 8–11**



.....] 8  
.....] 9  
.....] 10  
.....] 11

## TRANSLITERATION

8 [...] ‘nh.wy=k mdw=k m rʒ=k šm=k m  
rd.wy=k iわ bʒ=k ntry m dwʒ.t  
[... šr]šr.w n p 45 (i)šd šps 46 m Iwnw  
nhs.tw=k r` nb mʒ ʒ=k nʒ stw.t 47  
[...].w n ‘nh di=fir.t=sn [...] hpr 48 [...]  
dbʒ.wt=k pr=k r tʒ r` nb rdi.tw n=k š`  
[...] nd.w=k snsн.w=k im=s mi R` mʒ ʒ  
ir.t=k stw.t Itn dd.w mʒ `t n=k 49

## TRANSLATION

### Opening of the Mouth Fragment

8 [...] thy (two) ears, thou speakest with thy mouth, thou walkest with thy two legs. Thy *ba* is deified in the *duat*.

### Introduction to a New Life

[...] rustlings (whisperings) of the most noble *ished*-tree in Heliopolis (when) thou awakenest every day (and) seest (or upon beholding) the ray(s)

[...]s of life, he causes thee to begin (make) breathing thy coffin and come up to earth every day. There is given to thee the book

[...] thy protections, thou breathest by it like Re (when) thine eye beholds the rays of Aton. They call thee (or they refer to thee as) Maat

### Column 3, Lines 12–13



[...] [12] [13]

## TRANSLITERATION

12 [... *ind*] *it=f*[...] *Hr Bhdt* [50](#) *hnm.n=f*  
*d.t=k ntr.ty=fy* [51](#) *b3=k mi' irw ntr.w nb b3*  
*n R ' hr s 'nh*  
[... *ms*] *ty=k hy Wsir Hr m3 '-hrw ms.n*  
*T3y-hy-bi 3.t* [52](#) *m3 '-hrw sns sn b3=k iw*

## TRANSLATION

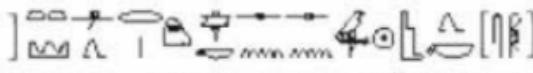
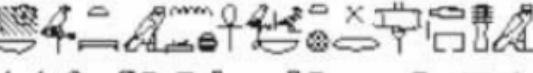
12 [... protector of] his father [...] Horus the Behdetite embraces (unites with) thy body and deifies thy spirit (*ba*) as all the gods do (*or* in the manner of all the gods). The *ba* of Re is giving life  
[...] thy (two) [nost]rils. Hail thou Osiris Hor, Jusjpgied, born of Taykhebyt, Jusjpgied. Thy *ba* breathes in (any)



Figure 9. JSP X col. 4 (see color plate 3). ©  
Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

## Column 4, Lines 1–5



[.....]	1
[.....]	2
[.....] 	3
[.....] 	4
[.....] 	5

## TRANSLITERATION

1 [...]

[...]

[*šms*]=*k Wsir sns**n=k hnty* <sup>53</sup> *Rʒ-stʒw* [...]  
*m Ddw Tʒ-wr bʒ=k ‘nh m p.t [r ‘]-nb* [...]  
‘*ʒ ib.w* <sup>54</sup> *hr irw mk.t Hr Bhdt* [...]

## TRANSLATION

1 [...]

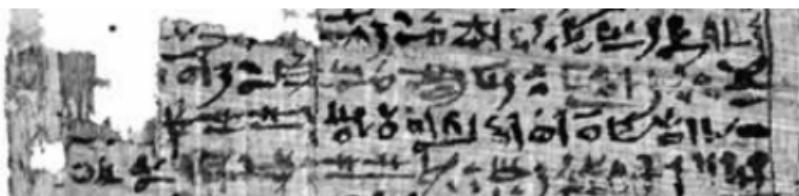
[...]

**Mounting to Heaven (Coronation Theme)**  
thou [mayest follow] Osiris and breathe in  
Rostau [...]  
in Busiris of the Thinite nome (while) thy  
*ba* lives in heaven all the time (every

day) [...]

Great of Heart is providing (making) thy protection; Horus the Behdetite [...]

## Column 4, Lines 6–9



[.....] 6  
[.....] 7  
[.....] 8  
[.....] 9

### TRANSLITERATION

6 ‘nh wdʒ snb iw=k mn.tw 55 hr ns.t=k m tʒ-dsr [...]

h .tw m ty.t=k tw.t 56 m hkr:w=k sdr.n=k 57  
m ‘nh [...]

r bw nb wbn R ‘hr tp.t=k 58 mi Wsir snsн  
[...]

kʒ=k ‘nh wdʒ snb 59 swʒd.tw=k m šʒ ‘t

*snsn šms=k Wsîr* [...]

## TRANSLATION

6 life, prosperity, health, remaining upon thy throne in the holy land (Deseret). [...]

## Rising with the Sun

Thou appearest in glory in thy proper and perfect form in thy full ceremonial regalia, (which) you prepared while you were alive (*or* having made preparation in life) [...]

everywhere. Re shines upon thy high place (as for) Osiris, that thou mayest (*or* mayest thou) breathe [...]

## Joining the Heavenly Company

thy *ka*, living, protecting (*or* prospering) to flourish in (*or* by) the Book of Breathings. Thou art following Osiris [...]

## Column 4, Lines 10–13



## TRANSLITERATION

10 *ntr.w* ‘*nh hr=k nfr ms.t=k rn=k rwd r*’  
*nb* [...] ‘*q=k* <sup>60</sup>*r [hr.t]-ntr* [...]’  
*m Ddw mʒ ʒ=k hnty-imnty.w m hb wg*  
*ndmy* <sup>61</sup>*sty=k m hwn.w* [...]’  
*s ‘h* <sup>62</sup>*šps hy Wsir Hr mʒ ‘-hrw ‘nh bʒ=k m*  
*š ‘y sns* [...]’  
*bʒ ‘q=k r dwʒ.t nn wn hfty.w=k iw=k m bʒ*  
*ntr* [...]’

## TRANSLATION

10 the gods. Thy countenance liveth;  
 beaujpgul (perfect) is thy form (*or are*

thine offspring); thy name shall be firmly established (*or* flourish) henceforward (every day). [...] Enter into the god's [domain ...]

in Busiris to see the Chief of the

Westerners at the *wag*-festival. Pleasant is thine odor as (*or* among) the young men [...]

very Elect. Hail, Osiris Hor, Jusjgied.

Thy *ba* lives by the Book of Breathings, [...]

a *ba*. Thou enterest (*or* Enter thou) into the *duat*; thine enemies do not exist, for thou art a deified *ba* [...]

## Notes

1. *Hnw* being a substantive (*Wb* 3:368.17; 369) following the preposition *r* in the more complete de Horrack text (P. Louvre N. 3284, in Philippe-Jacques de Horrack, “Le Livre des Respirations d’après les manuscrits du musée du Louvre,” in *Oeuvres diverses*, ed. Philippe Virey and Gaston Maspero, BE 17 [Paris: Leroux, 1907], pls. 7–11; see Adolf Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 2nd ed.

[Leipzig: Engelmann, 1933], 284–85 §591)—*r hnw p3 š* “hinein,” “to the interior (midst, center) of the pool”—could be followed by an indirect genitive, though “*hnw* is usually followed by the direct genitive” (*Wb* 3:370.15). Though the vaguely horizontal stroke, which also follows the combination “*hnw hrw*” in line 5 below, could be the preposition *n* in both cases, it differs from the other *ns* in the papyrus (e.g., in Khonsu). The de Horrack text, however, has *n* at both places. [Though the *n* differs from others in the papyrus, it follows a pattern of form and usage in Demotic where multiple forms of the same *n* are used in the same text. It probably should read *hnw n py š n wr Hnsw* “in this great pool of Khonsu”—eds.]

2. Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 53 §122.
3. A variation of ~~w~~ *wr*, so read for reasons unknown. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 538, sign-list Z9. Another variant occurs at this place in the corresponding text of P. Louvre N. 3284 6/2. The two small strokes between this word and the preceding water-ideogram are part of the walking legs. See Georg Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1927–36), 3:11 no. 120. [What looks to be two small strokes is probably an *n*, which would follow the grammar of adjectives known from both Demotic and Coptic—eds.]
4. For the otiose *-t*, see Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 12 §21.
5. [Nibley, following Baer and others, read this name as T3y-

ḥby.t. Research has since proven Baer's reading to be erroneous. The correct reading is Tȝy-hy-biȝ.t, Greek Chibois, which means not "the dancer" but "she of high character." For discussion, see Herman de Meulenaere, "Quatre noms propres de basse époque," BIFAO 55 (1955): 147–48; Didier Devauchelle, "A propos du papyrus de Genève D 229," Enchoria 8/2 (1978): 73–75; Erich Lüddeckens and Heinz-Josef Thissen, Demotisches Namenbuch, 17 Lieferungen (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1980–2000), 14:1081; Jan Quaegebeur, "Le Papyrus Denon à La Haye et une famille de prophètes de Min-Amon," in Aspekte spätägyptischer Kultur, ed. Martina Minas and Jürgen Zeidler (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern), 222 n. 56; Marc Coenen, "The Dating of Papyri Joseph Smith I, X and XI and Min Who Massacres His Enemies," in Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years (Leuven: Peeters and Departement Oosterse Studies, 1998), 2:1104 and n. 7. We have changed the reading of the name to the correct one throughout the transliteration—eds.]

6. The root of the verb is supplied by an identical passage in P. Louvre N. 3284 6/2–3; see below, ch. 4.
7. The face has been heavily retouched. [Nibley correctly noted the retouching; what he did not notice was that the scribe has written the Hieratic (and Demotic) number 2 over the *hr*-sign which, although it does not change the translation, produces *hf'.wy ḫ.wy=f 2 r hȝty=f* "grasps his two hands to his chest." The change in the text

actually destroys the rection of the verb since *hf*' normally takes the preposition *hr* rather than *r*; see *Wb* 3:272.11–12—eds.]

8. The damaged character can be read as *hrw* “outside” (*Möller, Hieratische Paläographie*, 3:30 no. 326; *Wb* 3:146), or as *bnr* “outside” (*Möller, Hieratische Paläographie*, 3:30 no. 326; *Wb* 1:461.11)  or as *mdʒ.t* “papyrus roll or book” (*Möller, Hieratische Paläographie*, 3:50 no. 522; *Wb* 2:192). [The reading of *hrw* “outside” can be ruled out as the word disappears after the Middle Kingdom and is replaced with *bnr*. The sign does not have the standard shape of the *bnr*-sign and so that reading also can be ruled out—eds.]
9. Baer assumes that the name of Isis has been “omitted by the scribe” at this point and renders the passage “and the Breathing Permit (which [Isis] made and has writing on its inside and outside) has been wrapped.” Klaus Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham,” *Dialogue* 3/3 (1968): 119–20 and n. 42. Parker ignores the *ir:n* “made by” and renders simply “one wraps the Book of Breathings, which is with writing both inside and outside of it.” Richard A. Parker, “The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: Translations and Interpretations: The Book of Breathings (Fragment 1, The ‘Sensen’ Text, with Restorations from Louvre Papyrus 3284),” *Dialogue* 3/2 (1968): 98. In the confusion I would suggest an economical emendation by having the scribe write *ir:n*

for *ir mi* since the writing of *m* for *mi* is characteristic of Breathings texts. See P. Louvre N. 3279 line 43, in Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 47, where the emendation occurs twice (cf. *ibid.*, 50 n. 1). Another characteristic is the changing of *m* to an *n* before a following labial (*ibid.*, 13). Hence *ir mi nty* becomes *ir m nty*, which assimilates to *ir n nty*, as in our text, giving the very appropriate formula *ir mi nty m s̄w* “wie es in den Büchern steht” (*Wb* 3:477), as indicated by the following line.

10. *Wb* 2:192.16.
11. *Wb* 3:419.
12. *Wb* 3:477. Cf. P. Louvre N. 3279 line 27, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 11 and 40.
13. *N-im=s* is attested in P. Louvre N. 3284 6/5, instead of a possible *iw=s m ss-nsw* “it being on royal linen.” See below, ch. 4. [*n-im=* as a form of *im=* is attested starting in Late Egyptian and is the standard form in use for Demotic—eds.]
14. *Wb* 2:171–72; Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 3:8 no. 95. The double fingers are the sign of exactness also, as in ‘q3.
15. De Horrack, “*Livre des Respirations*,” 136, confesses that he cannot decipher this line. Parker, “*Book of Breathings*,” 98: “this having been done at his wrapping and outside it.” Baer, “*Breathing Permit of Hôr*,” 120: “The rest of his mummy bandages should be wrapped over it.”

The s is here very strongly marked, and two variant readings supplied by de Horrack agree with the Joseph Smith text and show the word here to be gs, “side.” Unique to the Joseph Smith version is the swirling sign ⚭, which can be read either as m or mi. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 3:18 no. 196, 49 no. 509), “on the outer side” or “like the outer side.” Other possible readings for gs are šs “linen,” hr=s “underneath it,” psd=s “its back,” ȝw=s “its length,” the feminine pronoun referring to the book—all of which have possibilities in view of the corruption of the text.

The enigmatic sign following the cloth symbol can also depict a rope, linen, or a bag. Alan H. Gardiner, “Two Hieroglyphic Signs and the Egyptian Words for ‘Alabaster’ and ‘Linen,’ etc.,” *BIFAO* 30 (1931): 161–83. All of these are relevant to wrapping or even to a recitation or formula. Georg Möller, “Zur Datierung literarischer Handschriften aus der ersten Hälfte des Neuen Reichs,” *ZÄS* 56 (1920): tables 1–3, following p. 40.

16. In this peculiar combination (Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279, 22*), the scribe has written the flag symbols like reeds and the oddly looped plural strokes like a conventional Hor ☩ = hr sign.
17. An idiom for the beginning of religious books of instruction; see references in Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 162. Note that the official

beginning of the Book of Breathings does not come directly after the picture (Abraham Facsimile 1). If a text of a “book of Abraham” was attached, it would not have to be at that point either.

18. Redundant and improper *y* is a characteristic of Breathings texts. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 11; so P. Louvre N. 3279 44/36, where this identical form appears.
19. The tail of the genitive *f* seems to be faintly visible, and there is space for it.
20. The *r* of *hpr(w)* has been damaged. For this writing of *hpr*, see Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 24 §49.
21. [Nibley did not read the end of this line: *ḥ3p sp-sn imn sp-sn* “Hide it! Hide it! Conceal it! Conceal it!”—eds.]
22. The “parasite” *-t* is very common with *nb*; Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 11.
23. The end of the lines are found pasted upside down on the framed text of JSP IV.
24. [Nibley originally had a note here, but the previous publishers failed to include the text, and we do not have any versions of the original manuscript for this section. Apparently he intended to justify the restoration of the name—eds.]
25. No distinction is made between the writing of the *-t-* and *-d-*; Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 22, citing Raymond O. Faulkner, “Some Further Remarks on the Transcription of Late Hieratic,” *JEA* 21 (1935): 49–50.
26. [Nibley read this name *Rmny-q3i*, and included the

following discussion:] “Remeny is exalted”; cf. Rmn.y ‘nh, “Remeny is living” (Hermann Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* [Glückstadt: Augustin, 1935–52], 1:222 no. 16), or “Remeny is my support” (Wb 2:419). Since rmny means to lift or elevate in ritual (*ibid.*), it could also mean “Qai is exalted,” or even “Qai is crowned” (*ibid.*, 2:420), Qai being a much commoner name than Remeny (Ranke, *Personennamen*, 1:332 nos. 4–24). Number 20 of this list is qʒi-gbʒ, “mit hohem Arm(?)”, and number 21 is qʒi-ḍr.t, “mit hoher Hand(?)”, suggesting for Remeny-qai a possible “My arm is exalted” (stretched out, upraised; Wb 2:418); cf. the very common “stretched out” arm of God (nātāh) in the Old Testament. [Nibley is following Parker, “Book of Breathings,” 99, who originated this misreading—eds.]

27. Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 38–39 §83.
28. The lower part of mʒ'.ty is supplied from JSP IV.
29. This -tw may be used for the -ti of the old perfective; Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 155–56 §§328, 331.
30. The Two Maats is the subject; see P. Louvre N. 3284 1/18; see below, ch. 4.
31. The top of an m and the wsh.t symbol are clear, though the lower part of the fragment (upper left-hand corner of JSP VI) has been almost entirely cut off.
32. The scribe has transposed the w and the disk; see Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 3:28 no. 306.
33. Lacuna; supplied by P. Louvre N. 3284.

34. At this place other manuscripts have s'  $\text{h} = k$  “thy mummy,” which the scribe of the JSP seems to have overlooked, leaving the sentence defective, unless a substantive preceded mn.
35. This can be the common r' nb, “every day,” symbol or, it is just possible, the common hr, “in the presence of,” which appears also in the following line.
36. The hr is damaged but discernible.
37. The determinative ○ (Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 490, sign-list N33) is clear, the bottom of the incense pot faintly visible. Where the JSP is destroyed, the others have a list of invocation offerings. Lists of food offered tend to show the greatest variety in Egyptian funerary papyri. The P. Louvre N. 3248 list is bread, beer, beef, poultry, water, libation, and incense. The JSP text is smeared and retouched.
38. Reads  $q3i = k$  in P. Louvre N. 3291, but  $irw = k$  in P. Louvre N. 3284. Here the two are scrambled.
39. For  $sw(r)i = k$ ?—this particular word is a spelling stumbling block. *Wb* 3:428; Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 213 §279; P. Louvre N. 3284 has  $siw$  (though the -*iw* can be read -*ir*), while P. Louvre N. 3291 has  $si-wr$ . Is the -*i*- transposed or prothetic (Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 209 §272)?
40. Preserved in P. Louvre N. 3284.
41. Direct object; Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 38–39 §83.
42. Object supplied by other manuscripts.

43. Dittograph for either the m or the 'nh sign. P. Louvre N. 3291 doubles the m and P. Louvre N. 3284 puts "the living" in the plural. Can be read here as either "among the living" or "in life," i.e., "when thou wert alive."
44. Confusion of r' with m' ? Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 132 §178; Erman, Neuägyptische Grammatik, 311–13 §§623–24. [The word here is actually the Late Egyptian preposition *irm* "and"—eds.] For the reading of the last sign, see Möller, Hieratische Paläographie, 3:64 sign VI.
45. All the manuscripts differ in this passage. P. Kerasher (BM 9995) has the same spelling as the JSP, being a Greco-Roman form of *p3*  , Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 13, which duly appears in the other manuscripts.
46. As mounted, the papyrus has a piece here that belongs to another fragment of papyrus glued over the unsightly gap in this one, which extends to the next line.
47. For this spelling, *Wb* 4:331. The word is written out completely in line 11 below.
48. The hpr-symbol here seems to belong on another fragment of papyrus which has been glued on here to fill an unsightly gap. This would indicate that the hole in the papyrus was there when it was mounted.
49. P. Louvre N. 3284 and P. Kerasher have dd=w *m3'.t r=k*, "they speak truth to or concerning thee," while P. Berlin 3135, p. 2, reads dd=w *m3'.t rn=k*, and JSP seems to have dd=w *m3.'t rn=k* or *n=k*, the latter suggesting the dd=w.n=f formula, where the -w ending is a participle

rather than plural. Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 295  
§377.1.

50. Or “protected, reconstituted”; *Wb* 3:378; Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 202.
51. Redundant -t- (Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 12) or emphatic -t- (Constantin E. Sander-Hansen, *Ägyptische Grammatik* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963], 113 §426, 115–16 §433, etc.) in other manuscripts; here a sdmty.fy.
52. The only occurrence of the complete name. Its meaning is unknown (Ranke, *Personennamen*, 2:197). For the first element, see *ibid.*, 2:79; for the second, *ibid.*, 1:268. Cf. *t3y nh.t*, *ibid.*, 2:119. [For the meaning, see above, note 5 —eds.]
53. [Nibley originally had a note here, but the previous publishers failed to include the text, and we do not have any versions of the original manuscript for this section. He appeared to suggest that there were two possible readings for the hieratic sign, m or hnty, but only the latter is a possible reading for the sign—eds.]
54. Cf. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 77 §95. For more on the special epithet Great of Heart, see below, commentary to lines 53–54, pp. 350–51.
55. Improper -tw as in the related *hms(tw)* in P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 49, 59, line 49 having much the same context.
56. Also means “complete, natural, pleasing, perfect”; cf. Alma 11:43.
57. P. Louvre N. 3284, etc., continue wrs=k m snb “you

spend the day in health,” which suggests *sdr* instead of *grg*, i.e., the rhetorical contrast between sleeping and waking, day and night. The sign, however, is not *sdr* but *grg*.

58. Möller, Hieratische Paläographie, 3:6 no. 79; the de Horrack text, “*Livre des Respirations*,” 3 line 14, has a hill or house instead, the hieratic symbols for “hill” and “house” being indistinguishable in *Breathings* manuscripts. Goyon, Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279, 23. The two words combine in *tp-hw.t* “roof” (Faulkner, Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 297). The determinative here calls for a definite place or structure.
59. The two signs following the *ka*-symbol do not occur in the other manuscripts and suggest that the writer placed the usual ‘*nh-wdʒ-snb* formula after the royal *ka* title from force of habit. The second symbol can be read *wdʒ(w)* (Simeone Levi, Raccolta dei segni ieratici egizi [Turin: Paravia, 1880], 36 no. 407), while the absence of one *s* following may be due to the well-known reluctance to repeat symbols, e.g., in *ddw*, in line 4 above.
60. Attested in P. Louvre N. 3291.
61. “Parasite” *y* is common.
62. The de Horrack version, “*Livre des Respirations*,” p. 3 lines 18–19, does not mention the youths, but has instead *mī imʒh.w*, ‘*ʒ rn=k m s’ h.w*, “as (of) the Venerated Ones, great is thy name among (or as) the Noble Ones,” spelling out the words.

## Chapter 3

# Translated Correctly?

## What Is a Translation?

To the often-asked question, “Have the Joseph Smith Papyri been translated?” the answer is an emphatic *no!* What, then, is the foregoing? A mechanical transcription—no more. The hieratic text was mechanically reproduced by photography, transcribed into hieroglyphics by mechanically unimaginative reference to Georg Möller’s and Simeone Levi’s catalogues of signs,<sup>1</sup> mechanically written in reverse by the use of a tracing table,<sup>2</sup> and transcribed into its theoretical English phonetic equivalents by reference to Alan Gardiner’s sign-list;<sup>3</sup> finally, each word was matched by its modern equivalent

as indicated in the *Wörterbuch*,<sup>4</sup> while endings and particles were accounted for by rules laid down by Adolf Erman and Gardiner,<sup>5</sup> who devoted their lives to making Egyptian texts translatable by infallible, automatic rules. What we have is a *transmission* rather than a translation of the text; and such transmissions, as Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend note, “need in no way imply ‘understanding.’”<sup>6</sup>

Today, those soliciting the aid of the computer find themselves forced to speak with a precision which philology in the past could always evade and, as a result, must confess to drastic defects in modern scholarly knowledge of Egyptian. Thus Rolf Gundlach and Wolfgang Schenkel point out that, so far, no one has figured out a way to write Egyptian without hieroglyphics—which means that there are fundamental aspects of the system which still escape us.

The hardest question of all for the Egyptologist, according to Gundlach and Schenkel, is whether Egyptian writings can really be understood by anyone but an Egyptian.<sup>7</sup> Go up to the man in the car (it used to be the man in the street) when he stops at a red light and deliver this sober message to him: “Osiris shall be towed toward the interior of the great pool of Khonsu,” which is the first line of Joseph Smith Papyrus XI. If the man gives you a blank look or starts an ominous muttering, explain to him that the great lake of Khonsu is “probably a liturgical designation of the portion of the Nile that has to be crossed in order to reach the Theban cemetery on the west bank”<sup>8</sup> and that Khonsu, or Khons, is a youthful moon-god. When the light changes, your new friend may proceed on his way knowing as much about the first line of our Book of Breathings as anybody else does—

namely, nothing at all. Though as correct and literal as we can make it, the translation in the preceding chapter is not a translation. It is nonsense.

For, what is a translation? The most carefully thought-out definition is that of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff: “A translation is a statement in the translator’s own words of what he thinks the author had in mind.” A little reflection will show that this is the best, if not the only possible, definition. Gardiner defines a sentence as “*any set of words in which he [the hearer] can discern a reasonable intention on the part of the speaker.*”<sup>9</sup> A translation must therefore be not a matching of dictionaries but a meeting of minds, for as the philologist William Entwistle puts it, “there are no ‘mere words’ ... the word is a deed”;<sup>10</sup> it is a whole drama with centuries of tradition encrusting it, and that whole drama must be

passed in review every time the word comes up for translation.

The ablest Egyptologists have always insisted that the main difficulty that confronts them is not a matter of grammar or vocabulary, but a complete ignorance of what the Egyptian writer *really* had in mind. “The most accurate knowledge of the Egyptian vocabulary and grammar will...not suffice to pierce the obscurity,” Peter Le Page Renouf wrote long ago. “The difficulty resides not in literally translating the texts, but rather in the understanding the meaning which lies concealed beneath familiar words.”<sup>11</sup> Or, as Edouard Naville put it, “A sentence that is easy to understand philologically, whose words and grammar cause us not the slightest perplexity, may all too often present a strange and even burlesque appearance; we have understood the form, but have not penetrated to the idea

that lies behind it.”<sup>12</sup> The Egyptian terms, Gaston Maspero noted, “always end up by escaping us, dragging us in the direction of our own present-day concepts.”<sup>13</sup> “Too often we know approximately what a sentence means,” Erman admitted, “but its exact translation is not yet possible in the present state of our knowledge,” in which case he takes refuge, he says, in the “ars nesciendi” of frankly admitting that he does not know, responding with a “‘das verstehe ich nicht,’ und ‘Gott weiss’” to whatever his students may think.<sup>14</sup>

Hence, “only by the unceasing reworking of texts, by combining, trial and error, and often also by daring guesses [is] it possible to make any progress.... We are still obliged to come to grips with linguistic problems in every text that is not completely ordinary.”<sup>15</sup> But here even the cautious Erman speaks too soon: is there such a thing as a “completely

ordinary” text in Egyptian? To this day there is no agreement on the meaning of the most ordinary and familiar phrases in the religious writings, such as *m3 '-hrw* and *pr m hrw*.<sup>16</sup> As an eminent contemporary Egyptologist puts it, a “certain helplessness in the face of these mythological records is unavoidable to both laymen and Egyptologists,”<sup>17</sup> and he demonstrates his point by showing how consistently the experts have misconstrued what an Egyptian had in mind when he employed various familiar words for “sun.”<sup>18</sup>

The most valuable of all clues to understanding hieroglyphic texts has always been, according to Gardiner, “the logic of the situation.”<sup>19</sup> Until we know what the situation is, we are helpless; and the texts themselves rarely contain adequate clues: “These hoary strangers,” writes James Breasted of the Pyramid Texts, “often remain

strangers until they disappear; we have no means of making their acquaintance or forcing them to reveal to us their names or the message which they bear, and no art of lexicography can force them all to yield up their secrets,” for theirs is “a fabric of life, thought, and experience largely unfamiliar or entirely unknown to us.”<sup>20</sup> Speaking of what have always been thought much easier texts, Adriaan de Buck states, “It is difficult to suppress a feeling of skepticism as to the intelligibility of the B[ook of the] D[ead] version, not so much of its separate sentences, which as a rule are not difficult to translate, but above all things of the plot and story of the spell as a whole.”<sup>21</sup> “I may say frankly,” writes Rudolf Anthes of an excellent popular edition of inscriptions in the tomb of Tutankhamun, “that I wonder what a reader not very well acquainted with Egyptian religion may possibly get out of the

study of these texts and pictures. He may find in them scattered ideas which appeal to him in one way or another, but he will hardly know if his interpretations harmonize with what the Egyptians actually thought.”<sup>22</sup>

But is the Egyptologist much better off? “One is often asked this very simple question,” remarks T. Eric Peet. “Is it possible to read a piece of Egyptian as easily, as quickly, and as certainly as a piece of Greek or Latin? The answer to this must certainly be No.”<sup>23</sup> “Egyptian texts are never easy,” Peet explains elsewhere. “Every translation ought to be accompanied by a copy of the original...and by a mass of critical notes...which repel the average reader.”<sup>24</sup> But translations into English are properly meant for English readers who know no other language. The Egyptologist may be expected to read the original; what the average reader has a right to is a

flawless translation here and now, and through the years various Egyptologists, by pretending that they could supply such, have beguiled the public and exploited its restless impatience with devastating effect against Joseph Smith.

The trouble is, in short, that the Egyptians just don't speak our language; every sentence of theirs, from our point of view, is in a technical jargon "which," as Santillana observes, "can hardly be understood if it is not even recognized. Nobody can interpret farther than he understands.... The most refined philological methods in the hands of expert philologists will yield only childish stuff out of them, if childish stuff is expected. Technical indications which would make clear sense to scientists [or to Latter-day Saints!] go unnoticed or mistranslated.... It should be kept in mind that every translation is a mere function of the translator's

expectation.”<sup>25</sup> From this it would seem that no matter how well one knows one’s Gardiner, or how many years one has spent in Egypt, one may still be totally excluded from the real meaning of any Egyptian text. Many scholars have known Greek better than any man alive knows Egyptian, yet to this day Greek literature is full of texts that no scholar even pretends to understand; is Egyptian so much more obliging?

## **How Did Joseph Smith Translate? What He Meant by a Translation**

What we are saying is that there is still an unbridged gulf, broad and deep, between the real message of the Joseph Smith Papyri and what purport to be translations of them. It is ironic that the chief weapon against the Prophet Joseph has always been the word *translate*, a word which none of his critics has bothered to define but which, if carefully

considered, might lead to fruitful investigation.

What the philologists have always overlooked is the *positive* contribution of Joseph Smith as a translator. He was a translator in the grand manner, whose calling was to convey the thoughts of the ancients to his own generation by any and all means which the Spirit put at his disposal. The work of restoring all things and “bringing all things together in one,” the last great summing-up in which nothing should be lost, entails a great meeting of cultures and languages and requires, above all things, an inspired interpreter. Joseph Smith’s proper title is “Prophet, Seer, Revelator, and *Translator*,” the last referring to his unique and particular work and calling. He understands “translating,” in its broad and proper sense, as the handing on of any part of the heritage of the past from one generation

or culture or language to another, in which the rendering of written texts is only part of the process. Webster gives as the primary meaning of *translate* “to bear, remove, or change from one place, condition, etc., to another; to carry over; to transfer.” Only when we get to his seventh definition do we find “to render into another language.... Broadly, to carry over from *any* one form or mode of expression to another; to interpret into another medium.” Even here, the idea of a “literal” translation must yield to that of interpretation, which is something quite different.

It is in this true and correct sense that Joseph Smith uses the word *translation*, while his critics, by employing it in a more narrow and limited sense, would ever turn it as a weapon against him. “While we were doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed unto us, we came to the

twenty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter of John, which was given unto us as follows" (D&C 76:15). Right here we can see that the critics of the papyri are wasting their time. The Prophet never claims to be operating as a linguist—the translation is *given* to him. We are reminded that he translated large parts of the Bible in the same way. Why, then, do scholars waste their time manipulating dubious Egyptian texts when a whole volume of Joseph Smith's translations lies at hand for comparison with countless translations by competent scholars of the very same biblical material? Take the passage from John mentioned above by Joseph Smith, for example; are there not hundreds of scholars in the world today who can translate it "from the original Greek" better than Joseph Smith ever could? There are, and that should settle the matter. Only it doesn't. For if Wilamowitz-Moellendorff is

right, how can any scholar ever be sure that he knows what John himself had in mind when he wrote those words which have baffled the doctors to this day? The “Johannine mystery” is today as much of a mystery as ever, and until we know just what John meant by the words attributed to him, we are in no position to claim that his words have been correctly translated.

Only within comparatively recent years have scholars such as Klaus Koch arrived at an estimate of the Apocrypha that exactly matches that of Doctrine and Covenants 91—namely, that “there are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly,” but also that “there are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men....[Therefore] it is not needful that the Apocrypha should be translated” (D&C 91:1–3). Here we are reminded that the

problem is not one of translating from one *language* into another, for the incorrect interpolations are in the same languages as the rest, and no knowledge of language alone could produce a correct translation, which calls for nothing less than the original manuscript free of all errors, even those made by the original writer; and it is doubtful whether any such text ever existed, for the hand is never completely obedient to the mind. To put it bluntly, short of revelation, no real translation of John is possible, and that is why Bible experts today assure us that all translations are tentative and imperfect. But in section 91, *translation* plainly means *transmission*, which, as we have seen, is what a translation really is; we are told that certain parts are not translated correctly because they are false interpolations, yet they are in the same language as the rest and just as easy to

“translate,” as far as that goes—but that is not the point, which is that, regardless of the language, they do not tell us what the original author wanted to say. No one ever stated the case more clearly than the Prophet Joseph himself when he said, concerning 2 Peter 1, that “the things that are written are only hints of things which existed in the prophet’s mind.”<sup>26</sup>

In 1835 William W. Phelps speaks of the Prophet as being “continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham,”<sup>27</sup> using translation as the equivalent of deciphering—which it is. Again, speaking of what he entitled the “*Explanation of the Above Cut*” in the Book of Abraham, he writes, “the above *translation* is given as far as we have any right to give it at the present time” (Facsimile 2), here identifying translation with interpretation or explanation of a

picture in which there was no writing whatever. When we are told that “a few leaves, opened by Mr. Chandler for exhibition were shown to Professor Anthon of New York and Dr. Mitchell of Philadelphia, each of whom commenced a translation,” we can be sure that those men were not translating as they did from the classical languages which they knew so well —it was perfectly correct in this case to call any attempt at interpreting an old document a translation.<sup>28</sup> When we read in the eighth article of faith, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God,” we are given to understand that the latter work, though containing “the mistakes of men” (Book of Mormon title page), is still translated more correctly than the Bible. Well, why translate the Bible at all? Can’t

we study Hebrew and Greek and read it in the original? We can, but again that is not the point, which is that it is not only the English Bible which has not been translated correctly; the ancient texts have also suffered in transmission. When Joseph Smith announced in the King Follett Discourse that some “old Jew without any authority”<sup>29</sup> had altered the first verse of Genesis, he served notice that that verse as it stands cannot be translated correctly, no matter how well one knows Hebrew. By using the word *translation* in one sense while Joseph Smith uses it in another, his critics have sought to do him great damage. What he means by *translation* is clearly apparent from a revelation given while the Prophet was producing the Book of Moses in December 1830: “Soon after the words of Enoch were given [these are contained in the Book of Moses], the Lord gave the following

commandment:... ‘Behold, I say unto you that it is not expedient in me that ye should translate any more until ye shall go to the Ohio.’”<sup>30</sup> In what language were “the words of Enoch” which Joseph had been translating? Where was the document? All we know is that Joseph Smith did produce —“translate”—a book of Enoch, which, matched with many ancient texts discovered since the Prophet’s day, must be accepted as an authentic piece of the large and growing corpus of Enoch literature.<sup>31</sup>

It is also important to understand Joseph Smith’s method of translation. Typical of a carefully cultivated misunderstanding is Wallace Turner’s statement to the world that “examination of these originals has heightened the confidence of some Egyptologists that the Book of Abraham is not a translation.”<sup>32</sup> What originals? We have just seen that there has been a serious

misunderstanding on this point: the Book of Breathings is not the pretended original text of the Book of Abraham at all. If the Book of Abraham were a hodgepodge of nonsense, one might well look for its source almost anywhere. But far from being nonsense, it tells a story of Abraham which subsequent documentary discoveries have confirmed in detail; and this, along with the now well-established tradition that Abraham did write an autobiography about his Egyptian experiences and that it was preserved and read by his descendants in Egypt, makes a very strong case for the proposition that the Book of Abraham was indeed taken from ancient writings.<sup>33</sup> If there is anything that the Mormons have always cried from the housetops, it is that Joseph Smith did *not* translate after the manner of the scholars; yet now Grant Heward and his friends repeatedly put this fact forth as a brilliant

discovery of modern science. Of course the Prophet did not translate in the manner of the Egyptologists—he had neither their tools nor their problems, for he had another method. Consider the descriptive heading to section 7 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, April 1829, when they inquired through the Urim and Thummim.... The revelation [referred to] is a translated version of the record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself.” Here we have a *translation* which Joseph Smith did not make—it was *given* to him, and he calls it a *revelation*; yet it was made from a real document, on *parchment*, or treated leather, which *John* wrote with his hand and then *hid* away. We know from discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls that it was the custom among saintly communities of Palestine in John’s day to

write important things on leather and then hide them up in caves, so that is an authentic touch. But the remarkable thing is that, though the translation was made from a real and tangible document, such a document was never in the hands of Joseph Smith; it may still be in existence in some corner of a cave or a monastery or even a museum, but it is plain that Joseph Smith never had it—he didn't need to have it or to know how to read it, for the whole thing was given to him: “Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given unto us of the Spirit” (D&C 76:18). The translation of John, like the book of Enoch, was made from a document that was never in the Prophet's possession and may indeed have been destroyed thousands of years ago. Did he know the original language of Enoch? Nobody does, but that makes no difference when a translation is not worked out but given to one by revelation.

When he first got the plates, the Prophet recalled, "I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some of them" (Joseph Smith—History 1:62). Mere copying was easy enough, and with that he had no trouble; but translating was another matter—for that he needed the supernatural help of the Urim and Thummim. This was not translation by normal methods and was never proclaimed as such. As everybody knows, the rendering of an exact translation, especially from an ancient language, is supposed to be an impressively slow and meticulous process. But that is not how he worked. "Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon, without apparent hesitation, as fast as a scribe could write it in longhand. There is no chance for error on this point. The entire Whitmer family,

besides Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Joseph's wife, sat and listened, or had free access to listen, to the record as it grew day by day during the entire month of June, 1829.”<sup>34</sup> As his wife tells it, “I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscript unless he was inspired: for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him.”<sup>35</sup> “There were no delays over obscure passages, no difficulties over the choice of words, no stoppages from the ignorance of the translator; no time was wasted in investigations or argument over the value, intent or meaning of certain characters, and there were no references to authorities. . . . All was as simple as when a clerk writes

from dictation. The translation of the characters appeared on the Urim and Thummim, sentence by sentence, and as soon as one was correctly transcribed the next would appear.”<sup>36</sup> And so, in seventy-five working days, between 7 April 1829 and the first week of July 1829, a book of 264,000 words was turned out at an average of 3,500 words a day.<sup>37</sup>

Plainly, this peculiar type of translation depends on getting in the spirit and is not to be accomplished by intellectual effort alone. Of the Apocrypha the Lord told the Prophet, “It is not needful that the Apocrypha should be translated. Therefore, *whoso* readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth; and *whoso* is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom; and *whoso* receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited. Therefore it is not needful that it should be translated” (D&C 91:3–6). From

this it appears that all men, and not just chosen prophets, have a right to inspiration if they are worthy, and that a translation is really a means of helping those to understand who are unable to get the Spirit for themselves.

Nothing could be less like the normal ways of scholarship than the inspired mood and method by which the Prophet Joseph did his translation. "In the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the *Book of Mormon* was translated by the gift and power of God and

not by any power of man.”<sup>38</sup> If all the Prophet had to do was to read off an English text, why did he need the original characters in front of him? He didn’t! “I frequently wrote day after day,” Emma Smith recalls, “often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us....He had neither manuscript nor book to read from....The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth.”<sup>39</sup> David Whitmer confirms this: “He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes...and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be a parchment, on which would appear the characters of the plates...and immediately below would appear the translation in English.”<sup>40</sup>

## **Are Gadgets Necessary? The Place of Intuition**

Why, then, did Joseph Smith need a Urim and Thummim, and why did he go through the greatest pains and perils to get and keep the plates if he didn't really need them? Can't we forget all the hardware and be guided by the Spirit alone? No, because God does not want it that way. Whether we find it agreeable and rational or not, God makes use of both human agents and physical implements in carrying out his purposes on the earth, not because he needs to but because he wants to help us help ourselves. We are here, among other purposes, to learn, and we will learn precious little if we get all our solutions from the answer book; we must have our faith tested and our skills improved. Being here to gain mastery of new dimensions of existence, we need practice and training in subduing the strange and

difficult medium of the flesh, with which, thanks to the resurrection, we are destined to live forever; we cannot ignore physical bodies and physical things.

Let those who are still shocked at the proposition that the Spirit works with and through physical devices consider the visits of the Lord to his disciples after the resurrection. There he stands before them, the source of all knowledge and the wellspring of the scriptures themselves; he could well push the dusty books aside and admonish his listeners to heed him alone, from whom all the books came in the first place. Instead of that, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27); among the Nephites he called for the records and personally inspected them for errors and omissions, admonishing the people to spend their days

reading the words of a prophet who had been dead for seven hundred years, “for great are the words of Isaiah” (3 Nephi 23:1)! If the Holy Ghost “bring[s] all things to [our] remembrance” (John 14:26), one may well ask, why do we need to record anything at all? Because God has so commanded, “for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23).

We must not think that the Lord, in giving his servants special devices to assist them, was letting them off easy. He did not hand them the answer book, but only a slide rule. It takes far more formidable qualifications and far more intense concentration and cerebration to use a seer stone than it does to use a dictionary; similarly, the existence in our midst of computers does not mean, as some fondly suppose, that mathematicians and translators and genealogists no longer have to think—they have to think harder than ever. A Urim and Thummim, like a

dictionary, is only an aid to the translator who knows how to work it and may be gradually dispensed with as he becomes more proficient in his spiritual exercise. Admittedly, translating with a Urim and Thummim is not the normal way; it does not require philological training, but training of a far more exacting sort since, like the seer stone, it shows “things which [are] not visible to the natural eye” (Moses 6:36); it operates, as Buckminster Fuller would say, by the mind and not by the brain.<sup>41</sup> That requires even greater effort and discipline. “When a man works by faith,” said the Prophet, “he works by mental exertion... instead of exerting his physical powers.”<sup>42</sup> It is the exertion of the mind, and it is the most strenuous and exacting work of all.

Certainly, the documents with which Joseph Smith was dealing could be translated in no other way than by the Spirit. How can any

mortal ever know what the original first writer of Genesis had in mind save by the power of revelation? And without that knowledge, *no* translation is possible. It was Brother Joseph's calling to interpret the minds of dispensations other than our own, and during the short time in which he worked at it he covered an astonishing amount of ground, handling huge masses of material which could only be rightly understood and explained by the power of revelation. In fulfilling his formidable mission, he was never bound to any particular method or text or vocabulary or rules of grammar since they are merely aids to any translator's ignorance. Every good translator will tell you that after all the aids and implements at his disposal, including his own long training, have been brought to bear, it is, in the last analysis, his own *feeling* for things that makes a convincing translation—without intuition he

could never make it. If truly scientific translation were possible, machine translation would have been perfected long ago; but where wide gaps of time and culture exist, such a thing as a perfect translation is out of the question: in the end, it is the translator's own imponderable intuition that is his claim to distinction. The most learned linguists do not make the best translators, and the uncanny skill of a Scaliger, Hicks, George Smith, or Francis Ll. Griffith could divine the meaning of texts before which science and scholarship were helpless.

Even while they deplore anything that smacks of the mysterious or defies cold logic, no scholars are more keenly aware of the intuitive nature of translation than the Egyptologists. They constantly mention it. No one has ever worked harder to achieve a foolproof scientific method of rendering Egyptian texts than Gardiner, yet his final

verdict is that “the *only* basis we can have for preferring one rendering to another, when once the exigencies of grammar and dictionary have been satisfied—and these leave a large margin for divergencies—is an *intuitive* appreciation of the trend of the ancient writer’s *mind*. A very precarious basis, all will admit.”<sup>43</sup> Note that this most conservative of Egyptologists leads us right to Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s concept of a translation. Writing nearly four decades before Gardiner, Naville points out that the assumption of a perfectly correct translation on scholarly scientific principles can only lead to frustration: “We have perhaps missed the meaning because we have always broken the expression down into component elements and then translated each of those elements literally, which has led us on the wrong path.” Analysis can be destructive, and this sets a definite limit on the claims of

scholarship.<sup>44</sup> The key to Egyptian is not to be found in a grammar book or dictionary; it depends on knowing the *Denkart* (way of thinking) of the ancient East, according to Hermann Junker, which still eludes us.<sup>45</sup> How can we be expected to know what the Egyptians had in mind when even the Egyptian scribes had difficulty in understanding what they were writing?<sup>46</sup>

How can we escape the absurd conclusion of many an Egyptologist, that the Egyptians took a willful delight in the incomprehensible?<sup>47</sup> The only hope is to follow Professor Hans Bonnet's advice: every student should get "the *feeling* for the complex reality of the textual content."<sup>48</sup> Yes, but how? By cultivating "an infinite naïveté, a massive shedding of one's own intellectual habits," is Philippe Derchain's answer. After learning everything that can be known about the Egyptians, he suggests, one

then learns to “think Egyptian” by “imagining to oneself how [Egyptians] would react,” taking care to be “sensible to the finest nuances” of a text.<sup>49</sup>

That is all very well, but if there is anything that *cannot* be acquired by study, it is an “infinite naïveté”; and the only way one becomes an Egyptologist in this world is not to shed one’s own intellectual habits, but to conform in all things to the most conventional and regimented forms of departmental behavior on earth. The Egyptologist is the last person in the world to meet Derchain’s requirements; but even if one were to succeed, who could judge whether he was really thinking like an Egyptian? If “the problem for the translator is, how to give the reader the feeling that he ‘was there,’”<sup>50</sup> how is he to do it if he was never there himself? It is more than a vast gulf of time that lies between us and the

Egyptians—it is an insuperable wall of religion. “Religion is the *Schmerzenskind* of Egyptology,” wrote the great Erman at the end of his life. “For half a century I have wrestled with it, and how little certainty has come out of it all! Everyone still invents his own Egyptian religion.... One might say that whatever we come up with is wrong, because the task is simply insoluble. I have never been able to escape from this verdict.”<sup>51</sup>

Santillana notes that the *Wörterbuch* gives thirty-seven different terms for *heaven* “whose nuances are left to the translator and used according to his lights. So elaborate instructions in the Book of the Dead, referring to the soul’s celestial voyage, translate into ‘mystical’ talk, and must be treated as holy mumbo jumbo.”<sup>52</sup>

To this day, no Egyptologist can do more than pretend to understand the Book of Breathings or the facsimiles to the Book of

Abraham.<sup>53</sup> Though by departmental courtesy we credit them with knowledge they do not possess, it is safe to say that Egyptologists are still without a foothold in reality. Fortunately for us, the most forthright statement on the subject of translating Egyptian has been made by Bruno Stricker in a specific reference to the Book of Breathings: “The text is so pregnant,” he writes, “that well-nigh every word, whether substantive, verb, or even preposition, possesses a hidden (*mystieke*) content. The mere business of translating, under such circumstances, becomes virtually impossible. A translation can here be nothing more than a caricature.”<sup>54</sup> Such is the predicament of any scholar who undertakes to translate the Joseph Smith Papyri.

## Method versus Results

It is, first and last, on the grounds of

method that Egyptologists have weighed Joseph Smith in the balance and found him wanting. Once the method has been discredited, it has been considered unnecessary to look further into the results of that method. But the Prophet has saved us the trouble of faulting his method by announcing in no uncertain terms that it is a method unique to himself depending entirely on divine revelation. That places the whole thing beyond the reach of *direct* examination and criticism but leaves wide open the really effective means of testing any method, which is by the results it produces. The results in this case are a formidable corpus of purportedly ancient records which can be readily tested as such. Yet to this day, the critics insist on confining their efforts strictly to an exposé of Joseph Smith's method, while avoiding with almost hysterical touchiness any discussion of the results. The

case of Joseph Smith versus the scholars thus presents a remarkable parallel to the more recent experience of Michael Ventris with his critics.

Some years ago a young English architect by the name of Ventris announced that he had decoded the so-called Minoan Script B, which had baffled scholars for almost a century, and invited all to put his findings to the test. Instead of welcoming his contribution with open arms, the most eminent authorities condemned it outright, for Ventris had presumed to aver that Minoan B was related to Greek, whereas Sir Arthur Evans, though he could not read it, had announced eighty years before that it was *not* Greek; moreover, Ventris was very young and, worst of all, he who presumed to question the most eminent scholars was himself a mere *amateur*. To justify the out-and-out rejection of Ventris's findings was

simply a matter of showing that his method was completely at variance with the practice of the experts: if he didn't use the correct scientific method, he couldn't possibly arrive at the right results, could he?

In the young man's defense, Professor Leonard R. Palmer of Oxford pointed out that the objections of the experts were really quite irrelevant: "Criticism of his basic assumptions, his methods, and the inadequate nature of the script is beside the point."<sup>55</sup> How so? These were the very things the authorities pounced on in order to demolish Ventris; if the man's basic assumptions are wrong, his methods unacceptable, and his evidence inadequate, what more witness do we need? Why is all that "beside the point"? Because, Palmer explains, in producing his translations, Ventris has "committed himself irrevocably to a precise set of predictions of great complexity" which can only be verified

or refuted by the discovery of texts unknown to Ventris when he made his predictions—texts “which did not enter into the original calculation.”<sup>56</sup> Once such texts are available, the test of Ventris is “simply the verification of a set of predictions, *regardless of the way in which they were arrived at.*”<sup>57</sup> Given such a perfect control, long syllogistic arguments based on method are a waste of time. When texts unknown at the time Ventris laid down his rules were duly discovered and confirmed his position on point after point, the critics, as might be expected, were prompt to “ascribe [any] ‘successes’ to pure chance,” pointing out that since all sorts of sound combinations were possible, “some sort of meaning [could] be wrung out of any such text.”<sup>58</sup> Such an argument, Palmer observes, impresses only those who have not wrestled with these texts and who conveniently ignore the possibility of

checking the probabilities mathematically in each specific case. In truth, each language uses only a few countless possible phonemes and disposes of the rest, so that if Ventris uses a shotgun, he is not shooting at a solid target, but at “space thinly peopled by patterned constellations”; and if each pellet connects, that can hardly be pure chance.<sup>59</sup> The case of Joseph Smith and the Book of Abraham provides a striking parallel to this. He, too, offended basic assumptions of scholarship—what possible relationship could there be between the religions of the polytheistic Egyptians and the monotheistic Hebrews? the indignant Professor Breasted asked in 1912. Joseph Smith, too, was a youthful amateur, totally unacquainted with the methods and materials of scholarship: his methods were simply outrageous—no need to look any farther for evidence to damn him. And they never *did* look any farther. But in

publishing the Book of Abraham, the Prophet, even more than Ventris, had “committed himself irrevocably to a precise set of predictions of great complexity”; he told a story of Abraham that nobody knew anything about in his day and threw in books of Enoch and Moses for good measure. Within the past hundred years, hundreds of ancient documents “which did not enter into the original calculation” of Joseph Smith have come to light—all vindicating the strange stories and teachings he has given us about the ancient patriarchs. Like young Ventris, Joseph let loose with his shotgun, and his critics were quick to protest that with so many guesses, some were bound to be right by pure coincidence and common sense; but in his case also, when hundreds of buckshot hit their distant and illusive targets, mere chance is ruled out. With the sources now available (but unknown in the Prophet’s

time) to check his stories of Abraham, Enoch, and Moses, criticism of his basic assumptions, methods, and documents as unscientific and inadequate is indeed “beside the point.”

Over the signatures of Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith, there appeared in the *Times and Seasons* a letter dated 28 October 1840, a statement which “breathes that spirit of liberty in the pursuit of knowledge characteristic of the work of God in the last days,” according to the editors. “As we consider it perfectly consistant with our calling, with reason and revelation,” the brethren wrote, “that we should form a knowledge of kingdoms and countries, whether it be at home or abroad, whether it be ancient or modern, or whether it be of things past [or] present or to come, whether it be in heaven, earth or hell, air or seas; or whether we obtain this knowledge

by being local or travelling, by study or by faith, by dreams or by visions, by revelation or by prophecy, it mattereth not unto us; if we can but obtain a correct [view of] principle and knowledge of things as they are, in their true light, past, present and to come.”<sup>60</sup> Here is a clear statement of the principle enunciated by Palmer: it “mattereth not” what method is used, as long as one finds the way to demonstrably valid and correct information. The coming forth of some of the Joseph Smith Papyri in our time is a reminder that many channels of light and truth are open to us and that the Spirit chooses its own methods. Latter-day Saints are constantly asking: How did Joseph Smith translate this or that? Do we still have a seer stone? Will we ever get the Urim and Thummim back? What about the sealed parts of the plates? Do we have the original text of the Book of Abraham? Where is the Book of

Joseph?—etc., etc. With Palmer, this writer views all such questions as totally irrelevant to establishing the bona fides of the Prophet. They do not even make sense as expressions of normal human curiosity since Joseph Smith made it perfectly clear that the vital ingredient in every transmission of ancient or heavenly knowledge is always the Spirit, which places his experiences beyond the comprehension and analysis of ordinary mortals.

But if the Prophet can never be pinned down in matters of sources and method, it is from the nature of the thing and not from any desire on his part to escape examination. Far from it—he was always inviting his critics to put the inspired writings to all such valid and established tests as may be applied to any purportedly ancient document, and he gave them a hundred times more evidence than they would need to determine the

measure of their authenticity. If “it mattereth not” by what imponderable method Joseph Smith produced his translations, as long as he came up with the right answers, it matters even less from what particular edition of what particular text he was translating. It is enough at present to know that the Prophet was translating from real books of Abraham, Moses, Enoch, Mosiah, and Zenos, whose teachings now reach us in a huge and growing corpus of newly discovered writings. But instead of matching Joseph Smith’s bold and explicit images of the past, “regardless of the way in which they were arrived at,” with what is now being found, his critics can still think of no better attack than to go on chanting their monotonous and forlorn refrain: “He was no scholar, he was not one of us—he did not use our methods!”

## Notes

1. Georg Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1909–12), vol. 3; and Simeone Levi, *Raccolta dei segni ieratici egizi* (Turin: Paravia, 1880).
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6. Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay on Myth and the Frame of Time* (Boston: Gambit, 1969), 120.
7. Rolf Gundlach and Wolfgang Schenkel, “M.A.A.T.: Eine System zur lexikalischen und grammatischen Erschliessung altägyptischer Texte mit Hilfe einer elektronischen Datenverarbeitungsanlage (Projektbeschreibung),” *CdE* 42 (1967): 51, 58–59.
8. Klaus Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham,” *Dialogue* 3/3 (1968): 119 n. 39.
9. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 410, emphasis added.
10. William J. Entwistle, *Aspects of Language* (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), 4.
11. Peter Le Page Renouf, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of*

*Ancient Egypt* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1880), 176–77.

12. Edouard H. Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie* (Berlin: Asher, 1886), 1:2–3.
13. Gaston Maspero, “Une formule des stèles funéraires de la XIIe Dynastie,” in *Études de mythologie et d’archéologie égyptiennes*, ed. Gaston Maspero, BE 1 (Paris: Leroux, 1893), 22.
14. Adolf Erman, *Mein Werden und mein Wirken: Erinnerungen eines alten Berliner Gelehrten* (Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1929), 271, 281.
15. Erman, *Mein Werden und mein Wirken*, 254.
16. Of the second, Naville, after years of toil, regrets that he has “so far been unable to translate these three Egyptian words in a satisfactory manner”; see Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, 1, 23–24. “The idea of MâΔrou = has exhausted the efforts of Egyptologists from the beginning”; see Alexandre Moret, *Mystères égyptiens* (Paris: Colin, 1913), 136–37.
17. Rudolf Anthes, review of *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, by Alexandre Piankoff, *Artibus Asiae* 20 (1957): 92.
18. Anthes, review of *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 93.
19. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 24.
20. James Henry Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 90–91.

21. Adriaan de Buck, “The Earliest Version of Book of the Dead 78,” *JEA* 35 (1949): 87.
22. Anthes, review of *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 92.
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## Chapter 4

# A More Complete Text of the Book of Breathings

Following is a reproduction and translation of Papyrus Louvre N. 3284.<sup>1</sup> The highlighted passages of the Egyptian and the bold words of the translated text are those occurring *also* in Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X, where they are found in the same order as in the Louvre manuscript, showing the Joseph Smith text to be an abbreviated version of the longer and better preserved Louvre document. Since the latter contains the whole of the Joseph Smith text intact almost word for word (the few differences will be noted) and presents a fuller and more detailed, as well as better written, account of

the ordinances, the analysis and commentary in the chapters that follow are based on them. To simplify reference, the lines of Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 are numbered both successively and by columns/lines (e.g., 48 [3/5]).

## **Text and Translation of Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 with Variants from Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X**

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 (1/5)  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10 (1/10)  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15 (1/15)  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20 (1/20)  
21  
22

Figure 10. P. Louvre N. 3284 col. 1.

## Nature and Purpose of the Book

- 1 (1/1). Beginning of the Book of Breathings, which Isis made for her brother Osiris, to make his *ba* live, to
2. make his body (corpse) live, to make young all his members anew; that he might enter (*lit. join*) the horizon along with his

**father, Re, to make**

3. his *ba* appear in glory in heaven in the disk of the moon, and that his body might shine in (*or as*) Orion in the womb of the lower heaven (*nn.t*) of Nut;
4. and **to cause to happen the same things for the Osiris** (*i.e.*, the candidate or initiate), the God's Father and Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-
- 5 (1/5). Amon-Re, Bull-of-His-Mother, upon his great throne, *Wsir-Wr*,<sup>2</sup> Justified [JSP has **Hor, Justified**], the son of one of like honors to these,
6. *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*,<sup>3</sup> Justified. Hide it! Hide it! **Do not let any man read it! It is beneficial**
7. to a man in the next world (*hr.t-ntr*) when he lives (*or that he may live*) again, having been proven **true (effective)**<sup>4</sup> **countless (millions of) times.**

# Purification Rites and Entering the Temple

8. Speak the words (Recite as follows):

**Hail,** Osiris, God's Father and Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-

9. Amon, *Wsîr-Wr* [JSP: **Hor**], **Justified**, son of one of like offices, *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy* [JSP: **born to Tay[khebyt]**], Justified!

Thou art pure,

10 (1/10). thy heart is pure, cleansed is thy front **with washing, thy back with cleansing water** (*twr + water ideogram*), **thine inward parts with soda** and natron.

11. No member of thine causeth offense.

Purified is the Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-Wr*, **Justified**, Son of [JSP: **born of**]

12. *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy* [JSP: **Taykhebyt**], **Justified, in the (these) standing waters** of the Meadows of Rest on the north side  
13. of the Field of Grasshoppers. **Edjo**

(W3dy.t, Uto) and Nekhbet have made thee pure in the eighth [JSP: **fourth**] hour of the night,

14. in the eighth [JSP: **fourth**] hour of the day. Come thou, Osiris, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-*

15 (1/15). *t3.wy*, **Justified, that thou mayest enter into the broad Hall of the Two Maats since thou hast been cleansed from all defilement**

16. and all sin. Stone of Truth is thy name! Hail, God's Father, Prophet of Amon-Re,

17. King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon, *Wsir-Wr* [JSP: **the Osiris Hor**], **Justified**, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*,

18. **Justified!** Thou enterest into the duat in a state of **perfect (great) purity** (*or by the great purification*), with **which** the Two Maats have washed thee in the great hall (*or court*).

19. There has been performed for thee, yea,

there has been performed for thee a washing in the Hall (*or Court*) of Geb; thy members have been purified **in the Hall** (*or Court*)

## The Creation (Resurrection) of Man

20 (1/20). **of Shu.** Thou art about to behold **Re in his coming down**, Atum in the evening; Amon is at thy side, bestowing upon thee

21. breath (of life), while Ptah forms **thy body (members).** Thou enterest (*or that thou mayest enter*) **the horizon in company with Re;** they receive (*or that they may receive*) thy *ba*

22. into the *nšm.t*-bark along with Osiris. They deify (sanctify, exalt) thy *ba* in the House (*or Hall*) of Geb; thou art justified for time and eternity.

أَلَّا يُؤْتَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَا أَنْهَا كَفَرَتِي	23
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	24
وَلَكُمْ يَوْمٌ تُرَدَّنُونَ	25
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	26
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	27 (2/5)
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	28
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	29
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	30
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	31
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	32 (2/10)
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	33
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	34
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	35
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	36
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	37 (2/15)
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	38
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	39
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	40
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	41
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	42 (2/20)
كَلِيلٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَسَبَتْ	43

Figure 11. P. Louvre N. 3284 col. 2.

23 (2/1). [Recite as follows:] Osiris, God's Father, Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon, *Wsir-Wr* [JSP: Hor],

24. **Justified**, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified. [JSP: born to Tay[khebyt.]] Abiding is thy name, firm (or enduring) thy flesh (corpse), hale is

25. thy mummy. There is no holding thee back in heaven or earth. Made to shine is thy countenance in the presence of Re; **living is thy ba in the presence of**
26. **Amon. (Ever) youthful is thy body (corpse) in the presence of Osiris. Thou breathest henceforth for time and eternity.** Thy *ba* makes for thee
- 27 (2/5). invocation offerings of bread, beer, flesh, and fowl, of libation water and **incense as the requirements of each day.** Thy flesh is upon
28. **thy bones, made like thy very form(s) upon the earth: Thou drinkest with thy throat, thou eatest with thy mouth,**
29. thou receivest (**offering**) bread, along with the *bas* of the gods. Anubis guards thee; he is (*lit. makes*) thy security.
30. **There is no turning thee away from the gates** of the *duat*. Thoth, **the Most High (twice great [different spelling in JSP]),**

**Lord of Hermopolis**, comes up to thee,  
having written [JSP: has written] for  
thee

31. writings [JSP: **a book**] of breathings  
**with his own fingers, so that thy ba may**  
**go on breathing** forever and thou renew  
**thy form**
- 32 (2/10). **as upon the earth among the**  
**living, thou being deified along with the**  
**bas of the gods. Thy heart is the heart**  
**of Re;**
33. **thy members are the members of the**  
**great god (himself).**
34. Hail, Osiris, God's Father, Prophet of  
Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of  
Min-Amon,
35. **Wsir-Wr, Justified** [JSP: **Osiris Hor**  
**Justified**], Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*,  
**Justified! Amon is at thy side constantly**  
**(every day [JSP adds: in the Temple (or**  
**House) of Re]) engaged in (hr, concerned**

with)

36. renewing thee (*or* thy renewing) in life.

[*JSP: Thou repeatest life.*] Wepwawet reports (opens, announces) to thee the right road. Thou seest with thine eye, thou hearest with **thy two ears**, thou speakest

37 (2/15). **with thy mouth, thou walkest with thy two legs.** Thy ba is deified in the duat, being about to (*r; so as to*) make whatever transformation (*hprw*) it desires.

## The Garden Story

38. Thou makest the **rustlings (whisperings, breezes, scatterings, splittings) of the** [JSP adds: most] **noble ished-tree in Heliopolis when thou awakenest**

39. **every day and seest (or upon beholding) the ray(s) of the sun.** Amon comes to thee bearing the breath(s) of life; **he causes thee**

40. **to begin (or make) breathing in thy**

**coffin and come up to earth every day.** [JSP continues: **There is given to thee the book...]. The Book of Breathings by Thoth is as thy protection(s);**

41. **thou breathest by it every day** [JSP adds: **like Re**] **when thine eye beholds the rays of Aton. They call thee Maat (or they refer to thee as Maat)** in the presence of Osiris. They write the

42 (2/20). *mʒ ‘-hrw* (Justified) formula [*ideogram for speech or utterance*] upon thy body. Horus the protector of **his father** [JSP adds: **Horus the Behdetite**] protects [*hw; JSP: hnm, embraces, unites with*] **thy body and deifies thy spirit (ba) like all the gods** [JSP: **as all the gods do, or in the manner of all the gods**]. The ba

43. **of Re is giving life** to thy *ba*; the *ba* of Shu is infusing (uniting) **thy two nostrils**.

44 (3/1). **Hail thou, Osiris, God's Father, the Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods,**

Prophet

45. of Min-Amon, *Wsir-Wr* [JSP: **Osiris Hor**], **Justified**, Son of [JSP: **born of Taykhebyt**] *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, **Justified**.  
**Thy ba breathes in** (any)
46. place thou desirest, thou being in the place (seat) of Osiris; Chief of the Westerners is thy name. It is Hapy the ancient (the great), the inundation-god, who comes to thee from Elephantine,
47. filling thine offering table with offerings of meat and fowl. O Osiris, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, Son of

٤٤	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٤٥	إِنَّا لَنَا مِنَ الْأَنْوَارِ
٤٦	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٤٧	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٤٨ (٣/٥)	إِنَّا لَنَا مِنَ الْأَنْوَارِ
٤٩	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٠	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥١	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٢	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٣ (١٠)	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٤	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٥	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٦	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٧	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٨ (٣/١٥)	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٥٩	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٦٠	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٦١	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٦٢	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٦٣ (٣/٢٠)	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٦٤	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
٦٥	لَمَّا دَعَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

Figure 12. P. Louvre N. 3284 col. 3.

## The Long Road Back

48 (3/5). *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified! There come to thee the gods of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt to guide thee

49. in acquiring a full knowledge of the eternities, that thy soul might live, and that thou mayest follow **Osiris and breathe in**

## Rostau.

50. *H3pw-nb=s* (*i.e.*, the necropolis) and the great god protect thee. Thy corpse lives **in**
51. **Busiris of the Thinite nome while thy ba lives in heaven all the time (every day).** Osiris, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr*,
52. Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*,  
Justified! Sekhmet hath power (*shm*) over those who conspire against thee.
- 53 (3/10). Horus the **Great of Heart is providing (making) thy protection; Horus the Rescuer [JSP: the Behdetite]** is procuring (making) thy heart; Horus the Seer is guarding

## Triumph (Coronation)

54. thy body. Thou art (*or Be*) firm in possession of **life, prosperity, health, remaining upon thy throne in the holy land (Deseret).** Come thou, Osiris, God's Father,

55. *Wsîr-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified! **Thou appearest in glory in**
56. **thy proper and perfect (*twt*) form** [JSP has a different spelling: *tyt* for *qʒi.w*], **in thy full ceremonial regalia, which you prepared while you were alive (or Having made preparation in life)**, thou passest the day hale and hearty, walking about and
57. breathing **everywhere**. Re shines upon **thy cavern (house, hill [JSP: high place])**, **Osiris (or O Osiris!), that thou mayest (or mayest thou) breathe** and live
- 58 (3/15). by his rays. It is Amon-Re who causeth **thy ka** [JSP adds: **living, protecting, or prospering**] to live. It is [JSP adds: **in or by**] **the Book of Breathings** that causeth thee to flourish.
59. **Thou art following Osiris**, a Horus, Lord of the *Henu*-ship (or of jubilations),

being as a great god at the head of (*or*  
among) **the gods**. Thy [P. Louvre N. 3284  
*omits "thy"*] **countenance liveth;**  
**beautiful** (*or perfect*) **is**

60. **thy form** (*or are thine offspring*); **thy name shall be firmly established** (*or flourish*) **henceforward** (**every day**).

Come to [*other manuscripts, including JSP, have: enter into the gods' [domain]*] the exalted (*or twice great*) temple **in Busiris to see the Chief of the Westerners**

61. **at the wag-festival.** **Pleasant** is thine **odor** as of the venerated ones [*JSP: as or among the young men*]; great is thy name among the [*JSP adds: very*] **elect** (dignitaries, blessed dead, mummies [*the determinative is doubled in the JSP*]).

62. **Hail, Osiris**, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr* [*JSP: Hor*], **Justified**, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-*  
63 (3/20). *t3.wy*, Justified! **Thy ba lives by**

**the Book of Breathings**, thou unitest with the same (*lit.* likewise [*JSP has:* [thou unitest with] a ba]). **Thou enterest** (*or Enter thou!*) **into the duat;**

64. **thine enemies do not exist, for thou art a deified ba in Busiris.** Thy heart is thine own, never to be separated from thee.
65. Thou hast thy two eyes, open always (every day).

[Joseph Smith Papyrus ends here!]

## **The Fearful Passage**

- 66 (4/1). Words to be spoken by the gods in the following of Osiris: O Osiris, God's Father, the Servant (Prophet) of the God Amon-Re,
67. King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon-Re, Bull-of-His-Mother, upon his great throne,
68. *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified! Mayest thou follow (*or*

Thou followest)

65	.....
66	.....
67	.....
68	.....
69 (4/5)	.....
70	.....
71	.....
72	.....
73	.....
74 (4/10)	.....
75	.....
76	.....
77	.....
78	.....
79 (4/15)	.....
80	.....
81	.....
82	.....
83	.....
84 (4/20)	.....
85	.....

Figure 13. P. Louvre N. 3284 col. 4.

69. Re; mayest thou follow Osiris; may thy *ba* live for time and eternity! Words to be spoken by the gods within the *duat*
- 70 (4/5). to Osiris, Head of the Westerners, on behalf of the Osiris, God's Father, *Wsr-Wr*; Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-*

71. *tȝ.wy*, Justified, to open (*or* to the end that there be opened) to him the gates of the *duat*, to receive thee (*or* that it may receive, *the word it being crossed out*)
72. in *hr.t-ntr*. Grant that his *ba* live forever.  
He has built mansions in *hr.t-ntr*.
73. Let his *ka* praise his god when he has received the Book of Breathings; grant him ability to breathe (make breathing)!
74. An offering brought by the king to Osiris, President of the Westerners, the great god, Lord of Abydos. He makes invocation
- 75 (4/10). offerings of bread, beer, flesh and fowl, wine and milk (*or ale*), a sacrifice, a food offering (feast of abundance), an offering of all things
76. agreeable to the *ka* of Osiris, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-pȝw.t*,
77. may thy *ba* be hale, may thy body live;  
mayest thou flourish by the written decree

of Re himself. Thou shalt never know  
death (diminution, extinction)

78. or pain, even as with Re, for time and all  
eternity!

79. O (*or Hail*) thou who comest striding  
forth from Heliopolis! The Osiris, God's  
Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-*  
*p3w.t*, is not guilty (*lit.* to him

80 (4/15). is no doing) of light-mindedness  
(*or wrongdoing*).<sup>5</sup>

81. O thou Great Assailant, who cometh  
forth from the warrior city, Osiris, God's  
Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born of

82. *Ns-hr-p3w.t-snb*, hath committed no  
robbery!

83. O Thou with the Beak, coming forth from  
Hermopolis, Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-*  
*Wr*; Justified, born of

84. *Ns-hr-p3w.t-snb*, hath not been guilty of  
rapacity (evil speech? oppression?)!

85 (4/20). Hail, (O) Swallower of the Eye,

who cometh forth from the Two Caverns!  
The Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-Wr*;  
Justified, born of

86. *Ns-hr-p3w.t-snb*, hath not taken property  
(things) in a high-handed manner.
- 87 (5/1). Hail, thou Terrible-of-face, coming  
forth from Rostau! Osiris, God's Father,  
*Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-p3w.t*,  
has not been contentious.
88. Hail, *Rw.ty* (Two Lionesses), coming  
forth from heaven! The Osiris, God's  
Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-*  
*p3w.t*, did not do iniquity in hardness of  
heart.
89. Hail, Thou Whose Eye Is as Fire, coming  
forth from Letopolis! The Osiris, God's  
Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-*  
*p3w.t*, did not do defilement.

## Vindication and Triumph

90. O ye gods who are within the *duat*! Hear

the voice of the *Wsîr-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified, who has come into your presence!

91 (5/5). There is no sin at all upon him; no offense is held against him; no accuser riseth against him. He liveth on Maat; he feedeth on Maat. The gods are pleased with everything he hath done.

92. He hath given bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked. He hath made offerings to the gods, even invocation offerings (*or* funeral feasts) for those glorified ones (the deified ancestors). There is not made

93. a report of any kind against him before all the gods (*i.e.*, in assembly). (Spoken by the entire assembly?): Let him enter into the *duat*, none opposing. Let him attend (follow) Osiris, along with the gods of the

94. lower regions (caverns), being praised among the living and deified among the

proven ones. Grant that he live; grant that his *ba* may live; let

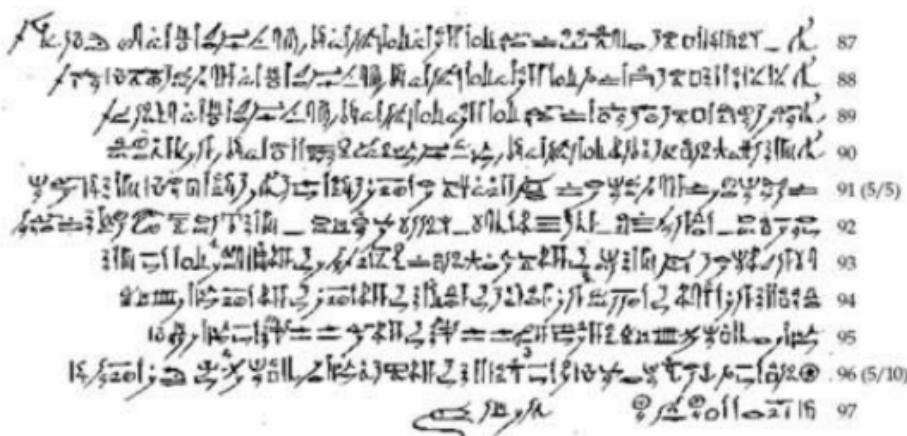


Figure 14. P. Louvre N. 3284 col. 5.

95. his *ba* be received into whatever place it chooseth; let his Certificate of Breathing be duly recognized (received). Grant that he may go on (make) breathing along with this, his *ba*, in (?)<sup>6</sup>

96 (5/10). the *duat*, along with the making of whatever transformations (*hprw*) his heart may be inclined (given) to, along with (*or* like) the dwellers in the west. And grant that his *ba* may go about whithersoever it

pleaseth, whenever it happens to be living upon

97. the earth, for all time and throughout all eternity. The end.

۲۷	۹۸
۲۸	۹۹
۲۹	۱۰۰
۳۰	۱۰۱
۳۱	۱۰۲ (۶/۵)
۳۲	۱۰۳
۳۳	۱۰۴
۳۴	۱۰۵
۳۵	۱۰۶
۳۶	۱۰۷ (۶/۱۰)
۳۷	۱۰۸

Figure 15. P. Louvre N. 3284 col. 6.

### **Culmination and Conclusion**

[Joseph Smith Papyrus XI, column 1, starts here.]

98 (6/1). Osiris is to be as one towed **into**  
**(lit. to within) the**

**99. great lake (pool) of Khonsu [JSP  
inserts the initiate's name] after**

## 100. he hath taken possession of his heart

[JSP: [has clasped] his two arms upon his breast, being as wrapped]<sup>7</sup>



Figure 16. Vignettes with P. Louvre N. 3284 flanking column 6. As is so often the case, the vignettes seem to bear no relationship to the text accompanying them. One can make a connection between the vignette on the right and the text from columns 4–5 to its right, as both derive from Book of the Dead 125, but the connection between the vignette on the left, which is the standard vignette for this type of Book of Breathings, and the adjacent text is obscure. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

de Horrack <sup>8</sup>	Parker <sup>9</sup>	Baer <sup>10</sup>
After he	After his	after his arms have

has repossessed his heart, one buries in the coffin	two arms are [fast]ened to his breast, one wraps	been placed on his heart and ... has been wrapped
<b>101. the Book of Respirations, which</b>	101. the Book of Breathings, which is	101. the Breathing Permit (which
<b>102 (6/5).</b> is written on two sides <b>[JSP: written according to what is in the books inside and out]</b>	102. with writing both inside and outside of it,	102. [Isis] made and has writing on its inside and outside)
<b>103. on suten-cloth.</b>	103. with royal linen, it being placed	103. in royal linen and placed

<b>Placed under his left arm</b>	at his left arm	under his left arm
<b>104. near to his heart.</b>	104. near his heart, this having been done	104. near his heart;
<i>105. [De Horrack writes in his commentary: "I have not been able to decipher line 8 of the hieratic text"; JSP: Having been done for his wrapping on the outside.]</i>	105. at his wrapping and outside it.	105. the rest of his mummy bandages should be wrapped over it.



Figure 17. P. Louvre N. 3279, a companion Book of Breathings, including columns of text (1–4) and vignettes (A–D). Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N.* 3279, foldout at end. Reproduit avec l'autorisation de l'IFAO.

106. **As for the one for whom this writing is made (or If he makes this book for him), he shall go on breathing**  
 107 (6/10). **ing along with (vs. JSP: like) the bas of the gods for**  
 108. **time and for eternity.**

## Some Controls

In the foregoing text we have distinguished six main topics: (1) the sacred purpose of the text; (2) rites of purification; (3) the creation

and its equivalent, the resurrection; (4) a garden of abundance and delights; (5) a long journey; and (6) its end in triumph and exaltation. These are the main themes of the mysteries everywhere. That we have not here indulged in a forced interpretation of the Book of Breathings should become apparent to anyone who compares that document with the six ritual texts presented in the appendixes to this book: though selected from widely different times and places, all follow the same pattern as the Book of Breathings. To establish the bona fides of the interpretation more closely, however, that book should be compared with other Egyptian texts, of which there are legion. Let us take a quick look at three of these.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3279

Closest to home is a companion Book of

Breathings, Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 (fig. 17), which has been thoroughly studied by Jean-Claude Goyon, who divides it into a succession of related scenes. The headings by which he designates these scenes are less instructive, however, than the actual content of each, which we take the liberty of summarizing here.<sup>11</sup>

## Column 1

*Invocation to Atum:* The initiate calls upon the god as head of the temple of Heliopolis to assist the subject in meeting the dangers and passing by the obstacles that lie immediately ahead of her (the initiate is a woman).<sup>12</sup>

*Invocation to Ptah:* The candidate appeals to the creator-god, as “father of the gods,” to bestow the breath of life on the candidate and endow her with mouth, eyes, limbs, and a strongly functioning heart—in

effect, it is the creation of man.<sup>13</sup>

## Column 2

*Invocation to Atum-Re of Heliopolis:* The initiate requests that the gates of heaven and the underworld be opened to the candidate as she joins the sacred company of initiates, the followers of Osiris, receiving from Atum-Re a written certificate in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, scene of the creation drama, that her body may be joined to her spirit (*ba*) in resurrection.<sup>14</sup>

*Calling upon the Heart:* The scene is the garden of “the noble *ished-tree*” in the great complex of Heliopolis, at the New Year, from which the subject sets forth in the rays of the rising sun to make a tour of the new world and begs protection from the Combatants.<sup>15</sup>

## Column 3

*Declaration of “Divine Identities”:* The

candidate claims to be Horus, the royal heir and very image of Re—nay, she *is* the king of the gods himself, and as such, is immune to death.<sup>16</sup>

*Invocation to All the Gods*: They are to sustain her on her harrowing passage through the dark underworld, as a member of the divine company. She walks steadily forward, overcoming all enemies on the way, and finally, “I mount up to heaven, victorious like the god,” having achieved the use of all her members forever.<sup>17</sup>

## Column 4

*First Request to Hapy—“Water and Wind”*: The initiate asks for the water of rejuvenation (resurrection) and the breath of life, claiming premortal existence with the gods and a share in the vigor of Hapy (the Nile) himself.<sup>18</sup>

*Second Request to Hapy*: The candidate

asks for a libation of fresh, running water of salvation, again claiming intimacy and identity with the great gods of the creation.<sup>19</sup>

## **Conclusion of Papyrus Louvre N. 3279**

*Closing Statement:* The heavens are now open to the candidate, who enters into glory with the imagery of the coronation, “coming forth in the capacity of a great god.” The closing line declares that the initiate now possesses the three basic needs of all living organisms: “The rays (light, heat) of Re, the breezes (air, oxygen) of Amon, and the water of Hapy.”<sup>20</sup>

Like the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings, this text is divided into four columns; there are fifteen lines to a column, compared to about twelve and a half lines in the Joseph Smith text. The two documents are almost exactly the same size, but a glance at the two

makes it instantly and almost shockingly apparent that the Joseph Smith document is the work of an amateur scribe. Each column of Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 text is adorned with a vignette, but as Goyon points out, these pictures do not match the accompanying texts.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, they do follow the story if viewed in reverse. Taken so, the first figure is the candidate herself, surprisingly appearing either nude or in an invisibly thin garment, sitting on a low settee with lion's feet (the *sem*-sleep) and holding out before her the sign of the breath of life. That this is really the first figure in the whole series is indicated by the fact that the other three figures in the scene are all facing her and are not turned toward the beginning of the manuscript. Before her is a special offering table, which is mounted on a stand strangely emphasizing the bound lotus-and-papyrus motif, the *sm3-t3.wy* symbol of the

New Year; standing by the table is a bundle of structural papyrus stalks such as make up the green booths in the year-rites, which here also has the form of the hieroglyphic symbol for “awake.” All this is indicative of the day of creation.

Next, two arms reach out from the midst of a tree or bush, holding flowing vases of the type used in ritual purifications. Then comes another tree, from or before which the Lady Hathor, the Great Mother, is reaching forth two flowing jugs from which water falls to the roots of lotus and papyrus stalks, which overhang another table of abundance (this one without the conspicuous *sm3-t3.wy* motif). It is the garden of abundance. The next scene, which baffles Goyon,<sup>22</sup> is dominated by a ritual portal before which an enigmatic bovine figure (perhaps the dead person herself) is crouched along with Anubis and a figure resembling the Sokar-

hawk; both these crouching figures are symbolic in the Joseph Smith Papyrus of the dark journey to follow. Next we see two doors, having a total of seven panels (in the Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 manuscript there are seven gates following the same description),<sup>23</sup> guarded by rampant fire- and venom-spitting serpents. Each door is faced by a monster holding a large execution knife in either hand and wearing the two feathers of justice on its head: obviously we are being apprised of the dangers and tests which the soul must undergo in its progress. Finally, two “genies” dressed as sacrificial priests stand before two closed doors; the doors are about to be opened because the two priests are lowering the large knives that they hold in either hand. It is the final barrier.

## The Petosiris Inscriptions

But the Louvre manuscript is too close to home. Let us go back another four hundred years to a family tomb in Hermopolis which very much resembles the setting in which the Soter papyri were discovered.<sup>24</sup> The most completely preserved funeral monument of its time (ca. 300 B.C.), the Petosiris complex (fig. 18) was a family tomb containing the remains of several generations of an illustrious priestly family whose head held the highest civil and sacral offices in a region dominated by one of the most ancient and venerated temples in Egypt, that of Thoth of Hermopolis. The parallel to the tomb of Soter in Thebes is thus a striking one, but the texts found in the Petosiris complex are not on papyrus but are the original inscriptions on the walls. Like the Theban counterparts, they borrow freely from far more ancient sources, including the Book of the Dead, the famous Middle Kingdom story of Sinuhe,

and the Pyramid Texts, so that what we have here is the ancient and ongoing tradition, which makes the Petosiris theater very much like the complexes of Rekhmara in the Eighteenth Dynasty and the El-Bersheh tomb of circa 1929 B.C. on the one hand and the tomb of Soter on the other.<sup>25</sup>

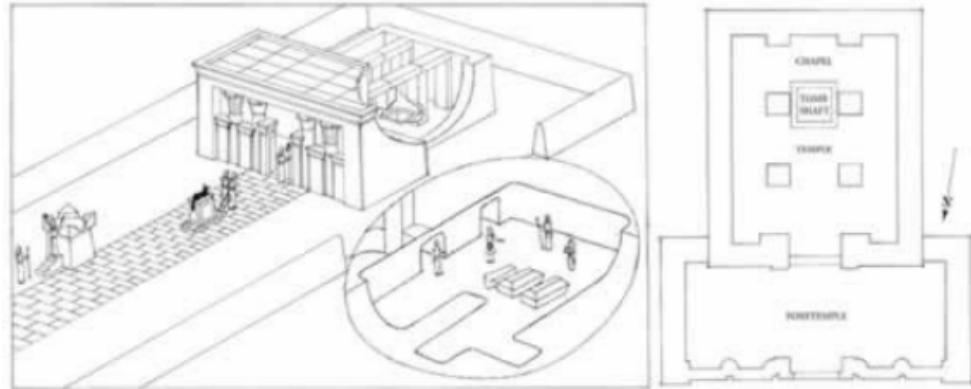


Figure 18. The Petosiris complex combined temple and tomb in an unusual way. The great horned altar, over seven feet high, was at the left of the paved sacred way, leading to a typical Late Egyptian temple façade. The shaft opened on the center line between the pillars of the temple and descended twenty-six feet to the tomb crypt. The crypt contained the stone sarcophagi of Petosiris, his brother, and other relatives.

Two things in particular command our attention in the Petosiris inscriptions. One is the remarkable balance preserved—not only in the inscriptions, but in the buildings of the complex—between tomb and temple.

According to Gustave Lefebvre, the layout “gives absolutely the impression of a miniature temple,” with a true temple façade, pronaos, avenue, and the most perfectly preserved horned altar ever discovered. Indeed, ancient pilgrims to the place from 300 B.C. to the time of the Romans called it simply “the temple,” by which name it is still known to the local inhabitants.<sup>26</sup> The inscriptions emphasize the activity of Petosiris and other heads of the family as living benefactors and active high priests in the local temples of Thoth and Re. Balance between tomb and temple is reflected in the constant ambivalence which views the afterlife on the one hand as a permanent

residence in the underworld and on the other as a celestial exaltation. Thus a pilgrim leaves a note at the place: “I pray to Petosiris, whose body is beneath the earth but whose spirit reclines among the gods, a wise one (*sophos*) mingling with the wise (*Petoseirin audō to[n] kata chthonos nekyn, nyn d'en theoisi keimenon; meta sophōn sophos*).”<sup>27</sup>

Even more arresting is our second point: the undeniable parallelism between many passages of the Petosiris inscriptions and the words of the Bible. While the moral teaching of the Book of Breathings strongly suggested the precepts of Moses and Christ to the nineteenth-century scholars who first studied them, Lefebvre, writing in 1924, expresses surprise and puzzlement at discovering “a series of philosophic-religious texts forming an original whole (*ensemble*) which invite comparison, as much for their ideas as for

their form of expression, with certain passages of the Wisdom literature, the Psalms, and some other writings of Hebrew literature.”<sup>28</sup> Lefebvre matches up a score of biblical and Petosiris texts, pointing out “an exact parallelism of words, phrases, and thought,” as well as the identical form of parallel sentence structure between the two.<sup>29</sup> Perplexed by this, he cautiously suggests that “the editors of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Wisdom” could have learned from the Egyptians at Hermopolis; but in the end he dismisses the whole thing as a mere coincidence, which, he affirms, only shows how advanced the Egyptians really were in their religious thinking.<sup>30</sup> But writing in that same year, Adolf Erman calls attention to resemblances between sayings of a much earlier Egyptian wise man, Amenemope, and the biblical sayings of Solomon, which led him to

conclude that “there can be no question of coincidence here (*so kann doch hier von Zufall nicht die Rede sein*).”<sup>31</sup> Though Erman was as disturbed as Lefebvre had been by the surprising parallels, there can be no doubt today that in the tomb of Petosiris, as in that of Soter with its Book of Breathings, we have a point of contact between the Egyptian and Hebrew worlds. The texts from both tombs reach back to the very beginning on one hand and look forward to the Judeo-Christian teachings on the other.

The peculiar relevance of the Petosiris writings to the study of the Breathings texts lies in the presentation of the same ritual motifs in the same order of succession. Since the six major elements of the initiation belong naturally and inseparably together, they often mingle and fuse in a way that tends to obscure their proper order: “the Egyptian

mentality,” wrote Henri Frankfort, “considered it a particular nicety that symbols should possess multiple significance—that one single interpretation should not be the only possible one.”<sup>32</sup> To make things more complicated, the rites are so totally relevant to each other that each assumes awareness of all the others in any operation; hence they can be intermingled in almost any combination, and frequently they are all reviewed in miniature at each main phase or step of the initiation, every such step being a rite of passage in its own right. This is complicated, indeed, but not confusing—because it is all so perfectly natural and rational. Consider the Petosiris sequence in the order in which Lefebvre uncovers the inscriptions as we proceed through the “miniature temple” from the outer gate to the holy of holies.

# The Portal

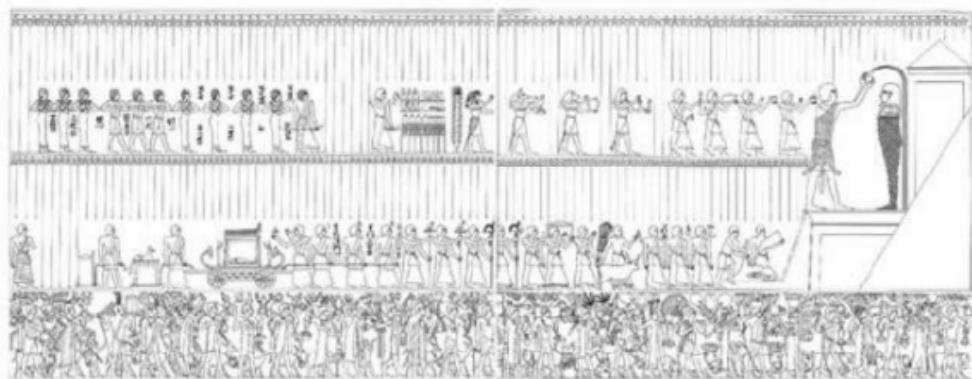


Figure 19. On the east wall of the temple (fig. 18), a great procession of priests and officials offer sacrifice and carry offerings to the Opening of the Mouth of Sishu, Petosiris's brother. The unusual wheeled funeral bark carries the body to the tomb. The priest on the far right, dressed in a panther skin, pours waters of purification over the mummy, which stands before a typical pyramid-topped tomb against the side of a hill, though the actual burial site did not have these features. The artists struggled to combine the Hellenistic style of the lowest row of offering bearers—who bring all the good things of the earth, including a baby elephant and other exotic animals—with the stylized clarity of the ancient Egyptian tradition.

The visitor is greeted at the outer gate by an inscription enjoining “all prophets,

priests,” scribes, and officiants to pronounce the name of Petosiris as they perform the rites and to “think of my *ka* (eternal spirit).”<sup>33</sup> The importance of keeping the written text in view is emphasized at successive crucial phases of the operation, for everything in the temple, including the design of the building itself, must be done “in conformity to the holy writing.”<sup>34</sup> “All scribes, savants, men learned in scriptures, who come to this mountain shall read these inscriptions aloud to the people who come with them.” While carrying out the instructions therein,<sup>35</sup> “the chief lector-priest” checks everything against the written instructions he holds.<sup>36</sup> It is our belief that Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X may be the actual prompting sheets used by such a priest. “O prophets and priests of Thoth,... when you see this tomb, recite the words here engraved,...read the inscriptions,

perform the rites for me in my name.”<sup>37</sup> Thus the first words of the Petosiris inscriptions, like those of the Book of Breathings, proclaim the sovereign importance of the written text in all that follows.

## The Façade of the Foretemple

The inscriptions on the façade all deal with purification rites: libation, censing, “the ceremony of anointing the divine members” of Petosiris, and the presenting of *bandelettes*, or items of protective clothing.<sup>38</sup> As in the Book of Breathings, the archaic purification rite called the Opening of the Mouth is repeated at important transitions, including the final recapitulation in the crypt.<sup>39</sup> This vital ordinance, in which various members of the body from head to feet are purified and healed of the blows of death,<sup>40</sup> represents both resurrection and creation: “Thy mouth is opened by Ptah [the

Creator]....I open thy mouth, Sishu [brother of Petosiris], for I [Petosiris] am Ptah" (fig. 19).<sup>41</sup>

## The Pronaos, or Foretemple

The walls of the pronaos are adorned with reliefs showing artisans—metalworkers—at their trade.<sup>42</sup> The Opening of the Mouth, representing the creation or resurrection of the body, was commonly performed by priestly artisans on statues (as substitutes for the dead initiate), and in the Petosiris rites the work is performed by the divine artisans with a ritual chisel.<sup>43</sup> Here also the rites belong, as in the Book of Breathings, at the *wag*-festival, or celebration of the creation. Also, the occasion is marked by the purification and promenading of Petosiris's statues with the announcement that he has come to the place where he was born in the beginning.<sup>44</sup> Petosiris's proudest boast is that

he restored the temple of Re, “the place where Re was born at the beginning of the world, when the earth was still surrounded by Nun (chaos). It is the house of the cradle of all the gods...for half of the egg was buried there, and (from it) all creatures issued forth.” “It is the place where every creature was born.”<sup>45</sup>

Here Petosiris is speaking specifically of the temple garden, which was his special concern: “I reinforced (*or* protected) the fence of the park, to prevent its being trodden under the feet of the populace; for vulgar people were walking around in it, eating the fruit of the trees, and carrying off its rushes in every direction, thus bringing affliction on the land of Egypt....For that was the place where all things were born.”<sup>46</sup> In the pronaos, the creation (artisan) reliefs and inscriptions are followed by the garden motifs, depicting animals, both domestic and

wild (such as oryx and ibis), being brought to Petosiris, while the workers toil in the fields and vineyards to bring in “all manner of pleasant things that grow on the back of the earth,” especially the aromatic plants of Punt, the Egyptian Eden.<sup>47</sup> We see Petosiris disporting himself, while an inscription tells of him sitting in a booth playing the chess game which the hero in the Book of the Dead vignettes and the Egyptian legends plays with a lady in a green booth in some other world.<sup>48</sup> We are also told that when Petosiris restored the temple garden, he also restored the booth: “the Pavilion of the Goddesses, as it is called in the Sacred Book, which always faces east,” as well as “the sanctuary of the Lady Hathor of the Sycamore of the South” and that of Nehmetaouai, the Royal Mother.<sup>49</sup>

At this point Petosiris is joined with his wife, who represents Maat, “the perfect

woman.” While “the creatures bring Maat to Petosiris,” it is she, “the perfect woman of great charm, . . . holding out her generous hand to all,” who is the universal mother, whom all love and cherish.<sup>50</sup> Her special charge is the initiate himself, receiving food in the Hall of the Double Maat and water of life from the sycamore tree, “as for perfect souls.”<sup>51</sup> As Nut, the heavenly mother, she offers him the food of the garden “with her own hand” and the water that flows from the sycamore as he sits at ease in the Field of Repose.<sup>52</sup> As Sekhat (*sh3t*), she brings all the wild game and fishes to his nets.<sup>53</sup> When he enters the garden, she greets him as the sweet-singing Merit, his reception committee.<sup>54</sup> It is she who brings him wine (the forbidden fruit of the Egyptians) as he sits amidst “the magnificent trees of a flower-filled garden,”<sup>55</sup> the garden that he enters as he passes from one world to

another, putting foot in the *hr.t-ntr*, the “holy ground.”<sup>56</sup> One enters and leaves this world by a pleasant garden, even as one enters it by Eden and moves on to the next world through the *anapausis* or *refrigerium* of the early Christians.

## The South Partition

One leaves the pronaos by a door flanked by inscriptions of a totally different nature from what has gone before. It appears at once that in leaving the garden, one is about to undertake an arduous journey, for which the inscriptions provide preparation.

Petosiris speaks: “O all ye prophets and priests,...come, I will cause you to be instructed in the will of God: I will guide you in the Way of Life.”<sup>57</sup> The Way of Life is the stock designation of the mysteries everywhere. We are assured that everything has been arranged “in accordance with the

holy book.”<sup>58</sup> There follows a poem which is entirely in the spirit of the first psalm of David:

Come, I will instruct you in the Way of God;

I will guide you in the Way of Life,  
The true (*or* right) way of him who obeys  
God.

Happy is he who guides his heart in that  
way!

He whose heart is firm in the Way of  
God, whose existence on earth is assured,

He whose soul is filled with the fear of  
God, great is his happiness upon earth!<sup>59</sup>

Petosiris’s younger daughters add their contribution: “Father, how good it is to walk in the Way of God!”<sup>60</sup> And his grandson adds a pious voice to theirs: “It is profitable to walk in the Way of God;...it assures a happy life here, length of days, numerous children, and a long line of successors; and he will be

as the glory of the sun at its rising!"<sup>61</sup> One cannot resist comparison with the *Rule of the Community* (1QS) from the Dead Sea Scrolls: "to all who walk in it—healing and great peace, and length of days, and fruitful progeny with all the blessings of eternity,... and a crown of glory and a radiant garment amidst eternal light."<sup>62</sup> The Way of Life is, of course, compared to a journey—and indeed, all who came to the shrine were pious pilgrims: "Who walks in thy Way does not stumble."<sup>63</sup> "Come, I will guide you toward the Way of Life: you will sail with a favorable wind, and without mishap reach the harbor of the city of the generations."<sup>64</sup> In the Book of Breathings, the breath of life is also a favorable breeze helping the traveler on his way through the dangerous waters of the underworld.

As a ceremonial way, the journey must be implemented by ordinances. Petosiris

reports how, after restoring the temples, he consulted the holy books and conferred with the local authorities “concerning the manner of organizing the ceremonies” of the same.<sup>65</sup>

“All who come to this place:... Come, read the inscriptions.”<sup>66</sup> “I will guide you in the Way of Life ... and tell you what to do.”<sup>67</sup>

The high priestly offices of Petosiris, his father, and his brother culminated with “penetrating into the adyton (the holy of holies), performing the rites of his office along with the great prophets,...chief of the priests of Sekhmet (*meaning* sacrifice), chief of the third class and fourth class (priests), royal scribe, recorder of all the properties of the temple.”<sup>68</sup> During the ordinances, “everything I did was in conformity with the holy book.”<sup>69</sup>

But this is more than a religion of mere forms and observances; all is vain unless the heart is right, filled with love unfeigned for

God and man: “If one does evil in this world without being punished for it, he will surely be punished in the next!”<sup>70</sup> “No one arrives at the dwelling of righteousness unless his heart is perfect in doing what is right; in that world there is no distinction between the poor and the rich...when the weights are balanced before the Lord of Eternity,...every man being judged according to his deeds while on earth.”<sup>71</sup> “I have arrived...at the city of eternity by doing good upon the earth,” says Petosiris. “My heart was set upon the Way of God from my youth to this very day. By night his Spirit was in my heart, and at dawn I was about doing what was pleasing to him [Lefebvre here calls attention to Isaiah 26:9]. I did what was right and shunned iniquity [cf. Psalm 45:7], for I knew the course (*lit.* works) of life in which he is well pleased. I performed priestly functions (*or* purifications) in which his soul

delights. I did not consort with those ignorant of the Spirit (*or* power) of God [cf. Proverbs 1:15; 24:1] but trusted in (*lit.* leaned upon) those who did his will (*lit.* who did loyally to him). I never took what belonged to others and never wronged any man.... These things I did, being mindful of coming into (*or* arriving in) the presence of God after death. For I knew the day of the Lords of Truth, when they make division in the judgment. A prayer for him who loves God (*or* whom God loveth), that he may reach his spirit home without misfortune.”<sup>72</sup> Both in his civil and priestly functions, Petosiris was openhanded in time of need, a pillar of strength in times of trouble (the stormy transition from Persian to Greek occupation of Egypt), “toiling for his god, seeking the welfare of his fellow citizens,...protector of all in his city,...support of the fatherless,” etc.<sup>73</sup> His confidence waxes strong before

the divine judge because, according to his claim, "I have committed no sin, I have done injury to none, I was upright in heart and practiced justice, remaining faithful to thee while on earth; I have committed no crime."<sup>74</sup> By his own accounting, no charge can be brought against him before the judges.

But it is as a series of obstacles and trials that the Way both teaches and tests the initiate. As in the Book of Breathings, one must here face Him of the Warlike Countenance and try one's strength in combat against the opposing denizens of darkness on the way.<sup>75</sup> Only by divine guidance and protection does he narrowly escape the sacrificial block and fire; saved by an arrested sacrifice,<sup>76</sup> he is rescued because those who would put him to death have themselves become the sacrificial victims (sheep and goats) and thus provided a substitute and an atonement (see pp. 84–85,

fig. 19).<sup>77</sup>

It is as a “follower” in the company of the god that he enjoys the salvation of a guiding light amid the encircling gloom.<sup>78</sup> Among other things, he must stand trial for his life in the Great Hall of Judgment.<sup>79</sup> In the Petosiris story, the hero must face nine juries, each made up of a trio of gods (in the Book of Breathings it is seven gates, each with three guardians, that he must pass). The juries sit at Busiris, Letopolis, Pe, and Dep, the archaic centers of human sacrifice, reminding us that the seven gates of the Book of Breathings represent seven deadly sins and can only be passed after a close examination of the candidate, who must demonstrate both his knowledge and his innocence.<sup>80</sup> Petosiris, having passed his tests, demands admission to heaven: “Hail, ye Lords of Justice....Let me enter, ... for I am shining in your forms and am in

possession of your powers (*hk3w*)....For I know your names, ... I know the name of this god....I am everything that he is, and vice versa....I have joined hands in the innermost temple which my father has given me, [calling me] ‘My son of my body.’”<sup>81</sup>

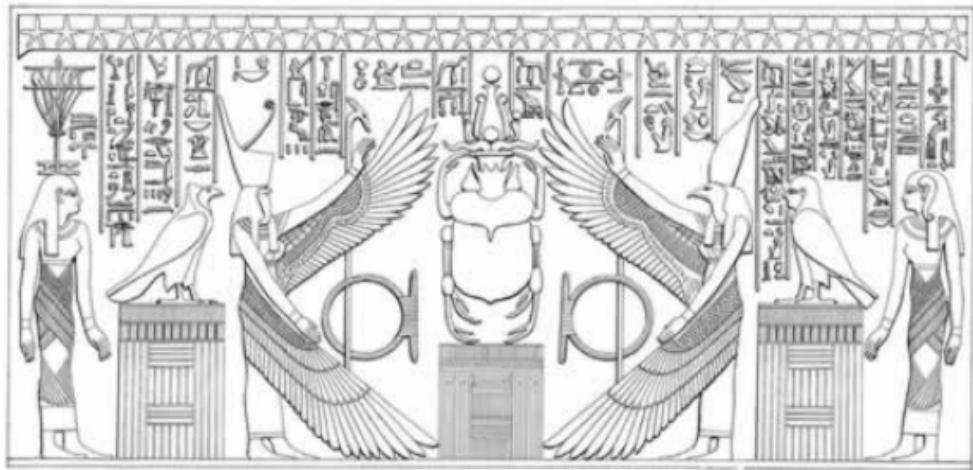
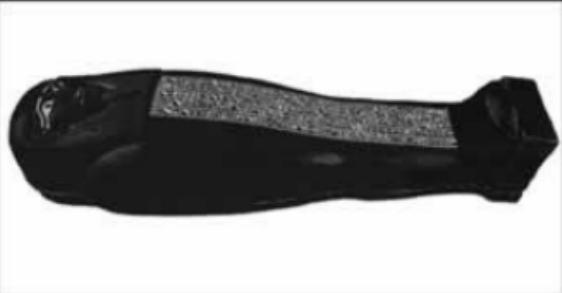


Figure 20. At the center of the south wall (fig. 18), the most important panel in the temple, the winged goddesses Edjo and Mut gently fan the *kheper* beetle, symbolizing the sun-god’s transformations. The scarab rests on what Joseph Smith described as the “pillars of heaven” (Fac. 1, fig. 11). On the far left, the headdress of the goddess of the north wind is a billowing sail.



Below in the crypt, the imported blackened pine sarcophagus was inlaid with hundreds of delicate glass hieroglyphs (the text of BD 42). Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

The final ordinance, that just referred to, takes place in the crypt—it is the end of the road, the dead end of the underworld. But as in the tomb of King Unas and the Book of Breathings, it is not the end after all. The subject not only reverses his steps and takes his way to heaven—following the example of the sun-god who reverses his course as soon as he has reached the lowest depths (fig. 20)—but promises to take others with him, delivering “those who sit in darkness” in the manner of pharaoh, who visits the underworld in the Amduat texts from the

royal tombs of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The final Petosiris text (on the sarcophagus) reads: “Petosiris,...with thee are the inhabitants of the *duat*; their faces turn to thee, the Living One, in thy capacity as god forever.”<sup>82</sup> But the culminating scene, with its triumph and coronation motifs, takes place in the “chapel,” which corresponds to the “celestial room” in the tomb of Unas. As the candidate is promised three degrees of glory in the opening lines of the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings, so at the gate of the chapel he finally achieves them: “Glory in heaven in the presence of Re, power on earth in the presence of Geb, and victory in the celestial worlds (*hr.t-ntr*).”<sup>83</sup> Here he is “exalted to the height of heaven” and “descends to the depths of the *duat*.” He is free to visit the necropolis, but he is also free to leave it, for, being divine, he may go wherever he pleases.<sup>84</sup>



Figure 21A–B (top), 21C (bottom). P. Herweben, Twenty-first Dynasty. Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

## The Herweben Papyri

Going back a full thousand years before the Joseph Smith Papyri Book of Breathings, we meet with the so-called mythological Papyrus of Herweben, in two parts (fig. 21).<sup>85</sup> Herweben was the daughter of a king and high priest of the Twenty-first Dynasty (ca. 1054–795 B.C.). Her story is told in pictures, with only a few brief but helpful notes in hieroglyphic.

A. The lady, bringing a lavish gift of sacrificial meat, bread, and fruit of the vine

salutes the Horus-headed figure designated in the text as Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, Lord of the Temple (mystic shrine), "who rises hale and hearty." The emphasis is all on the rites of the New Year (Sokar-Osiris) and the creation (Ptah). Before the figure on the throne is the skin garment of regeneration, and behind him stands the universal mother, Hathor.

B. Herweben is washed by Thoth, the master of ordinances, and Horus; the water flowing from the vases is designated by streams of tiny signs of life <sup>†</sup> and power <sup>‡</sup>. On her head is a very large cone of scented oil, which does not appear in any of the subsequent portraits of the lady (in one case [F], it has been erased).

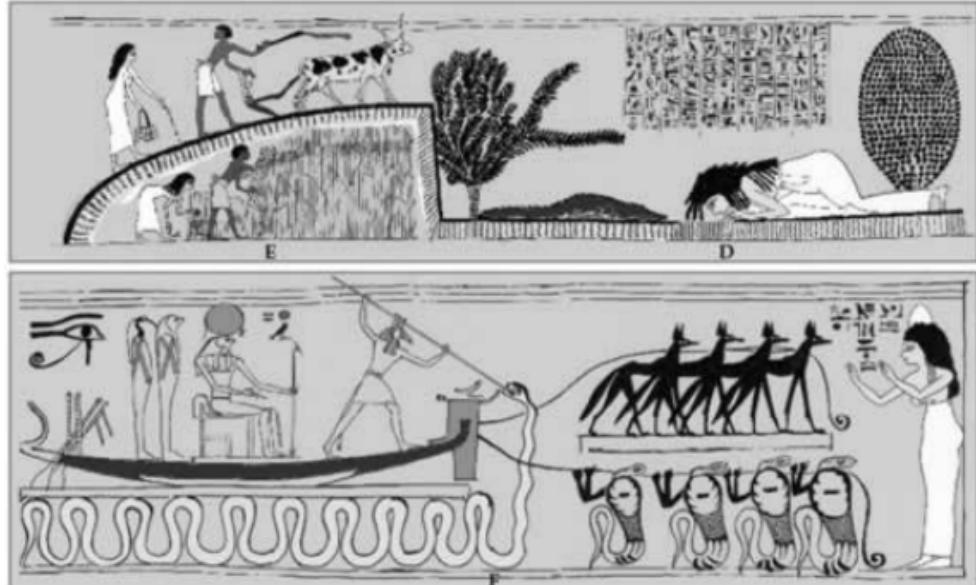


Figure 21D–E (top), 21F (bottom). P. Herweben.  
Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

C. Herweben venerates the symbols of creation, rebirth, and resurrection, with emphasis on the passing of time. A brief inscription says that this is happening at the New Year, while the union of the child Re-Horakhty, seated within the cycle of generation upon a horizon-symbol with Re-Sokar-Osiris, denotes the winter solstice. The child faces a cynocephalus ape, who greets the sun at its rising, and a huge

*wedjat*-eye symbolizing the complete resurrection. Creation is the theme.

D. In this famous drawing, the lady, beneath a wild fig tree, would drink the water of life but is confronted by a dangerous reptile beneath a willow (poplar?) tree (the symbol of death).

E. Next she is seen sowing and reaping in the fields, either dressing and tending the garden or working by the sweat of her face.

F. Leaving the farm, the imagery is all that of travel. The lady hails the solar bark of Re-Horakhty, sailing over the heavens; the god's attendants are again Horus and Thoth, this time shown as mummies, but immediately behind them is a large *wedjat*-eye promising resurrection. At the prow, Seth drives off the great serpent, Apophis, who tries to arrest the progress of the ship, which is drawn by four jackals, "openers of the way," and four apotropaic serpents.

G. The ship having safely passed, the lion, symbol of bloody sacrifice, renders the great serpent incapacitated by inflicting upon him five wounds.

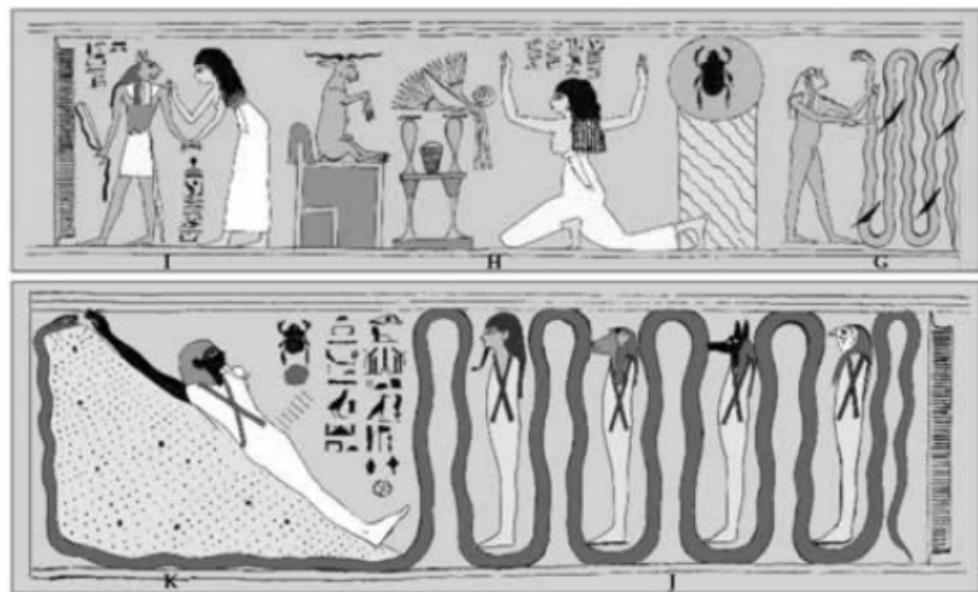


Figure 21G–I (top), 21J–K (bottom). P. Herweben.  
Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

H. The deliverance is complete: the sun is shown bursting from the confining mountains of the underworld, and within the disk a great scarab symbolizes the moment or act of transition from one state or form of existence

to another—eternal progression. Herweben celebrates her delivery in a gesture of ecstatic praise and thanksgiving as she declares, in the inscription, that she is now truly justified. She faces a surprising figure, a ram enthroned behind two large *hs*-vases (signifying praise or grace) and giant lotuses; the combination and position of the ram and the huge plants closely resemble objects found in the royal cemetery of Ur, designated by their discoverers as “the Ram in the Thicket.”<sup>86</sup> Is Herweben here giving thanks and praise to the ram as a substitute sacrifice?

I. A lion-headed figure, designated as “Doorkeeper of the House of Truth” (lions still guard the doors of our courthouses), conducts Herweben to a door or screen that is opened.

J. On the other side of the door, the four familiar canopic figures (Book of Abraham,

Facsimile 1, figs. 5, 6, 7, 8), representing the vital organs, the four elements of which the body is composed, and the four regions of the earth from which they come, are shown passing through the coils of the great serpent, through which, according to the Egyptians, all things must pass to be reborn.

K. The resurrection in progress: Osiris, bursting from his mummy bands, is halfway between the horizontal and vertical, and the scarab and rising sun above him show which way things are going. It is a new life; leaving the embrace of the serpent, he is rising from his bed of dust and ashes, interspersed with glowing coals, while a bold inscription declares that Osiris is risen hale and sound in the holy (*dsrt*) land, which is the place of the holy mountain or mound, Re-Khepri—in effect, the primordial mound of the first creation.

# Notes

1. Philippe-Jacques de Horrack, “Le Livre des Respirations d’après les manuscrits du Musée du Louvre,” in *Oeuvres diverses*, ed. Philippe Virey and Gaston Maspero, BE 17 (Paris: Leroux, 1907), 110–37, pls. vii–xi.
2. Name meaning “Osiris, the Greatest and Oldest.”
3. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 87; Hermann Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* (Glückstadt: Augustin, 1935), 1:176 no. 1, s.v. “archaizing.”
4. *m s̄rw mʒ* ‘“as a successful method”; Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 248.
5. [There is some question about how the verbs in this series, which are written as though they were older negative future forms, are to be understood at the time the papyrus was written. They can either be taken as negative future forms (*nn sdm=f* forms), or, taking *nn* as a miswriting for *n*, as is also common at this time period, as negative past forms (*n sdm=f* forms). Nibley has taken them as negative past forms—eds.]
6. [The scribe has written *nw* “of” for the expected *m* “in.” As Demotic and Coptic transcriptions show, there often seems to be no distinction made in the pronunciation of these two terms—eds.]
7. [The scribe of the Joseph Smith Papyri has written *m* in place of *=w*, realized his mistake, tried to correct it, and

instead put a blob of ink on the papyrus, failing to make the correction properly. Nibley has translated the scribal error. For an explanation of the following three columns, see commentary, part 7—eds.]

8. De Horrack, “*Livre des Respirations*,” 135–36.
9. Richard A. Parker, “The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: Translations and Interpretations: The Book of Breathings (Fragment 1, The ‘Sensen’ Text, with Restorations from Louvre Papyrus 3284),” *Dialogue* 3/2 (1968): 98.
10. Klaus Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham,” *Dialogue* 3/3 (1968): 119–20.
11. Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 28–62.
12. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 1–5, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 28.
13. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 5–14, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 31–32.
14. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 15–21, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 36–39.
15. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 21–29, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 39–40.
16. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 30–36, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 43–44.
17. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 37–44, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 46–47.
18. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 45–53, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 50–55.

19. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 53–58, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 56–59.
20. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 58–61, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 59.
21. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 2, 6–7. The vignettes are in the foldout at the back of the book.
22. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 6.
23. P. Louvre N. 3284 §13 (4/14–5/3) lines 79–89, in de Horrack, “Livre des Respirations,” pls. 10–11.
24. [Given the early second century B.C. date currently favored for the Joseph Smith Papyri, the tomb of Petosiris is a mere century earlier—eds.]
25. Gustave Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris* (Cairo: IFAO, 1923–24), 1:1–2, 36.
26. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 1:13.
27. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 1:24.
28. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 1:37.
29. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 1:37–40, quotation on 39.
30. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 1:40–41.
31. Adolf Erman, *Eine ägyptische Quelle der “Sprüche Salomos”* (Berlin: Preussischen Akademie, 1924), 92.
32. Henri Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1933), 1:29.
33. Tomb of Petosiris 5–8, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:3; the texts are translated in the first volume.
34. Tomb of Petosiris 59/8, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:32.

35. Tomb of Petosiris 57, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:28–29.
36. Tomb of Petosiris 82/78–79, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:62.
37. Tomb of Petosiris 102/4–6, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:75.
38. Tomb of Petosiris 12, 16, 19, 23–24, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:4, 6–8.
39. Tomb of Petosiris 82/1–79; 148/4–5, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:60–62; 101.
40. For a discussion of the Opening of the Mouth ordinance, see below, commentary to lines 36–37, pp. 164–82.
41. Tomb of Petosiris 82/69, 73, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:62.
42. Tomb of Petosiris 27–28, 30–31, 35–36, 39, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:9–14.
43. Tomb of Petosiris 82/70–71, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:62.
44. Tomb of Petosiris 82/93–97, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:65.
45. Tomb of Petosiris 62/4–5; 61/18; 81/47–68, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:55–57.
46. Tomb of Petosiris 81/61–68; 61/19–20; 62/4–5, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:56–57.
47. Tomb of Petosiris 37, 41–51, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:14–24.
48. Tomb of Petosiris 26, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:9.

49. Tomb of Petosiris 81/54–58; 61/22–25, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:55–56.
50. Tomb of Petosiris 58/8–11; 61/8–12, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:29, 35.
51. Tomb of Petosiris 56/8–9, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:28.
52. Tomb of Petosiris 69/3–6, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:44.
53. Tomb of Petosiris 58/14–15, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:30.
54. Tomb of Petosiris 58/16–17, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:30.
55. Tomb of Petosiris 58/15, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:30.
56. Tomb of Petosiris 58/16–17, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:30.
57. Tomb of Petosiris 59/1–2; 62/2, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:32, 38.
58. Tomb of Petosiris 59/5, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:32.
59. Tomb of Petosiris 62/2, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:38; cf. Psalm 1:1–6.
60. Tomb of Petosiris 58/22; cf. 58/31, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:30–31.
61. Tomb of Petosiris 61/28–30, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:36–37.
62. IQS IV, 6–8; see appendix 1 for an alternate translation by Nibley.

63. Tomb of Petosiris 115/3, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:82.
64. Tomb of Petosiris 116/2–3, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:83.
65. Tomb of Petosiris 81/78, 81, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:62.
66. Tomb of Petosiris 125–26, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:89–90.
67. Tomb of Petosiris 116/2–4, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:83.
68. Tomb of Petosiris 61/1–4, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:35.
69. Tomb of Petosiris 59/5, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:32.
70. Tomb of Petosiris 55/3, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:27.
71. Tomb of Petosiris 81/17–22, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:54.
72. Tomb of Petosiris 116/4–6, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 1:159; 2:83. [Lefebvre cites the scripture as Psalm 44:8, which is correct for numbering systems based on the Septuagint, but we have changed the reference to follow the numbering system more commonly used—eds.]
73. Tomb of Petosiris 128/5–6; 138/4, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:91, 96.
74. Tomb of Petosiris 70/4–6, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:45.

75. Tomb of Petosiris 66/6–7, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:42.
76. Tomb of Petosiris 63/4–8, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:39–40.
77. Tomb of Petosiris 80/18–19, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:51; cf. Abraham and the priest of Pharaoh in Abraham 1:7–20.
78. Tomb of Petosiris 74, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:48.
79. Tomb of Petosiris 125/5–6; 65/12–13, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:89; 41.
80. Tomb of Petosiris 80/3–95, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:50–53.
81. Tomb of Petosiris 151/1–6, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:102.
82. Tomb of Petosiris 152/3; 66/8–9, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:103; 42.
83. Tomb of Petosiris 54/1–4; 102/1, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:26; 74–75.
84. Tomb of Petosiris 106/11, in Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, 2:77.
85. Alexandre Piankoff, “Les deux papyrus ‘mythologique’ de Her-Ouben au Musée du Caire,” *ASAE* 49 (1949): 145–68, pls. 1–12; also in Alexandre Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri* (New York: Pantheon, 1957), 2: pls. 1–2.
86. Leonard Woolley, “*Ur of the Chaldees*”: *The Final Account, Excavations at Ur*, rev. and enl. ed. (London:

Herbert, 1982), 97, an allusion to Genesis 22:13.

# The Nature and Purpose of the Book of Breathings

**Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 1–7**

- 1 (1/1).<sup>1</sup> **Beginning of the Book of Breathings, which Isis made** for her brother Osiris, to make his *ba* live, to
2. make his body (corpse) live, to make young all his members **anew**; that he might enter (*lit.* join) **the horizon along with his father, Re**, to make
3. his *ba* appear in glory in heaven in the disk of the moon, and that his body might shine in (*or as*) Orion in the womb of the lower heaven (*nn.t*) of Nut;
4. and **to cause to happen** the same **things for the Osiris** (*i.e.*, the candidate or

initiate), the God's Father and Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-

- 5 (1/5). Amon-Re, Bull-of-His-Mother, upon his great throne, *Wsir-Wr*,<sup>2</sup> Justified [JSP has **Hor, Justified**], the son of one of like honors to these,
6. *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*,<sup>3</sup> Justified. Hide it! Hide it! **Do not let any man read it! It is beneficial**
7. to a man in the next world (*hr.t-ntr*) when he lives (or that he may live) again, having been proven **true (effective) countless (millions of) times.**

## **Commentary: “Book” or “Letter”? An Intimate Document**

### ***Line 1: “Book”***

The word *š ‘y* or *š ‘.t* designates any document or writing<sup>4</sup> and is commonly

rendered “book” when found, as here, “in titles of later religious books.”<sup>5</sup> Bruno Stricker and Jean-Claude Goyon both maintain, however, that “*letter of breathing*” is a more appropriate rendering,<sup>6</sup> the latter seeing in it “a sort of ‘letter of recommendation’” to be presented to the rulers of the underworld (see p. 29, fig. 4).<sup>7</sup> Siegfried Schott favors “breathing document (*Schrift zum Atmen*)” for š'.t.<sup>8</sup>

Its form and content suggest that the Book of Breathings is a sort of notebook, written not for the general reader but only for the use of one man, to whom it served as an aid to memory. Étienne Drioton notes that even the very ancient Papyrus Ramesseum B, far from being an exposition of the long and important rites it deals with, was only “the *aide-mémoire* for a master of ceremonies.”<sup>9</sup> Philippe Derchain has shown that the well-known Papyrus Salt 825 was also “a sort of

*aide-mémoire* for the master of ceremonies in charge of the rites,” who had jotted down “a mass of hints” for his own use “in very concise and sometimes obscure form.”<sup>10</sup> The Pyramid Texts themselves were placed on the walls of tomb chambers and passages to tell the priests what they should do and say at each particular station in the long ceremonies.<sup>11</sup> The dramatic text of the famous Shabako stone, perhaps even more ancient than the Pyramid Texts, was, according to Kurt Sethe, a directive for people participating in a ritual play, whose lines are much longer and whose actions are much fuller than here indicated. The content of the play is hinted at. The text gives us little more than the actors’ cues; they are prompter’s cards for the use of those who know their parts already. Along with that, they are sacred and secret—is there any reason that they should not puzzle us?<sup>12</sup> The

Egyptians necessarily cultivated skill at summarizing and condensing, and it has been noted that the first chapter of the Book of the Dead is really an epitome of the entire book.<sup>13</sup> The Joseph Smith text, hastily dashed off without any concern for appearances, retouched from time to time as words faded or flaked off, showing as it does the marks of wear and tear, was no mere formal display piece like the rest of the Joseph Smith Papyri, but bears the character of a useful and very private and personal notepad.

In the light of this technique and tradition, Derchain was able to explain the peculiar and baffling nature of Papyrus Salt 825: “The scribe wanted to compose a sort of manual for the ceremonies of the House of Life, dealing with rites for the conservation of life.”<sup>14</sup> Though the matter of the text can be found in many other documents, only one

sentence in this papyrus, according to Derchain, can be found verbatim in any other writing, which indicates that the scribe was jotting things down in his own words, simply as an aid to himself. The text also reveals not only that the writer knew the rites by heart, but also that he had access to other books in case he wanted to make sure of anything; what he has given us is “a guideline through an apparently abundant collection of liturgical writings which were followed one by one at the prescribed moments”<sup>15</sup>—a great help to the scribe but a miserable teacher for us.<sup>16</sup> *He* needed only the briefest mention to know what was going on;<sup>17</sup> the briefest mention only confuses us. His jottings, though in the contemporary idiom, contain religious formulas in a language that was no longer spoken,<sup>18</sup> and some of his comments are jotted down from much older—in fact, very ancient—priestly

commentaries (he had been doing research in the library)<sup>19</sup> to explain texts already obscure with age.<sup>20</sup> To complete the confusion of the modern student, this text is introduced by “an exercise in cryptography ... in vertical columns,” which does not belong to the ideas in the main text.<sup>21</sup>

This last is matched in the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings by four vertical columns of hieroglyphs that flank Facsimile 1 and were originally on the same papyrus strip. There are other indications that the Joseph Smith text is just such an abbreviated jotting of notes as Papyrus Salt 825. For one thing, it is much shorter even than the latter, though it is very apparent that the ordinances with which it deals were of supreme importance and also very long and involved; this cannot be an account of them, but only a series of reminders, fortunately and necessarily in the proper order, of little use to anyone else, but

prized above all other things by the owner. If “the Book of Breathings is without doubt the most important exponent of the funerary literature” of its time<sup>22</sup> and was esteemed so highly by its owners that they were buried with it clutched to their bosoms or placed under the head or at the feet as the final act of the funeral just as the coffin lid was shut down,<sup>23</sup> why is it of such a contemptibly small size (a roll “about the size of a Tuscan cigar,” as Giuseppe Botti puts it)<sup>24</sup> and so badly written, as our Joseph Smith version is, with careless and irregular spacing of lines and characters? Everything indicates a very personal and limited use of the document.

## Significance of “Breathings”

***Line 1:*** “Breathings (*or* Respirations)”

The word *sn̄sn* has the plural strokes throughout the text except at line 63 (3/20).

*Snsn* has many meanings, but all fall under the three general categories of (1) breathe, breath, breath of life, odor; (2) joining or uniting with an individual (king or god), or a company, entering a bond of brotherhood; and (3) suffusing or fusing with, as incense or raiment with the body; fragrance, light, air, or spirit investing an image or mingling with the stars.<sup>25</sup> These meanings are all related, as can be seen in a passage from the Book of Wandering through Eternity: “Thy nose breathes (*snsn*) the north wind. ... thou kissest (*snsn*) Osiris in the great Golden House ... and unitest thyself to (*snsn m*) the company of the saved.”<sup>26</sup> Hence it would be foolish to dogmatically confine the meaning in the present text to a single context. Since all the rites and ordinances, both for the living and for the dead, have as their express purpose the achieving of eternal life, for which the Egyptians considered the breathing

of air to be a prime prerequisite,<sup>27</sup> and though a great variety of rites and spells is presented under the title of *snsn*, “the goal pursued is the same for all of them”<sup>28</sup>—namely, the “total security” of eternal life and exaltation.<sup>29</sup>

## Breathing “Permit”? Passport, Identification, Guidebook, Certificate

### *Line 1: “(or Breathing Permit)”?*

Professor Klaus Baer’s rendering of the title *š ‘i.(t) n snsн* as “Breathing Permit” both gives and takes away, pointing up an important function of the document but limiting it unduly. It is indeed, like chapter 182 of the Book of the Dead, “a sort of right of passage to the next world (*eine Art Wegerecht zum Jenseits*),” as Schott puts it;<sup>30</sup> but in the same sentence Schott notes

that it is also a kind of identification (*Ausweis*) and a guide through and to the gates and wonders of the underworld. Thus Stricker designates as *Passeports d'Éternité* certain manuscripts of the Second Book of Breathings, which, however, represent only one of three classes of Breathings texts.<sup>31</sup> True, our Breathings document is one of the “passports to eternity,”<sup>32</sup> but it serves as such for a number of reasons, its function as a permit being only one of them. Thus Papyrus Leiden T 32 does double duty: “The Book of Breathings of Thoth protects you; no one denies you entrance to the Hall of Osiris.”<sup>33</sup> It serves as a passport, Goyon points out, because it contains whatever is necessary and sufficient to enable the holder to reach his destination in spite of all obstacles.<sup>34</sup> This means that the Book of Breathings provides its bearer with identification, being also (like the Coffin

Texts and Book of the Dead) a “sort of ‘letter of recommendation,’”<sup>35</sup> a request to grant passage.<sup>36</sup> Hence it is a ticket or pass.<sup>37</sup> More than a request, it is a decree, signed by high authority, commanding free passage for the dead.<sup>38</sup> But since the traveler is on his own a good deal of the time, it also contains information and instructions to help him on his way: it warns him of obstacles and tells him what to do to avoid or overcome them and what to say when his passage is challenged.<sup>39</sup> The instructional material in particular qualifies this most helpful document as decidedly more than a mere permit, though it does serve as such (cf. line 63). Like the Eighteenth-Dynasty Writings of the Hidden Chambers, its particular value to the dead *and the living* is as a textbook of vital instructions.<sup>40</sup> Preoccupation with sealing and documents of identification is characteristic of the ancient mysteries

elsewhere, such as the well-known Orphic “passes for the dead” on gold tablets<sup>41</sup> and the seals—*symbola* or *tesserae*—admitting the living and the dead to ritual banquets and other ceremonies.<sup>42</sup>

The Book of Breathings has been variously designated as a writing, letter, record, road permit, meal ticket, pass, directive or order, and handbook for local authorities.<sup>43</sup> As a guidebook, it contained helpful hints to the traveler, including “road maps complete with legends (*des cartes géographiques munies de légendes*).”<sup>44</sup> Above all, its purpose was to keep its owner properly informed: “Who *knows* this picture will eat bread with the living in the temple of Atum; … who *knows* it [this picture] is one whose ways are correct, leading him on the *right road* to Rostau.”<sup>45</sup> It is imperative that the dead *know* what certain stretches of road and country look like, for the way was

dangerous, and for that he should also know where to look for the appropriate pictures.<sup>46</sup> “It is made as shown in this book; whoever knows it will share in the blessings of heaven and earth.”<sup>47</sup> The ritual traveler is told just where to look for the proper maps and illustrations in the ceremonial passages and chambers: “This is how it looks … and you will find it on the east side of the chamber” (eleventh hour).<sup>48</sup> One is enabled to recognize the proper guide for a given stretch of the journey by being shown the pictures “of those who show the way to the secret in this holy path.”<sup>49</sup> And when one comes to the water, “This is the manner of the ship that one must board” (fig. 22).<sup>50</sup>

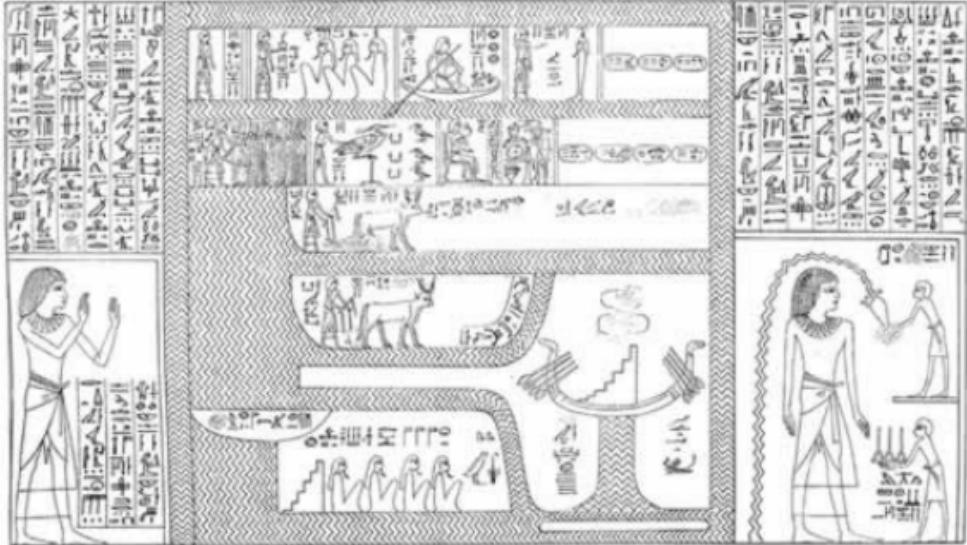


Figure 22. Starting from the right, the initiate is washed and clothed (the symbols on the tray signify clothing) before he arrives in the fields of bliss. From a sense of modesty, the Egyptians rarely depicted completely unclothed humans. On the left, the next world is shown as a map: the dead sails, feasts, labors in the field, and meets with exalted beings. P. Nebensi (BD 110), ca. 1440 B.C. BM 9900 © Copyright The British Museum.

“The validity of every formula depends entirely on a knowledge of the formula.”<sup>51</sup> A ticket or pass is not enough: “To attain this goal, the deceased must know the names of the demons ... and must know how to

recognize them”;<sup>52</sup> “if the deceased knows the names, he can easily pass ... and reach his goal.”<sup>53</sup>

The document called ‘*ft.t*’ may open the way for its holder by providing him with food and drink,<sup>54</sup> the saving document serving as both a pass and a meal ticket. Schott notes the association when he points out that a certain “writing of Thoth (*mdʒ.t n.t Dhwty*)” which the lady Hathor carries with her on a journey to Heliopolis seems to serve to supply her with either food or passage (*etwa zur Versorgung mit Gottesopfern oder als Pass*)<sup>55</sup> and could well supply both, as did the ancient feasting-*tesserae* of the Greeks and Romans.<sup>56</sup> Schott also suggests that this is an early form of the Book of Breathings.<sup>57</sup> The usual declaration is that these certificates are “beneficial (*ʒḥ*)” to the holder.<sup>58</sup> It is “beneficial on earth,” as

well as in the hereafter, provided the initiate *knows* what is in each book and picture.<sup>59</sup> He who *knows* “passes by all obstacles and cannot fail”;<sup>60</sup> offering cakes are assured him,<sup>61</sup> along with Re. Armed with knowledge, he walks in confidence.<sup>62</sup> As early as the Pyramid Texts, the person who “do[es] not know the Thicket of Reeds” must yield his seat in the heavenly ship to one who does.<sup>63</sup> In the Book of the Dead, he gets the seat in the boat only if certain words are spoken over certain texts and sketches.<sup>64</sup> The funerary literature, as Schott points out, was a didactic structure (*Lehrgebäude*) built up of a series of interviews (*Wechselreden*) in which questions were asked, mostly about objects in the other world, and answers were expected, the name of each object being a token or password, “the key word or solution (*Kennwort, die Lösung*), which permitted the dead to pass on.” To pass such

a series of questionings required a substantial *Erfahrungsschatz* or body of knowledge, and it was this “beneficial” knowledge that was contained in the funerary texts.<sup>65</sup>

## The Importance of Knowing

This emphasis on (1) knowing, implemented by (2) pictures and diagrams with (3) instructions regarding where to look for them, finds striking expression in the Book of Abraham: “And that you may have [1] a *knowledge* of this altar, I will refer you to [2] the *representation* [3] at the *commencement* of this record” (Abraham 1:12); “That you may have [1] an *understanding* of these *gods*, I have given you [2] the *fashion* of them [3] in the figures at the beginning” (Abraham 1:14). That is definitely the Egyptian way and in the Egyptian spirit—another bull’s-eye for the

## Book of Abraham.

Let us sum up the functions of this writing. It has been designated as a *vade mecum*, or guidebook to the hereafter;<sup>66</sup> or as a “passport to eternity,”<sup>67</sup> comparable to the golden *Totenpässe* (passports for the dead) of the Orphic mysteries.<sup>68</sup> It has been called a “letter,”<sup>69</sup> specifically a “letter of recommendation.”<sup>70</sup> Its purpose is not to establish the owner in his eternal home, whether infernal or celestial, but merely to assist him in getting there. The idea of “tickets” could go back to those prehistoric mummy tags which aided in the disposal of the dead;<sup>71</sup> as such, a Breathing text would be a mere *tessera* or *symbolon*, like the admission tokens used in the Greek and Roman feasts and mysteries.<sup>72</sup> In the end, Goyon decides that it is really “more of a sort of amulet or talisman” than a serious

redaction of funerary rites—a shipping tag, so to speak.<sup>73</sup> The Breathings text Papyrus Leiden T 32 points out the great importance of having one's papers in order,<sup>74</sup> and the owner of that document, setting the supreme example, had no less than four Books of Breathings buried with him!<sup>75</sup> Finally, since one prepares for one's heavenly home while still in this life, the writing was as beneficial to the living as to the dead.<sup>76</sup>

## **Who Is the Real Author? Isis, Thoth, the Scribe**

***Line 1:*** “which Isis made for her brother Osiris”

“The Book of Respirations Written by Isis for Her Brother Osiris” is properly the title of the second of the three types of Breathings books, according to Stricker.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, “Book of Breathings” is not a real title at all

but simply designates a class of literature, Stricker avers, noting that the title of Papyrus Leiden T 32, which belongs to the first of the three types, is really “The Book of Living in Eternity.”<sup>78</sup> Who is the true author of our text? After the mention of Isis, we read (lines 30–31) that it was *Thoth* who wrote this book “with his own fingers.”<sup>79</sup> What is more, some Books of Breathings bear the signature of their scribes, such as a Turin Demotic text which has written on the back of it, “The Book of Breathing made by the scribe Pakhyntawy.”<sup>80</sup> Who, then, gets credit for the book? The stock argument against associating the Joseph Smith Papyri with Abraham is that they come much too late to be from his hand. But we have shown that an Egyptian book was “made” every time it was “renewed” in fresh copies from time to time, each new scribe taking credit for its production.<sup>81</sup> Thanks to the Egyptian genius

for identification and the freest use of proxies in all ritual situations, there is no need for rivalry here. Isis and Thoth are often found together performing identical functions, in which association Isis often appears as Seshat, the lady of writing,<sup>82</sup> bearing the epithet “she who was in the beginning,” while she and Thoth are both called, without visible rivalry, the inventors of writing.<sup>83</sup> The “aretalogy” of Isis begins, “I am Isis, the ruler of all lands; I have been taught by Hermes, and *with* Hermes I invented letters.” It is her “assimilation to Seshat,” the goddess of writing, that makes this teamwork possible, though Dieter Müller finds it rather strange.<sup>84</sup> Thus Isis, Thoth, Seshat, and an Egyptian scribe each claim to have “made” the same book or writing, without any conflict or contradiction. But “made (*iri*)” can in this context also mean “recite” rather than

compose, and this can apply to Thoth as well as to Isis.<sup>85</sup> For even Thoth cannot take credit for the book if, as Georges Posener points out, “he has neither initiative … nor authority to write official documents in his own name,” but merely sets down what Re orders him to.<sup>86</sup> Though Thoth is already copying down Breathings texts in early times,<sup>87</sup> it is only in the Greco-Roman period, and specifically in the Book of Breathings itself, according to Schott, that Thoth actually composes sacred writings on his own.<sup>88</sup> At first, to “make (*iri*)” a book meant to recite it; then, in the Middle Kingdom, it could mean either to recite it or to write it down,<sup>89</sup> this being done by Thoth “with his own fingers” as a secretary for the “Lord of All Things,” or by Atum or Re.<sup>90</sup> According to Schott, it is Thoth in the library who is the ultimate inspiration for the Books of Breathings: first, the sacred formulas

were read at the funeral; next, a written copy was buried with the dead; and this was “finally designated as a letter of Thoth to provide breathing.”<sup>91</sup> But the material was at all times taken from the library of Thoth, of great antiquity. The expression used in Papyrus Louvre N. 3284, “written with his own fingers,” goes back to the earlier literature also,<sup>92</sup> thereby providing a useful tracer.

The rediscovery and exploitation of very ancient and holy documents is a standard occurrence on the Egyptian scene, from the Shabako stone<sup>93</sup> to the Setna-Khamuas cycle.<sup>94</sup> Chapter 137A of the Book of the Dead reports: “This text has been transcribed in conformity to what was found written (by) Prince Djedefhor, who discovered it in a secret chest, in a writing of the god himself, in the temple of *Wnw.t* [at Hermopolis] ... as he was on a tour of

inspection of the temples, towns, etc. What is to be recited from it is secret.”<sup>95</sup>

## Osiris, the First Initiate

**Line 1:** “for her brother Osiris”

Isis was known as the discoverer of “the medicine of immortality,”<sup>96</sup> by which she raised her brother Osiris from the dead, he being the first person ever resurrected. Earlier it was Thoth who wrote the divine words for Osiris,<sup>97</sup> he being the author of all the sacred writing and sole patron of the priests.<sup>98</sup> All the holy books are hermetic books, coming from Thoth (Hermes) in the library of the House of Books and the House of Life. So in the long Breathing text: “Effective are thy ministrations (*hʒ.w=k*) in the vicinity (*hʒwy*) of the book house, thy confidence (*kfʒ.w=k*) waxeth strong within the House of Life.”<sup>99</sup> The basic Egyptian

ordinances, Moret observed, were “only an imitation of the rites of the ‘first time’” as they were performed for Osiris.<sup>100</sup> It is interesting that in the Book of Abraham, pharaoh was ever “seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam” (Abraham 1:26).

For the Egyptians, “the legend of Osiris ... provides the *rationale* of a ritual drama designed to initiate the dead into a new and eternal life.”<sup>101</sup> Though the earliest performances of the drama come from the Eleventh Dynasty<sup>102</sup> and the classic stories of Isis and Osiris flourish in the later period, the basic plot and ideas behind the story go back to the very beginnings; <sup>103</sup> the names of Isis and Osiris designate two of the five epigomenal days of the oldest Egyptian calendar.<sup>104</sup> The rites were supposed to have

been revealed to men by Osiris, the first mortal to be resurrected: “death made of him a being who knew the great secret” of how mortals may become immortal.<sup>105</sup> In every list of Egyptian cults, Osiris and Isis appear at the earliest level.<sup>106</sup> The baptismal rites of the Pyramid Texts are already an Osiris ritual, according to Adolf Rusch,<sup>107</sup> though in those days Osiris was still a grim rather than an appealing figure.<sup>108</sup>

In the Middle Kingdom the whole religious life of Egypt centered around the Osiris mysteries of Abydos,<sup>109</sup> where, according to Wolfgang Helck, they went back to coronation ceremonies as old as the days of prehistoric nomadism,<sup>110</sup> with the relationship of the king to Osiris altering from time to time. Jaroslav Černý suggests that Osiris was perhaps “originally a human king who became deified after his death” but adds that “no systematic exposition of this

myth is known from Egyptian sources.”<sup>111</sup>

Important rites became “Osirianized” from time to time down through the centuries,<sup>112</sup> until by the late period Osiris was all-in-all, ending up as the Serapis of classic times.<sup>113</sup> Yet the nature and origin of Osiris remain a complete mystery, widely conflicting interpretations of his name being still put forth by the best Egyptologists.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, in spite of Osiris’s immense prestige and antiquity, J. Gwyn Griffiths finds the sudden appearance of Osiris in the Old Kingdom to be completely baffling.<sup>115</sup> There were early funeral rites without any mention of Osiris,<sup>116</sup> and there is even evidence that the Osiris doctrine met with stiff opposition in Egypt in early times.<sup>117</sup>

## Purpose of the Book: A Rebirth and a Renewing

**Lines 1–2:** “to make his *ba* live (*or* revive), to make his corpse live, to make young all his members anew”

The idea is definitely that of the resurrection of the flesh, which held a central position in the rites of Egypt.<sup>118</sup> The whole significance of Osiris—as of the mysteries in general, in which the initiate follows his example—is, according to Gertrud Thausing, *Stirb und Werde*, or dying in order to rise again.<sup>119</sup> Osiris, prostrate but stirring on the lion couch (cf. Facsimile I), depicts the moment of passage.<sup>120</sup> Long ago, Eugène Revillout noted that the purpose of the prayers in the Book of Breathings is to bring about the resurrection of the dead by giving him breath.<sup>121</sup> The nature of the *ba* is treated below (line 3).

**Line 2:** “to make young all his members anew”

The literal and physical nature of the Egyptian resurrection is attested by the constant accompaniment of the word *s·'nh*, “to make alive,” and by the related expressions *s·rnp*, “to make young,” and *rwd*, “to flourish, prosper, be firm and enduring,” which necessarily apply to both living and tangible things. By being reborn, “the dead has won a new life of eternal youth in the Lady of Heaven,” his permanent childhood being attested by his never being weaned again from his lady mother.<sup>122</sup> “Horus . . . found in the teachings of Osiris himself, the secret which would recall him to a new life and a better one—that would make him invulnerable to a second death.”<sup>123</sup> By the rites the dead “removes” his former nature and “puts on” a new one, even as a snake changes its skin, the whole process being one of rejuvenation.<sup>124</sup> It is nothing less than a reversal of the direction of time,

requiring that the candidate momentarily step into a timeless state, followed by a morning of rebirth which, in a way, repeats the creation itself, the “first time” (fig. 23).<sup>125</sup> The idea is clearly expressed in the Jewish-Christian *Epistle of Barnabas* 6.11: “Since he made us new by the remission of sins, he made us another type, that we should have the soul of children, as though he were creating us afresh.” For the Egyptians, “resurrection is a rebirth, … and so the dead is treated as a newborn babe.”<sup>126</sup> An important part of the mysteries was the imitation of a delivery, the squeezing of the candidate through a narrow passage (as in the pyramid of Unas; see p. 119, fig. 30) or through the *mshn.t*-skin of rebirth, by which he received new life regarded as his “new birth.”<sup>127</sup> The assistant in the ceremony was a priest in the guise of Anubis in his official capacity of “Rejuvenator (*rnpy*).”<sup>128</sup> By

resurrection (*s 'nh*, *srnp*, etc.), the Egyptian, like the Christian, meant the revival of the body since that is “an indispensable part of the person,” and a reuniting of body (*hʒ.t*) and spirit (*bʒ*) was essential to salvation; even when the *ba* and *shm* (power) left the body temporarily to sojourn in heaven,<sup>129</sup> the body was not entirely inert in the underworld but had definite ties with the upper realm as well<sup>130</sup>—an idea implemented dramatically by the hypocephalus.

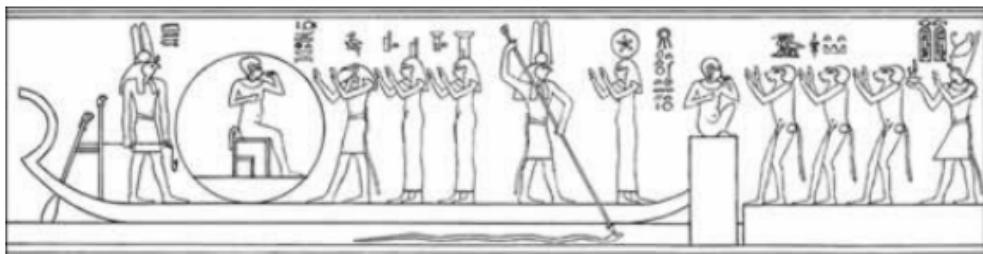


Figure 23. As the solar-bark passes through the waters symbolizing rebirth and rejuvenation, the child Harpocrates sits on the prow on the right as well as in a circle, which is both the new sun on the horizon and the embryo. Horus spears the serpent Apophis, while the Two Ladies, Isis and Nephthys, hail him. Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu, interior of

foretemple, ca. 100 B.C. Redrawn from Champollion,  
*Monuments d'Égypte*, 2: pl. 123.

## The Sun on the Horizon as the Soul in Transition

**Line 2:** “that he might enter the horizon along with his father, Re”

If the essence of cult and festival is “transition, *rite de passage*, succession of lives,”<sup>131</sup> the great exponent of such meaningful motion is Re the Sun.<sup>132</sup> The disk is directly observable under normal conditions only on the horizon: as “thou passest over the sky, ... every face ... watcheth thee and thy course, for thou thyself art hidden from their gaze,” except when “thou dost show thyself (to them) at dawn and at eventide each day”—i.e., on the horizon.<sup>133</sup> It is when the sun is on the horizon that men can get a good look at it and actually watch its motion even at the

portentous moment of transition between day and night, of passage from the lower world to the upper heavens, or the reverse. “The Gate of Heaven or Underworld, between the earthly and the otherworldly spheres ... was from the earliest times localized in the *3h.t.*, that is, the seam or juncture (*Nahtstelle*) in the east and west where heaven, earth, and underworld came into contact with each other and where intercourse between the spheres is possible.”<sup>134</sup> In passing the horizon, the sun-god and his ship both *change their natures* as a prelude to other changes in appearance to follow.<sup>135</sup> Actually, the sun *does* change its apparent shape, color, and size on the horizon (see p. 256, fig. 81). A variety of gates, pylons, false doors, and passageways in Egyptian tombs and temples are designated as horizons, such being the symbol of the boundary between this world and the other world.<sup>136</sup> Thus one

begins his journey through the hours of the *Stundenwache* by “standing on the threshold (*idb*) of the horizon,” which is the door of his “house.”<sup>137</sup> In the rites of the Unas pyramid, the middle chamber of the three main rooms is called the “horizon” since it is there that the dead takes his leave of the underworld and enters the upper world, that being where the *ba* emerges from the coffin,<sup>138</sup> at which moment the dead is told, “You purify yourself on the horizon” (fig. 24).<sup>139</sup> When the time comes for the dead to leave the tomb, “a messenger comes to thee from the great god: Come to heaven! Come forth from *Rw.ty*, the Gates of the Horizon.”<sup>140</sup>



Figure 24. Photograph of Nibley reading the Pyramid Texts in the middle chamber of the pyramid of Unas, 1984. Nibley Archives.

The word *ȝh.t*, “horizon” (fig. 25), can designate that particular spot on the skyline at which either the first or last brilliant point of the sun’s surface is visible at sunrise or sunset,<sup>141</sup> these being movable points, represented by the ancients as a series of gates or windows; or else the region just below the horizon whose effulgent glory can be seen reflected on our own upper sky at dawn and twilight. Alexandre Piankoff designates *ȝh.t* as a land of lakes through

which the sun had to pass just before it appeared on the visible horizon.<sup>142</sup>

According to Schott, in the Pyramid Texts the inhabitants of the *ȝh.t* live beyond the mountains of the eastern and western horizons, but on this side of the underworld itself, belonging to the place of transition;<sup>143</sup> while in the Amduat the entire underworld is designated as “the western *ȝh.t.*”<sup>144</sup> Charles Kuentz maintains that the *ȝh.t* is not the horizon line, “but an extended inhabited region,” the eastern desert, being in this world and designated as the *tȝ ntr*, or land of the god, the god in this case being *ȝh.t* or *Hr-ȝh.ty*, the Lord of the Horizon.<sup>145</sup>

For those who travel, especially in the desert, the horizon is a constant and visible proof of realities that may escape the city dweller and the farmer. The horizon at dawn and dusk is a sharp, hard, black line, as real and intensely visible as anything can be. But

when you pick a mark on the horizon and walk up to it, lo, there is more beyond—another horizon! We discover that the horizon, the absolute limit of *our* vision, beyond which for us nothing exists, is only a relative thing after all; the absolute limit of *our* present visible world turns out to be only the threshold to another world beyond. Farmers and city dwellers, unaware and suspicious of what lies beyond the safe oasis or city walls,<sup>146</sup> are prone to an existentialist philosophy and take a skeptical and gloomy view of what lies beyond the present life; but the nomad of the desert can always believe that there is something beyond because, for him, there always *is* something beyond. One of the peculiar traits of Egyptian culture and belief is, surprisingly enough, an obsession with the idea of *eternal progression*,<sup>147</sup> another nomad heritage. The saints, *das wandernde Gottesvolk*, have always been

drawn to distant horizons and spurned “this present world” as altogether too confining.<sup>148</sup> The passage from world to world and from horizon to horizon was dramatized in the ordinances of the temple, which itself represented a horizon.<sup>149</sup>

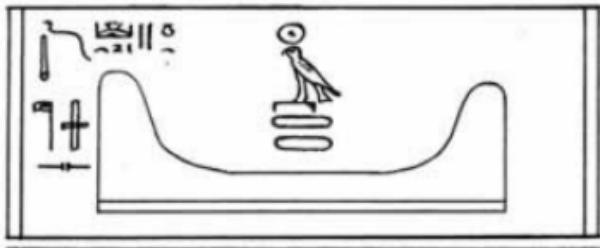


Figure 25. Horus fuses with his father Re on the horizon (*ȝh.t*) to become Re-Horakhty. P. Nebseni (BD 149), ca. 1440 B.C. BM 9900 © Copyright The British Museum.

## Joining the Father Re—Union with the Solar Disk

***Line 2:*** “along with his father, Re”

There has been endless speculation as to the real relationship of Re and Osiris.

Though the association of the sun-god with the ruler of the dead and the underworld suggests a pact between two originally separate and even hostile cults, yet the two are found joined together from the earliest times. And why not? Does not the sun visibly spend half his time in the underworld? But how does Osiris of the underworld get up into the sky? That is not so obvious. But the Shabako text tells how Osiris “passes through the secret gates of the glory of the Lords of eternity, following in the footsteps of him who shines on the horizon, upon the ways of Re.”<sup>150</sup> Re leads the way and Osiris follows, joining him at exactly the place and the time at which the two worlds meet—on the horizon, when “the secret gates of glory” are opened. Bearing in mind that, from the Middle Kingdom on, every deceased Egyptian as a candidate for glory was an “Osiris,”<sup>151</sup> we can understand why, in the

Kerasher text of the Book of Breathings, Maat urges the dead to take advantage of his father's company to get him through: "Come, pass thou on [*bs=k*, a term referring to a step in initiation] to the place where thy father is[,] that he may place thee among the divine favoured ones!"<sup>[152](#)</sup>

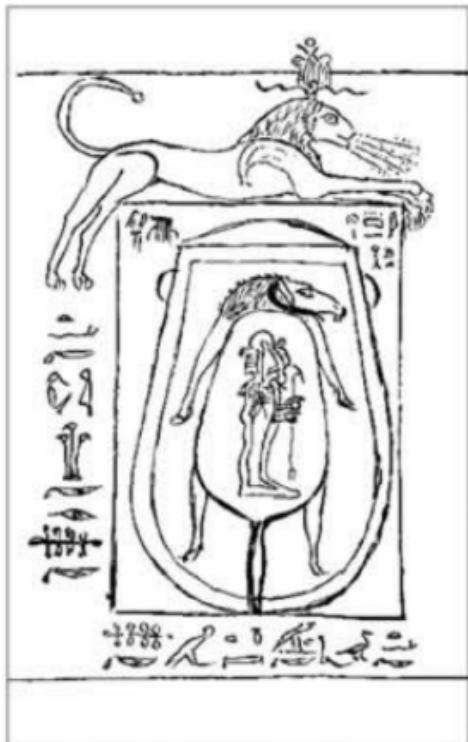


Figure 26. A mysterious representation of Osiris is surrounded by a ram skin of Re, the head of which

has the sacred beard. P. Salt 825, ca. 330–250 B.C., EA 10051/9 © Copyright The British Museum. The

Two Ladies, Isis and Nephthys, support a unique image of Re, combining the ram-headed Amon-Re with the body of Osiris in his distinctive white garment. The inscription confirms the composite image: “Osiris is at rest (*htp*) in Re; it is Re who is at rest in Osiris.” Reconstructed drawing from the tomb of Nefertari, ca. 1270 B.C.

“Re and Osiris, . . . far from opposing each other,” appear in the Book of the Dead “to be the one but a reflection . . . of the other.”<sup>153</sup> But this is no late reconciliation; for the culmination of the archaic rite depicted in Papyrus Salt 825, which is nothing less than “the great secret of the ritual,” is “the confusion in a single being of Osiris and Re in the appearing of a mummy wrapped in ram skin” (fig. 26). The association of Osiris and Re is “the symbol of the moment of resurrection.”<sup>154</sup> The wrapping, as we show below, is a ritual embrace, establishing a

relationship of father to son in a succession to kingship; in the sixth hour of the Amduat “the king as sun-god confronts his own corpse, with which he unites. He ministers to those of the underworld, including the great kings of old,” and then passes on to the next hour, “that of Osiris.”<sup>155</sup> It was “in the throne room [that] Osiris was completely identified with Re.”<sup>156</sup> In later times, priests speculated on the subject: “Who is this? Yesterday is Osiris and To-day is Rā. ... Others, however, say that To-day is Rā, on the day when we commemorate the festival of the meeting of the dead Osiris with his father Rā.”<sup>157</sup> Jan Zandee has observed that “it is not only in Christian dogma but also in the Egyptian theology that father and son are of identical nature (*wesensgleich*),” so that “what applies to the one applies also to the other.”<sup>158</sup>

In our text, the word for “enter” the

horizon is *hnm*, meaning properly to join or fuse with. Since light is the universal attribute of divinity, it is not surprising that the sun is the *Urbild des Gottes*, which goes back to prehistoric beginnings at Heliopolis, the sun-city,<sup>159</sup> and that, though divinity appears in a plurality of forms, “the god of the Sboyets [doctrinal teachings] never loses his archaic characteristics, ever remaining Re or another creator sun-god.”<sup>160</sup> The whole business of the Egyptian temple centers around “the mighty drama of the sun in his course (*das gewaltige Schauspiel des Sonnenlaufes*),”<sup>161</sup> not only because the sun is the most obvious symbol of divinity, but because the temple was, from megalithic times, designed to serve as an observatory of heavenly bodies and their motions, especially the sun.<sup>162</sup> François Daumas describes as the culmination of temple rites at Denderah “the cortege of priests ...”

moving along up the stairs to the terrace, ... there to achieve ‘union with the Disk.’”<sup>163</sup> In the temple rites, Re is the real “protagonist of the drama,” and all centers around him,<sup>164</sup> with whom the dead becomes identified:

*Tout se réduit, en somme, à une solarisation du mort.*<sup>165</sup> Hence the fusion of the candidate with his father, Re, on the horizon. “The heavenly journey of the individual is an analogy to the voyage of the sun on the divine path.”<sup>166</sup> It was at the moment that the sun’s eye pierced or entered the court of the House of Life “to unite itself with Osiris” that the fusion with Re took place.<sup>167</sup> Again, just as the sun strikes the top of a ritual stone in the New Year’s rites of Sokar-Osiris at Thebes, Osiris makes “union with the solar disc.”<sup>168</sup> When Re assumes the title of Osiris, “they have one body and ‘speak with one mouth.’” Re becomes the

night-sun.<sup>169</sup>

## The *ba* in Glory

**Lines 2–3:** “to make his *ba* appear in glory in heaven”

The rites of royal pyramid burial ended exactly at sunrise, when the *ba* (*b3*) of the dead king joined his father on the horizon.<sup>170</sup> Just so, the dead is told, “Thy Ba flies after Re, thou shinest at dawn and settest at even every day.”<sup>171</sup> At the beginning of the Sinuhe story, the king “flew to heaven and was united with the sun’s disk,” who was his heavenly father: “the flesh of the god was fused with him who made him.”<sup>172</sup> Whether one is entering or leaving the world, it is fusion with the disk that effects passage. According to Louis Žabkar, one (originally just the king, but later everybody) received a *ba* only at the time of the funeral, when the

*ba* left the body to carry on, not as a mere surviving part of the defunct, but as a projection of the entire being,<sup>173</sup> the *ba* being that *daemon* which joins the body at birth and accompanies it forever after (fig. 27; see color plate 7).<sup>174</sup>



Figure 27. The *ba*, bearing the seal which insures its identity with the person on the couch, hovers over the body. JSP VI (BD 89). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

As a result of having fused with Re, the subject enters celestial glory as a *ba*. It is common today to leave the word *ba* untranslated—an excellent illustration (since there is no more common word in Egyptian and since the layman has a right to a

translation) of the principle that familiarity with an expression is no guarantee of understanding. Concerning the nature of the *ba*, “a widespread lack of clarity still prevails”; <sup>175</sup> Žabkar, in fact, in a book on the *ba*, refuses to define it! <sup>176</sup> “A serious difficulty arises when we are called upon to translate such words as *ba*, *ka*, *akh* into modern languages,” he writes. “Perhaps we can describe these manifestations as ‘multiple personalities’ or even better, ‘multiple impersonations.’” <sup>177</sup>

The independence of the *ba* from other aspects of being is emphasized in the Coffin Texts, in which the *ba* appears (1) as part of both human and divine entities; (2) as separable from the body; (3) as having an earthly life both within and without the tomb, being able to come and go freely and to live in heaven while the body remains in the tomb or underworld; <sup>178</sup> (4) as having existed

before earth life; (5) as able to influence things and “enter into” them.<sup>179</sup> The many aspects of the *ba* have recently been treated by Thausing, for whom it is the “understanding, knowing, independent part of an individual which can go ‘wherever it will,’ being spirit and not dependent on the body: ... its manifestation is in the wind, ... the divine breath of Shu”; <sup>180</sup> it is the *Intellekt, Wisser, Bewusstseinsprinzip*, or *Seele* of the dead.<sup>181</sup> The root meaning of the word is “to open,” implying revelation, divine spark, spirit.<sup>182</sup> In particular, the *ba* is the mobile element, unhampered by a body and free to move about; it goes and comes, sometimes fetching food and drink for the otherwise helpless corpse.<sup>183</sup>

For, at death, the *ba* and the body are separated, even though both may go on living, according to our Book of Breathings: “Thy corpse (flesh) lives in Busiris ... while

thy *ba* lives in heaven all the time (every day)" (lines 50–51). And in the related Papyrus Louvre N. 3292 we read, "Grant that heaven may be for my *ba* and the *duat* for my body, that my nose may breathe the fresh winds."<sup>184</sup> "His *ba* is in heaven and his body is in the west";<sup>185</sup> and so back to the Pyramid Texts: "The spirit is for heaven, the corpse for the earth."<sup>186</sup> Another interpretation is given by the Herweben text: "They cause her *ba* to rise up to heaven like the *ba* of Re, while her body is in the *duat* like the *ba* of one who is united with Osiris."<sup>187</sup> The *ba* could even leave a man's body during his mortal lifetime and return, as in the case of Sinuhe when he passed out.<sup>188</sup>

But this separation of body and spirit is not permanent. In fact, it is the *ba*'s ultimate dependence on the body that assures the latter of a share in eternal salvation.<sup>189</sup> For

the dead needs both *b3* and *h3.t.*<sup>190</sup> Žabkar sees in the *ba* “the totality of physical and psychic capacities” of the individual, it being the fullest realization of the king’s powers and the alter ego of the ordinary man that takes over his physical functions.<sup>191</sup> According to Hans Goedicke, in the Old Kingdom the *ba* was considered “an immaterial being and spiritual power,” the image projected by a personality rather than an actual part of a person; it is an image that a man builds up during his lifetime on earth —it is himself as manifested by his acts, but persisting after death.<sup>192</sup>

In the darkest moment of the royal funeral in the deepest and darkest of chambers, the restorative process begins to take place, with the *ba* assuming the most tenuous of visible forms, that of smoke provided by scented candles.<sup>193</sup> Endowed with this preliminary materialization, the *ba* is able to

preserve its recognizable shape and to break forth from the coffin by main force;<sup>194</sup> next, it “receives complete form in a statue,”<sup>195</sup> which is then crowned and anointed in the “celestial room.”<sup>196</sup> The *ba* having asserted its independence at death, it is a matter of great concern to bring the inert parts of the person under its influence.<sup>197</sup> Hence, “this concept of the complete identity of the dead with his *ba* is the core of the entire resurrection ritual.”<sup>198</sup> Only when *ba* and body are permanently reunited can either enjoy a fulness of glory.<sup>199</sup> In that state, however, the *ba* may unite with other *bas*. The plural form of *ba* (*b3.w*) indicates “divine entities in a general sense,” or divinity “in its active and visible aspect,”<sup>200</sup> so that “to have a *ba* is to participate in the divine cosmic consciousness”<sup>201</sup>—to share, as it were, in the councils on high.<sup>202</sup>

The idea that the *ba* of one exalted being may unite with that of another is the ultimate expression of the mystery of identity, but it is no more baffling than the total fusion of persons and pronouns in the Gospel of John, chapters 14 through 17, or in 3 Nephi 19. Thus “the *ba* of Shu is Khnum. ... The *ba* of Kek ... is the night. The *ba* of Nun is Re. The *ba* of Osiris is the ram of Mendes. The *ba* of Sobek is the crocodile. The *ba* of all the gods dwells in serpents. ... The *ba* of Re is the whole land.”<sup>203</sup> In the Pyramid Texts, according to Sethe, “the dead himself is not Osiris, but his soul, his *ba*, is Osiris, i.e., dwells in Osiris, even as the soul (*ba*) of Osiris dwells in Orion or later in the phoenix-bird.”<sup>204</sup> Thus the *ba* of Isis belongs to Sothis (Sirius) while the *ba* of Horus belongs to Orion.<sup>205</sup> The *ba* of an exalted father may be with his son living on earth,<sup>206</sup> and it may even be possible to achieve an

earnest of the *ba*'s perfection while still in this life by virtue of the ordinances which initiate one into a higher state of being.<sup>207</sup> Thausing makes a distinction between the “*ba* of life” (the “living *ba*”) and the “*ba* of the spirit,”<sup>208</sup> the former being the more perfect, with the capacity to procreate.<sup>209</sup> “The living *ba*,” according to Paul Barguet, refers to “the aspect of divinity *par excellence*, the eternal,” being “the divine spark,” “the divine quality ... which leaves the individual at the moment of death and which has its domain in heaven, as shown by its bird form.”<sup>210</sup>

In hieroglyphic script, the *ba* is designated by the figure of a bird and also by a pot with fire in it (see p. 256, fig. 81a), showing, according to Thausing, that the *ba* is both the divine phoenix-bird of the resurrection and the divine fire.<sup>211</sup> Zandee sees the bird form as denoting primarily the office of the *ba* as

a messenger, in particular the messenger hawk between heaven and earth.<sup>212</sup> As Eberhard Otto explains it, from the beginning man sought some form which would enable him to get the best of the cold obstruction and dark and terrifying confinement of the grave; the most obvious form would be that of a bird, freely and swiftly moving in any direction and negotiating empty space in defiance of gravity. It plainly offered the best available solution to the problem of mounting to heaven.<sup>213</sup> Though “nothing was ever farther from their mentality than ideas of metempsychosis,” or transmigration of souls,<sup>214</sup> though the Egyptians never did “think of themselves as real birds after death,” and though “the initiated knew it [the *ba*] was a symbol,”<sup>215</sup> still there was always something special about bird symbols. The first epistle of Clement, one of the most respected of early Christian writings,

adduces the phoenix-bird of Egypt as unanswerable proof of the reality of a literal resurrection.<sup>216</sup> Zandee thinks the Egyptians took the bird quite literally, stating that “the *b3* is a power of the human soul, incarnated in a bird,”<sup>217</sup> and that “the ba-bird, bearing the head of a human person, instead of a bird’s head, is supposed to be an incarnation of a deceased” (see p. 435, fig 139).<sup>218</sup> But there is ample indication that disembodied wings were, for the Egyptians, a compelling symbol of speed, power, and freedom of motion on the abstract level.<sup>219</sup> If the *ba*-bird is a phoenix or *benu*-bird “considered as the soul of Re,”<sup>220</sup> we must bear in mind that birds do communicate knowledge to men and that the Egyptians were dedicated bird-watchers. There is more to the Egyptian symbolic birds than reaches the modern eye. In chapters 82, 83, and 86 of the Book of the Dead (JSP V and VI), the dead wants to

assume the form or function (*hpr*) of a swallow. Theodor Hopfner recalls the uncanny capacity of the swallow, noted by ancient writers, to return to an exact spot at an exact time as if by assignment, which was anciently demonstrated at Koptos, the oldest shrine of Egypt, even as it still is today at Capistrano.<sup>221</sup> Such a display of inspired behavior certainly suggests the classical and Christian story of the Egyptian phoenix, our *ba*-bird, immortalized in English literature by an early Anglo-Saxon writer following Lactantius, who tells how, exactly at the end of five hundred years, the bird would return from Arabia to Heliopolis to be sacrificed on the flames and arise anew from its own ashes as the type and earnest of the resurrection.

## Degrees of Glory

**Line 3:** “in the disk (*itn*) of the moon”

If Aton (*itn*) is “a development of the old sun-god of Heliopolis,”<sup>222</sup> it is strange to find his title applied to the moon. Indeed, Raymond Faulkner’s dictionary renders *itn* simply as “*sun*; more specifically *disk* of the sun.”<sup>223</sup> Aton is the sun in its physical, visible aspect and has been compared with “the window in heaven through which the unknown god, ‘Lord of the Disk,’ shed a portion of his radiance upon the world.”<sup>224</sup> In reliefs of the Amarna period, such as appear on obelisks, the all-important Aton is shown, not as a disk, but cut in very high relief, strongly accenting its appearance as a very palpable globe.<sup>225</sup> The expression *itn n i ‘h* inescapably associates the sun and moon as two physical globes. Since the word *Aton* is used to designate the sun in *contrast* to the moon—“I give thee all that Aton sees and what the moon sees”<sup>226</sup>—the unusual expression “Aton of the moon” evokes a

special situation. It has just been announced that Osiris is about to join with his father, Re, to fuse with his disk on the horizon,<sup>227</sup> and now we are told that at the same time his *ba* is to enter the glory of the moon's disk. The two disks coincide, suggesting a solar or even a lunar eclipse (fig. 28). "The meeting of Re and Osiris in their astral aspects," writes Derchain of Papyrus Salt 825, "shows that the throne chamber was consecrated to rites related to the cycles of the moon and sun."<sup>228</sup> Battiscombe Gunn derives the imagery of the combined coronation and resurrection rites of the Egyptians not from the sun as such, but rather from the various aspects of the visible disk,<sup>229</sup> and Elmer Suhr suggests that "from the suffering of the sun [by eclipse] emerges the birth of the ruler and the resurrected sun."<sup>230</sup> The ideal time for the Isia festival was when the winter solstice coincided with a moon at its

strongest and a lunar eclipse might occur. Making union or meeting is all-important, and here one wonders if the meeting or fusing (*hnm*) of the disks could be anything but an eclipse.

**Line 3:** “that his corpse might shine in (or as) Orion”

Having fused with the disks of the sun and the moon, the defunct now shines among the stars of heaven. Here are the three steps in sequence:

1. *r hnm=fʒh.t hn ‘it=fR ‘*, “to join the horizon along with his Father, Re (the Sun)”

2. *r sʒh bʒ=f m p.t m itn n i ‘h*, “to make glorious his *ba* in heaven in the disk of the moon”

3. *r psd hʒt=f m s ‘h m h.t Nw.t*, “to shine (i.e.) his flesh in Orion, in the womb of Nut (the starry heavens).”<sup>232</sup>



Figure 28. Conjunction of the sun and moon over two-headed Horus, representing the moment of passage from past to future, from one phase to another, here labeled “Khonsu the Great coming forth from *Nw*,” the primordial heavenly waters. Greatly enhanced from the lower back pillar inscription of a Late Period statue of a priest. Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy. 1823 engraving in Champollion, *Panthéon égyptien*, [147].

The parallelism is obvious, the pattern a conscious one; in each case a different word for “glory”—*R'*, *sʒh*, *psd*—is used: the first the glory of the sun, the second that of the moon, and the third that of the stars,

suggesting the “three degrees of glory” in 1 Corinthians 15:41 and Doctrine and Covenants 76:81, 86–98; 88:7–9; and 121:30. The “glory of the stars” is specifically that of Orion; in contrast to the constellation of the bear, low and dim on the Egyptian horizon, Orion was the visible symbol of the glory of the stars to the Egyptians.<sup>233</sup> More than that, “a sort of ‘theology’ of Orion and Sirius” prevailed in ancient times all over the ancient Near East, “having undeniable overall unity”;<sup>234</sup> an important center of this cult was Abydos, center of the Osiris cult as well.<sup>235</sup> In this cult, Sothis (Sirius) and Osiris (*sʒh*) are “practically inseparable,”<sup>236</sup> and it is specifically *Osiris* as *Orion* who caused the Nile to rise.<sup>237</sup>

Specific reference to Orion in our Breathings text goes back to the earliest times in Egypt, the word *sʒh* used here

designating both Osiris and Orion as the place where departed spirits go.<sup>238</sup> The journey through the stars is a conspicuous motif in the funerary literature.<sup>239</sup> “The stars Orion and *Spd* [Sirius] must carry the dead to heaven and save him from the state of the dead” (fig. 29).<sup>240</sup>



Figure 29. Orion and Sirius in their boats, with the usual five-pointed stars above their heads, move on their eternal courses. In an unusual feature, Orion's body is turned to his wife Sirius, while his head faces the opposite direction. The constellation of the bear is shown as an ox fastened to the north pole. Restored

drawing of the ceiling of the funerary temple of  
Ramses II, ca. 1230 B.C.

The idea of *three degrees of glory* can be lavishly illustrated in Egyptian funerary art (fig. 30). A fundamental example from the pyramid age is the arrangement of the chambers beneath the pyramids, which follow the same general pattern as later tombs and temples—that of three main rooms: “The coffin chamber is the underworld, the middle chamber is the upper world, representing the world in which we live,”<sup>241</sup> while the third room is called “heaven (*qbhw*)” and is divided in turn into three equal recesses, alcoves, or subchambers (the serdabs), in the center one of which stands the invisible god Re-Atum.<sup>242</sup> The crowning of the *ba*-image takes place in this central niche and is “the high point of the mystery drama,” after which the party leaves the pyramid to continue the rites

in the open air and on a higher level. This “fusion of the king’s nature with the god of heaven” is represented by the crowning of the statue with the Moon-eye of Upper Egypt and the Sun-eye of Lower Egypt.<sup>243</sup> The funeral party leaves the pyramid in three stages, representing three degrees of resurrection in which the coffin chamber is the underworld, the middle chamber the nocturnal upper world, and the serdab is heaven, all “scenically depicted.”<sup>244</sup> A scene from Biban el-Mulūk, or Valley of the Kings, depicting “the birth of the sun,” shows the sun emerging in three stages from a pyramid which has split in the middle to release him; the pyramid is divided into three equal horizontal sections, each of a different color (see color plate 10).<sup>245</sup>

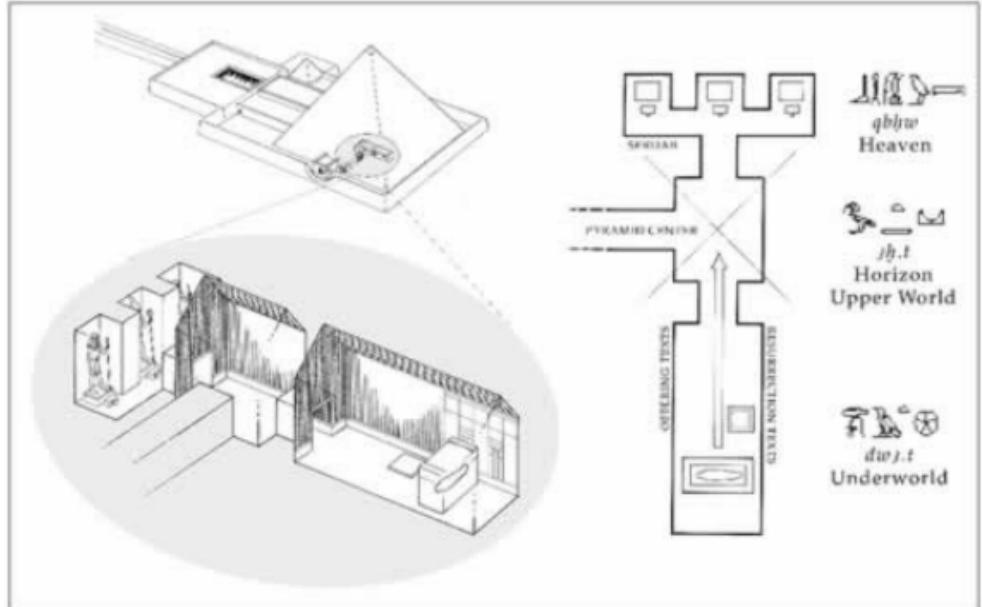


Figure 30. The pyramid of Unas was the oldest pyramid whose walls were covered with what became known as the Pyramid Texts. The deceased pharaoh was thought to move from the underworld (*dwj.t*) through the horizon (*zbt*) to join the gods in the heavens (*qbhw*).

Certainly, the concept does not originate with 1 Corinthians 15:40–42. Simeon ben Jochai says that in the next world those who come first “are like the *sun*; the next class like the *moon*; the third like the *firmament*; the fourth like the *stars*,” etc.<sup>246</sup>

# Rebirth by the Heavenly Mother

**Line 3:** “in the womb (*or* body) ... of Nut”

To be reborn in resurrection, the king must enter again into his mother’s womb.<sup>247</sup> The sarcophagus in which he lay was called *mw.t*, which also means “mother,”<sup>248</sup> and was designed to represent the embracing arms and wings of the starry sky-mother (fig. 31).<sup>249</sup> “I no longer know my first mother whom I knew before,” says the resurrected one. “Nut hath brought me forth, along with Osiris.” Thus he “wins a new life of eternal youth in the sky-goddess, and from her he will never be weaned.”<sup>250</sup> Hence, also, after his underworld coronation, “the king leaves off his aspect of Osiris to go to Nut, and takes his place in heaven among the stars, and he presents himself [for acceptance] at the gates of the horizon.”<sup>251</sup> In Pyramid Text 606 §1688, the king is hailed as “Re, come

forth from Nut who bears Re every day.”<sup>252</sup> And when at his morning ablutions the king is washed, anointed, and dressed in the manner of a newborn babe, he “rejoices in the picture of Nut that is in the chamber.”<sup>253</sup> He is the sun, who enters the womb of Nut every evening to emerge reborn in the morning.<sup>254</sup>

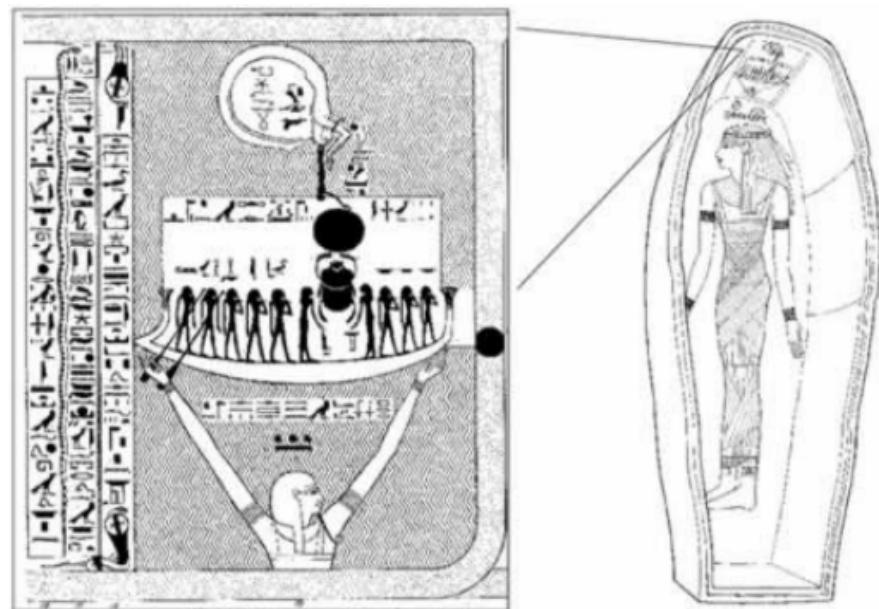


Figure 31. In this famous scene from the alabaster sarcophagus in the tomb of Seti I, birth and death are depicted as a passing through the waters. First, there is a mounting up from the arms of Nun (the primeval

waters), who supports a ship bearing five gods—Geb, Shu, Heka, Hu, and Sia, all patrons of knowledge and instruction—while at the prow stand three figures representing doors (passages, degrees?). Isis and Nephthys, the nursing mothers, receive into their arms and pass on the *kheper* beetle, symbolic of birth and transition, here pushing the rising sun before him; the sun is received into the arms of the sky-goddess Nut, who proceeds to give birth to him, who then becomes Osiris, his arched back and legs surrounding the *duat*.

Here the divine progress passes through a series of no less than five ritual embraces, from the large image of Nut in her winged garment on the bottom of the sarcophagus through the transformations engraved above her head. Book of Gates, twelfth hour, ca. 1290 B.C. Courtesy of Soane Museum, London.

Though there are many theories to explain how the sky-goddess Nut became the womb of the dead,<sup>255</sup> there is no doubt that her first and oldest form was that of sky-goddess. “The Two Lands were flooded with their brightness, like the stars in the body of Nut,” says an archaic inscription.<sup>256</sup> A very

“primitive” account depicts Nut as a sow who eats her children, the stars,<sup>257</sup> suggesting a return to the body of the primordial mother by a cycle of nature; a related concept is that of Nut swallowing the sun in the west and bearing him again in the east every day.<sup>258</sup> “The rejuvenating nocturnal journey of the sun can take place within the body of the sky-goddess” and is ritually repeated for all the dead, who by entering Nun put off their former nature and ‘put on’ a new one, becoming renewed and reborn.”<sup>259</sup> In the twelfth hour of the Amduat, the king or candidate emerges reborn: “He comes forth from the *duat*; ... he appears in glory between the thighs of Nut. The gate is called *Tnn* (the first land of creation), and the place itself is called ‘When the darkness comes the birth follows.’”<sup>260</sup> The low and narrow passages between the ceremonial chambers of tomb and pyramid through

which coffin and mummy are dragged with much toil and labor, much pouring of water to cool the friction-heated floors and runners, and much reciting of spells and incantations as the body is moved from one degree of its progress to another, represent the passages both of conception and of birth, by which the dead is both begotten for his rebirth and delivered into his new life,<sup>261</sup> emerging as “a singular star.”<sup>262</sup>

A common image of apocryphal literature compares persons who move between the worlds to stars (see, for example, 1 Nephi 1:8–10). The whole idea of the dead reentering the “Nut-cycle” goes back, according to Wilhelm Czermak, “to the primordial concept of the ‘dead as a star.’”<sup>263</sup> “Hail thee, Osiris, Orion in the sky, who … journeys with the stars of heaven, his mother Nut having received him in her time.”<sup>264</sup> “Glorious is Orion [Horus] in

heaven,” says the Lady, “... and I am Sothis [Sirius] who protects him and is never far from him.”<sup>265</sup> In the Pyramid Text, Isis comes to her brother “prepared (*spd*) as *Spd.t*” (Sirius—a play on words), the bridal star; the child she bears as a result is Hor-Sopdet, who comes forth as “Horus who is in Sopdet.”<sup>266</sup>

## The Title “God’s Father”

**Lines 4–6:** “and to cause to happen the same things for the Osiris, the God’s Father and Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon-Re, Bull-of-His-Mother, upon his great throne, *Wsir-Wr* (or Osiris Greatest and Oldest), Justified, the son of one of like honors to these, *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified”

Here the full title of the initiate is given. In translating funerary texts, it is customary to render the long names and titles of the

deceased after their first appearance simply by “N” or “NN.” If the names and titles remained the same throughout the ordinances, that would be a perfectly reasonable procedure; but since, in the present text, they show many changes which may be significant, it will be best to write them out each time. We have suggested that the Books of Breathings may belong almost exclusively in the same family of priests of Amon-Re at Thebes.<sup>267</sup> In the case of this *Wsir-Wr*, “the God’s Father” and “Prophet of Amon-Re” are titles that properly go together and denote the highest priestly dignity.

The “god” in question is the living pharaoh, and the initiate qualifies as his “father” either because his “high station, advanced age, outstanding wisdom or some such attribute” merited the title as a courtesy or mark of respect or affection,<sup>268</sup> or else

because the document's holder actually was either the nonroyal husband of the queen and father of the pharaoh or his real father-in-law.<sup>269</sup> Paradoxically, a still higher title than "God's Father" was "Servant of the God (*hm-ntr*)"; one was a servant in the capacity of "spokesman," *prophētēs*, the regular translation of *hm-ntr* being simply "prophet."<sup>270</sup> The normal *gradus honorum* of the Egyptian priesthood seems to have been from common priest (*w'b*, "pure one") to "god's father" to "servant of the god" or "prophet,"<sup>271</sup> with "a tendency for only the highest of the 'god's fathers' to be called 'prophets.'"<sup>272</sup> The god in this case was properly Amon or Amon-Re, identified in the earliest times with Min.<sup>273</sup> It is interesting that in our text the name of Min (formerly read as Khem or Ham) is inserted between two Amon-Re titles, along with the archaic designation of "Bull-of-His Mother,"

the name taken by Min at the coronation; this indicates that what follows should be read “upon his great throne (*s.t=f*)” rather than his “place” or “residence.”

The name of the candidate is *Wsir-Wr*, “Osiris is Great,” or “Greatest and Oldest.”<sup>274</sup> As might be expected of one holding the highest religious credentials in the land, the same honors were held by his father before him. The father’s name was *Nsp3w.ty-t3.wy*, “belonging to the primeval god of the Two Lands,”<sup>275</sup> and, like all the rest of the titles, has a zealously archaic ring.

The owner of the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings is Hor, the son of Wosirwer (*Wsir-Wr*) and Taykhebyt.<sup>276</sup> The name of Hor is, as Stricker points out regarding the father of Horsiese, anything but rare, and yet it is definitely a family name among owners of Breathings texts. But Stricker does find the name of Horsiese’s mother significant: it

is Qaiqai.<sup>277</sup> The *-qai* element—as in Remni-qai, which means “my arm is exalted”—gives something of a biblical tinge to the name. In the Amduat, one of the twelve goddesses of the first hour is named *Q3y.t-*, “*Die hoch ist an Arm.*”<sup>278</sup> In this case, “The name suits well with the gesture of ‘Praising,’”<sup>279</sup> the raising of the arm in the temple. In some inscriptions, to be “high on [the] arms” of one refers to a ritual embrace in the temple.<sup>280</sup>

What can be rendered as “the same things,” *mit.t*, means “the like” and occurs regularly in situations in which whatever is happening or being done by one person is attributed to another or accrues to his credit or benefit. This is very clear in the Metternich Stela, where the victim suffers snakebite as Horus did, so that he can be healed as Horus was: whatever Horus does, he does *mit.t*, each party being, for the

purpose of the ordinances, completely identified with the other. Since the afflicted victim, however, is in no condition to function, his place may be taken by yet another, who is now, to all effects, himself.<sup>281</sup> The “things” which the candidate wishes to share with Osiris are his *hprw*, which, according to some studies, may best be understood as the experiences he has undergone to reach his present glorified state—all the things he has *been*, usually overtranslated as “transformations.”<sup>282</sup> What identified the “Osiris NN”—that is, the candidate as Osiris—with the god Osiris in the first instance was, as far as we can tell, their *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, or common fate and experience in undergoing the trials of death and resurrection, according to Siegfried Morenz.<sup>283</sup> It is to this common experience that the present passage seems to refer.

# **Importance and Secrecy of the Book**

***Line 6:*** “Hide it! Hide it! Do not let any man read it!”

The word translated as “read” is ‘š, meaning “to read aloud, call upon or appeal to, quote, mention.” Absolute secrecy is commanded. The idea that the Egyptians had deep and awesome secrets has always thrilled the man in the street and accordingly has been deplored by the professional Egyptologist dedicated to maintaining the image of the scientist and avoiding any taint of Rosicrucian hocus-pocus. In a widely circulated comment, John Wilson wrote, “The notion that the ancient Egyptians were cabalistic esoterics devoted to hiding their mysteries from others dies hard.”<sup>284</sup> If hiding mysteries from others makes one a cabalistic esoteric, then the Egyptians were just that, as

were the Jewish sectaries and the early Christians.<sup>285</sup> The notion “dies hard” because the Egyptian writings are full of it. What can the line “Hide it! Hide it! Do not let (permit) any man (to) read it!” possibly mean if not that the author is concealing a mystery? Egyptologists both deny and admit the secrecy; Claas Bleeker, in his study of the subject, states that “the texts never mention the existence of secret societies ... [or] the existence of a kind of esoteric wisdom, only disclosed to the initiated,” only to add in the next breath that “mystery proves to have been an important component of the religious consciousness of the ancient Egyptians. And when mystery somewhere occurs, then the initiation into that hidden truth or spiritual reality can not be totally absent.”<sup>286</sup> Again, after announcing that there was “apparently ... no authoritative myth, and certainly no secret doctrine,” Bleeker

promptly qualifies his stand: “Yet some cultic ceremonies were celebrated, which were so holy and which so strongly had the character of a mystery that no one was allowed to describe or depict them.”<sup>287</sup> Elsewhere he observes that “initiation presupposes a religious secret, which is only known to the initiated. . . . The faithful are, in general, not inclined to discuss their religious belief with outsiders.”<sup>288</sup>

Herodotus designates the rites of Osiris as *mysteria* precisely because they were secret.<sup>289</sup> Like the Book of the Dead, the Book of Breathings texts belong to the hermetic writings of Thoth<sup>290</sup> and as such were necessarily secret. The Amduat texts are found only in concealed places, being “holy and hidden,” known only to the elect.<sup>291</sup> Such secrecy should surprise us least of all in Egypt, where the funerary literature “swarms” with admonitions of

secrecy, according to Morenz, who quotes these very lines from our Breathings text, Papyrus Louvre N. 3284, to illustrate.<sup>292</sup> The curious Greeks never penetrated beyond the public religion of the Egyptians, whose esoteric teachings were divulged only within the temple walls<sup>293</sup> and never revealed to the vulgar.<sup>294</sup> Those secret books of directions for the temples<sup>295</sup> were real books, of interest to both the living and the dead, equally valid in the *duat*<sup>296</sup> and among mortals on earth, *tp-t3*.<sup>297</sup>

“To maintain that precisely ancient Egypt should not have known some kind of initiation—and initiation rites—like the rest of the world,” writes Walter Federn, “is plainly absurd, and irreconcilable with the existence there of a hierarchy.”<sup>298</sup> Bleeker duly notes that “certain parts of the temples were inaccessible to ordinary people” and

that “the Egyptian temple was not meant to let the masses of the people participate in the religious services”;<sup>299</sup> that “the texts record, that people took pride in the fact that they had beheld certain secret rites”;<sup>300</sup> and that some documents lift “a corner of the veil” to hint at cultic secrets.<sup>301</sup> Barguet finds in the Book of the Dead “nothing which permits us to say that there was an initiation in this life into any secret knowledge concerning certain formulas.”<sup>302</sup> In which life did it occur, then, and how? The fact that the Egyptians did not talk and write about their mysteries is taken as proof that they did not have any; but mystery, as the Greek visitors to Egypt knew so well, is something one does not talk or write about. From the earliest times, Egyptian officials boast that they were “initiated into the secrets of all the secret orders, … initiated into the secrets of the House of the Morning,”<sup>303</sup> without evincing

the slightest intention of telling us what those secrets were. In the Coffin Texts the dead boasts, “I have been introduced into that which before I was not permitted to know, ... to enter into the House of Osiris in Busiris, to a thing which must not be made known!”<sup>304</sup> The owner of a Middle Kingdom stela reports that he is (or was) “first to enter [the temple] and last to leave [the temple], putting my foot in a secret place. ... I go through all the ordinances correctly and violate (reveal) none of the secrets.”<sup>305</sup> Bleeker concedes that, since “the essence of godhead was mysterious ... , mystery must have played an important role in the cult, too”;<sup>306</sup> and even though in later times “people were allowed to see” the mysteries, “it was a matter of course that they should not talk about it or depict it for the public at large.” Even after the general public was invited, “the obligation of secrecy remained

in force . . . : ‘Do not reveal what you have seen in the mysteries of the temples.’”<sup>307</sup>

The old Egyptian word for “initiate,” *bs*, had the root meaning of “secret, secret things,” and is accordingly “a key concept for the secret initiations and mysteries.”<sup>308</sup> *Bs* normally means “to conduct the king (into the temple, to the god), often in the sense of to crown the king. . . . To install priests or the like in their office. . . . To initiate one into a secret and the like. . . . Rarely, to inter.”<sup>309</sup> The candidate in a companion text to our Book of Breathings says to the gods: “I come to you because I am instructed in your secrets.”<sup>310</sup> The entire twelfth hour of the Amduat has to do with “the secret things (*shr:w*) which the god performs.”<sup>311</sup> Bergman renders *hry sštʒ* “(in) on (i.e., in possession of) the secret,” a very common formula, simply as “initiated.”<sup>312</sup>

Since it is written by the fingers of Thoth

himself (lines 30–31), our Book of Breathings is what the Egyptians of the later period would call a hermetic book,<sup>313</sup> a secret document of very limited circulation. S. Mayassis has assembled a formidable array of classical writers who attest the secrecy of the Egyptian religious books and teachings; <sup>314</sup> one of them informs us that one had to be a priest to share any of the real religious teachings, <sup>315</sup> the public being put off with myths, legends, and superstitions that were meant to satisfy them without giving away anything of real importance.<sup>316</sup> There is a story told by Hermes Trismegistos of how Asculapius pleaded with King Ammon not to let any of the sacred writings of Egypt be translated into Greek lest they become the football of rhetoricians and intellectuals who would not understand them.<sup>317</sup> Heliodorus says that the vulgar religion of Egypt was always trying to gain

access to and identity with the true religion, which was superesoteric, very ancient, and very intellectual, the carefully guarded secret of the prophets.<sup>318</sup>

Everyone knows that the Egyptians called hieroglyphics the “divine words” and that they were meant to conceal, if not to mystify; they know also that in the most important passages the scribes often resorted to cryptograms and even spoke to each other in code language when they discussed them; <sup>319</sup> it is not too much to say that the religious texts are written in a *Metasprache*, or metalanguage, to use Erik Hornung’s expression,<sup>320</sup> a special *Initiationssprache*.<sup>321</sup> The words used on the higher level could only be understood in their true sense by the initiated.<sup>322</sup> Everything was in code, the nature of the gods concealed “by a cloud of epithets,” referring to mythological or cultic situations

which only the instructed understood; [323](#) the cultic images are not portraits, but “ideograms” that must be interpreted. [324](#)

Egyptian texts confirm the report of the Greeks that no one was allowed to describe or depict the mysteries in writing or drawing [325](#) and that it was a privilege and an honor to have set eyes on certain secret writings. [326](#) To avoid a lengthy survey, let us glance at the Amduat on the subject. It was “a secret book, known only to a single chosen individual, perhaps the owner.” [327](#) Though a funerary text, parallel observations regarding temple rituals indicate that “the book was reserved, aside from its owner, for the king alone.” At first His Majesty gave permission only to very favored and important officials to have portions of it painted in their tombs. [328](#) It is called “the writing of the hidden rooms,” [329](#) and the

tombs in which it is found painted were all dug with the greatest secrecy; [330](#) the titles of the various hours are very secret and are never found mentioned elsewhere. [331](#)

The way of Sokar in the sand is “a secret picture, not to be seen or scrutinized,”[332](#) recalling in more than one way the old Hopi (and later Navajo) sand writings. Cryptograms are found scattered throughout the book to enhance the secrecy of it; the names of the gods are written in a special way, “normal ideograms being replaced by hieroglyphs of secret significance,” and for the supersecret fifth and sixth hours, even the notes and explanations are written in code.[333](#) It concludes with the same formulas of secrecy as our Book of Breathings, declaring it to be “the chosen guidebook, the secret writing of the *duat*, which is not known by any man save the chosen one. No one may see it. ... It has been tested millions

of times.”<sup>334</sup> Likewise, it begins with a formula found in the preface to the Joseph Smith text and the appendix to that of Philippe-Jacques de Horrack: “It is beneficial for him on earth—as truly tested—very special, like the secret that is written.”<sup>335</sup> The statement that the writing is meant only for the eyes of one person, the owner and initiate himself, is significant since it shows that we are dealing with the individual salvation inherent in the mysteries. It is “a chosen directive (*Leitfaden*) … which only the chosen (‘nd) knows.”<sup>336</sup> Hence he can say, “I come to you because I am instructed in your secrets.”<sup>337</sup>

Nothing is ever given away. Hermann Grapow notes that the Egyptians constantly refer to the story of Horus and Seth without ever telling it.<sup>338</sup> Sethe has shown how the word *bs*, “to initiate,” is equivalent to *sštʒ* and *štʒ.w*, “secret things.”<sup>339</sup> “I was initiated

by the *sem*-priest," says a Coffin Text. "I do not tell it to man nor repeat it to the gods. . . . I have come (entered) by virtue of (*hr*) what I know. I do not repeat it to men, I do not tell it to the gods."<sup>340</sup> It is common to the Orphic and Phrygian as well as the Egyptian mysteries, says Eusebius, to present "most things by enigmas in a veiled, secret, and symbolic theology, the most important things of all being *ta sigomena*," the things about which no one speaks at all.<sup>341</sup> Nowhere are these things explained in any systematic exposé.<sup>342</sup> The rites revealed to men by Osiris, the first mortal to be resurrected, were nothing less than the great secret of how mortals may become gods, taught in the temple, "the place of the [great] secret."<sup>343</sup> Why does Re journey in the underworld? "It is a secret why he does it . . . not known by any save the elect. No one may see it."<sup>344</sup> For all the countless references to the

tragedy, “the texts provide no clear picture of the manner in which Osiris died.”<sup>345</sup>

Plutarch says that the Egyptian priests were very reluctant to talk about Osiris at all, holding his story as sacred and secret.<sup>346</sup>

The earliest Christian Apocrypha contain the same admonitions to secrecy as their Egyptian predecessors: “Do not permit this book to fall into the hands of any infidel or heretic. . . . Michael sustained me so that I could behold these mysteries.”<sup>347</sup> Indeed, *apocryphon* is nothing less than a secret teaching.

One of the main reasons that modern scholarship denies the Egyptians their secrets is that the Greek and Roman visitors and students made so much of them. The Egypt of the Greco-Roman period is commonly designated as late and degenerate, the sort of world in which all sorts of fraud and humbug flourished—hence the heavy

capitalizing on the secrets of the ancients. Modern scientific scholars are insulted by the company of such ignorant and superstitious informants and offended by the suggestion that they might even have known more about the Egyptians than we do today. “The greater bulk of classical authority,” wrote Alan Gardiner, “inflated by the obscurantist preferences of medieval mystery-mongers, had misconstrued Egypt into a home of recondite wisdom and its hieroglyphic inscriptions into symbols of deep hidden truths. To such views as these—except in circles deliberately hostile to the results and methods of science—the decipherment of the hieroglyphs put an end for ever.”<sup>348</sup> It is comforting to know that Erman’s grammar, laboriously expanded by Gardiner himself,<sup>349</sup> has banished the unknown from the field of Egyptian studies. In the same spirit students have announced

that the New Testament holds no mysteries for them since they have learned to read Greek.

Since secrecy is a game that all humans play from early childhood, the easiest and most enticing of games at that, it is remarkable that those same scholars who regard the Egyptians as superstitious primitives should allow them the strength of character to avoid its pitfalls. Montet finds secrecy a necessity among the primitive communities of earliest Egypt, enabling “a group of Egyptians … to recognize their own and preserve their local life.” The special secret knowledge preserved by each local group was its *bwt*: “he who observes the *bwt* of his group is a pure one: he who transgresses it is a *bwty*,” i.e., outcast.<sup>350</sup> Moret noted long ago that all the arts and sciences are secrets and have always been treated as such.<sup>351</sup> But today it is precisely

the results and methods of science that reverse this verdict, as Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend inform us: “We are not in the best condition to imagine the strict secrecy that surrounded archaic science. The condition is so bad, indeed, that the very fact is often regarded as a silly legend.”<sup>352</sup>

## The Book of Breathings Is Beneficial to Both Living and Dead

**Lines 6–7:** “It is beneficial to a man in the next world *hr.t-ntr* when he lives again, having been proven true (effective) countless (millions of) times.”



Figure 32. The relief on the lintel of the temple library, or House of Life, of Edfu shows two figures, symbolizing eternity, holding up a scribe’s palette for the veneration of four figures representing, from left to right, all that is heard, seen, uttered, and understood beneath the heavens, ca. 200 B.C. Redrawn from

Half a dozen variations of this theme occur in the Amduat.<sup>353</sup> Line 15 says, "It is beneficial to him upon the earth, proven truly (*iw ȝh n=f tp tȝ ss mȝ*')." This last expression, "proven effective," is very common and is usually rendered by the Germans as *als wahr erprobt*. "It benefits him in the *duat* very much (*iw ȝ h=f m dȝ.t wr.t*)."<sup>354</sup> According to line 36, "It is useful to a man upon the earth, proven truly millions of times." And in line 60, we read, "It is beneficial for a man upon the earth (and) in the underworld (*hr.t-ntr*), tested truly (*ss mȝ*)."<sup>355</sup> Finally, line 167 declares, "It is beneficial for him for whom it is done." The entire ceremony concludes with: "Who knows these secret designs is a glorified spirit well-equipped. He can go up and down in the *duat*, ... tested truly millions of

times.”<sup>354</sup>

In each of these cases, it is specifically the *book* that is beneficial, and, as noted in the preceding section, it is meant for the owner’s benefit only (fig. 32). Schott observes that the common formula “beneficial on the earth” actually shows that we have here “a textbook for life on the earth,” with useful and important information, for example, about the secrets of nature, to guide the living as well as the dead.<sup>355</sup> The formula “found useful a million times” has also been found on a strip of cloth to be worn by a living person.<sup>356</sup> It is possible that one and the same document can see a person through this life safely and on into the next, as in Papyrus Bremner-Rhind: “It is beneficial for him who does it upon the earth, beneficial for him in *hr.t-ntr*; power is given to this man (to go) into ever higher offices, (until) he gets power over everything.”<sup>357</sup>

Grieshammer notes that the formulas are also written in the first person, showing that the text is to be used by the dead himself as a prompter to get him through the tests.<sup>358</sup>

We have translated *ȝh* as “beneficial” rather than “useful.” The root meaning, according to Wilson, is “usefully efficient,” so that a wife can be “a profitable (*ȝh*) field for her lord,” “the breath of the mouth is beneficial (*ȝh*) for the dead,” etc.<sup>359</sup> In this case, however, the best rendering would probably be “indispensable.”

*Hr.t-ntr*, usually rendered “necropolis,” can be a good deal more than that. Goyon has listed some of the main interpretations of *hr.t-ntr*, which include “the realm of the dead in the beyond (*das Totenreich im Jenseits*),”<sup>360</sup> “Domain of the God [Osiris],”<sup>361</sup> *Gottesboden*,<sup>362</sup> “the holy ground where the initiation to the holy mysteries took place, in the sacred enclosure

of the Necropolis.”<sup>363</sup> Federn holds that the *hr.t-ntr* is so closely bound to the initiation that the occurrence of the term in a text may be taken to mark it as an initiation spell.<sup>364</sup>

“Millions of times” need not be taken literally, as the dictionary and Hornung assure us, since it is used to indicate a number countless to us, though not necessarily infinite.<sup>365</sup>

## Notes

1. To simplify reference, the lines are numbered both successively and by column/line (e.g., 48 [3/5]). The entire text of P. Louvre N. 3284 appears in chapter 4; the bold-faced words occur also in JSP XI and X.
2. Name meaning “Osiris, the Greatest and Oldest.”
3. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 87; Hermann Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* (Glückstadt: Augustin, 1935), 1:176 no. 1, s.v. “archaizing.”
4. *Wb* 4:418–19.
5. *Wb* 4:419.
6. Bruno H. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” *OMRO* 23 (1942): 40–41; Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le*

*Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), vii n.  
3.

7. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, vii.
8. Siegfried Schott, "Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften," *ZÄS* 99 (1972): 23.
9. Étienne Drioton, "Ce que l'on sait du théâtre égyptien," *Revue du Caire* 1 (1938): 218, cited in S. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l'Égypte ancienne* (Athens: BAOA, 1957), 43.
10. Philippe Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051): Rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1965), 1:19.
11. Joachim Spiegel, "Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide," *ASAE* 53 (1956): 348–52.
12. Kurt Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zur altägyptischen Mysterienspielen: Das "Denkmal memphitischer Theologie" der Schabakosteine des Britischen Museums* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1928), 8–10, 16–18.
13. Wilhelm Czermak, "Zur Gliederung des 1. Kapitels des ägyptischen 'Totenbuches,'" *ZÄS* 76 (1940): 24.
14. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:133.
15. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:136.
16. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:134.
17. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:68.
18. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:128.
19. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:135.
20. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:135; Siegfried Schott, *Die Deutung der Geheimnisse des Rituals für die*

*Abwehr des Bösen: Eine altägyptische Übersetzung*  
(Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der  
Literatur in Mainz, 1954), 165 (23).

21. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt* 825, 1:134; 2: pl. 15.
22. Giuseppe Botti, “Il Libro del Respirare e un suo nuovo esemplare nel Papiro demotico n. 766 del Museo Egizio di Torino,” *JEA* 54 (1968): 223.
23. Siegfried Schott, “Nut spricht als Mutter und Sarg,” *RdE* 17 (1965): 86; Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 83, 87.
24. Botti, “Il Libro del Respirare,” 224.
25. *Wb* 4:171–74.
26. Walter Wreszinski, “Das Buch vom Durchwandeln der Ewigkeit nach einer Stele im Vatikan,” *ZÄS* 45 (1908): 115, 119.
27. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 86.
28. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 83.
29. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 85.
30. Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften,” 24.
31. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, vii–viii.
32. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 76.
33. P. Leiden T 32 8/9, in Bruno H. Stricker, “De Egyptische mysteriën: Pap. Leiden T 32,” *OMRO* 37 (1956): 60.
34. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 76.
35. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, vii.
36. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 64.
37. Cf. Hermann Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien* (*Totenbuch Kapitel 69 und 70*) (Berlin: Akademie-

Verlag, 1954), 265–66.

38. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 64–65.
39. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 87.
40. Siegfried Schott, *Die Schrift der verborgenen Kammer in Königsgräbern der 18. Dynastie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1958), 362–63.
41. Max Siebourg, “Neue Goldblättchen mit griechischen Aufschriften,” *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 10 (1907): 393–99.
42. Siegfried Morenz, “Rechts und links im Totengericht,” *ZÄS* 82 (1957): 67; Gerardus van der Leeuw, “The SUMBOLA [Symbola] in Firmicus Maternus,” *Egyptian Religion* 1 (1933): 65–66; Hugh W. Nibley, “Sparsiones,” *Classical Journal* 40 (1945): 515–43, reprinted in *The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled*, CWHN 10:148–94.
43. See Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften,” 24–25.
44. Alexandre Piankoff, *Le Livre du Jour et de la Nuit* (Cairo: IFAO, 1942), ix; see also Leonard H. Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 2, 69, 80; Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 355.
45. Erik Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963–67), 2:81, emphasis added.
46. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:83–85.
47. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:174.

48. [Ancient Egyptian ritual texts often divide themselves into various hours, usually taking twelve hours to finish—eds.]
49. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:85.
50. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:167.
51. Hans Schack-Schackenburg, *Das Buch von den zwei Wegen des seligen Toten (Zweiwegebuch)* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903), 8–9, quotation on 8.
52. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 135.
53. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 23.
54. *Wb* 1:183.
55. Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften,” 24.
56. Nibley, “Sparsiones,” 538–43, reprinted in *Ancient State*, CWHN 10:162–64; and Hugh W. Nibley, “The Arrow, the Hunter, and the State,” *Western Political Quarterly* 2/3 (1949): 335–36, reprinted in *Ancient State*, CWHN 10:9–10.
57. Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften,” 25.
58. Schott, *Deutung der Geheimnisse des Rituals für die Abwehr des Bösen*, 175 (33).
59. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 363–64.
60. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:63–64.
61. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:67.
62. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:71.
63. PT 267 §367, in Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 76.
64. BD 100.
65. Schott, *Deutung der Geheimnisse des Rituals für die*

*Abwehr des Bösen*, 175 (33).

66. Nathaniel J. Reich, “An Abbreviated Demotic Book of the Dead: A Palaeographical Study of Papyrus British Museum 10072,” *JEA* 17 (1931): 86.
67. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, viii, 76.
68. Morenz, “Rechts und links im Totengericht,” 67.
69. Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 40–41.
70. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, vii n. 3.
71. Reich, “Abbreviated Demotic Book of the Dead,” 86.
72. Van der Leeuw, “*Symbola* in Firmicus Maternus,” 65–70.
73. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 87.
74. P. Leiden T 32 7/24–25, in Stricker, “De Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 37 (1956): 59.
75. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 49–50.
76. Cf. Reinhart Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970), 8–9; Eberhard Otto, review of *The Egyptian Coffin Texts VII: Texts of Spells 787–1185*, by Adriaan de Buck, *ZDMG* 113 (1963): 197–98.
77. Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 42.
78. Stricker, “Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 50.
79. Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften,” 24.
80. Botti, “Il Libro del Respirare,” 228.
81. Hugh W. Nibley, “As Things Stand at the Moment,” *BYU Studies* 9/1 (1968): 74–79.
82. Jan Bergman, *Ich bin Isis: Studien zum memphitischen*

*Hintergrund der griechischen Isisaretalogien*

(Uppsala: Berlingska, 1968), 235.

83. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 236.
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322. Wilhelm Czermak, “Vom großen Gedanken Ägyptens,” *Archiv für ägyptische Archäologie* 1 (1938): 212.
323. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 81; English trans., 90.
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325. Bleeker, “Initiation in Ancient Egypt,” 53.
326. Bleeker, “Initiation in Ancient Egypt,” 55.
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328. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 370.
329. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 334–35.
330. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 321.
331. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 360.
332. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:64; 2:82.
333. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 338.
334. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 3:25–26.
335. E.g., Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:135.
336. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 348.
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338. Hermann Grapow, *Das 17. Kapitel des ägyptischen Totenbuches und seine religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung* (Berlin: Paul, 1912), 23.
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355. Schott, *Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 362–63.
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358. Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 10.
359. John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 67–68.
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362. Czermak, “Zur Gliederung des 1. Kapitels des ägyptischen ‘Totenbuches,’” 12 n. 4, cited in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 39 n. 4, and cited in Federn, “‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts,” 252 n. 115.
363. Federn, “‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts,” 252 and n. 115, cited in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 39 n. 4.
364. Federn, “‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts,” 252 and n. 115.
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# Color Plates



Plate 1. Joseph Smith Papyrus I (source of Facsimile 1). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

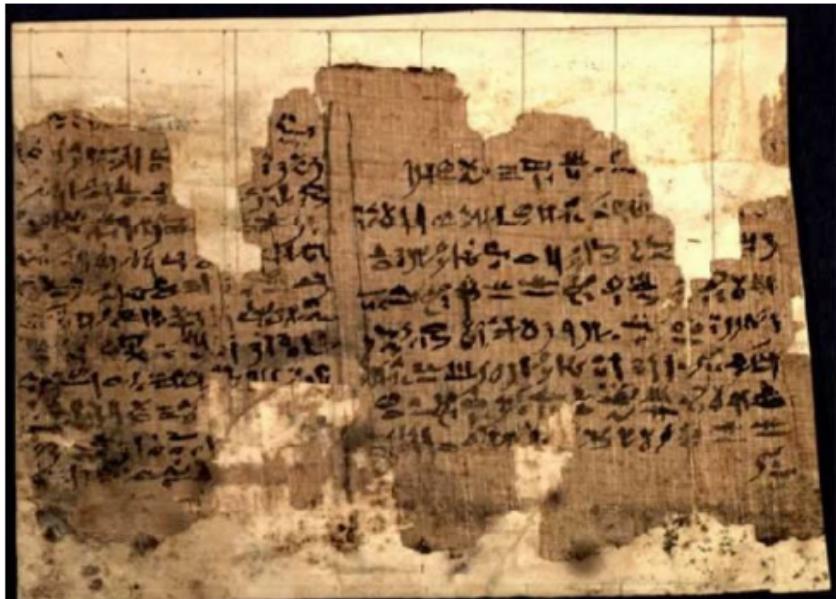


Plate 2. Joseph Smith Papyrus XI. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

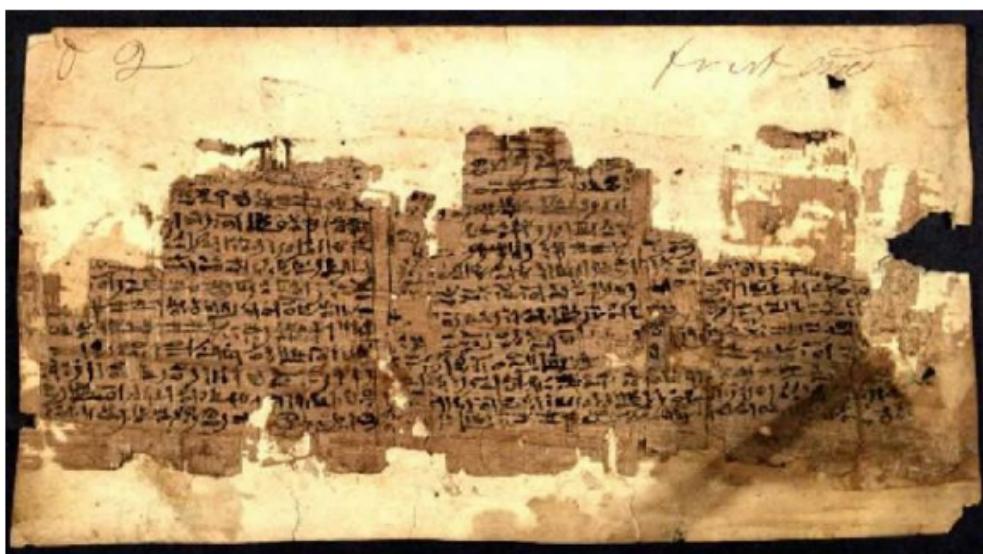


Plate 3. Joseph Smith Papyrus X. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

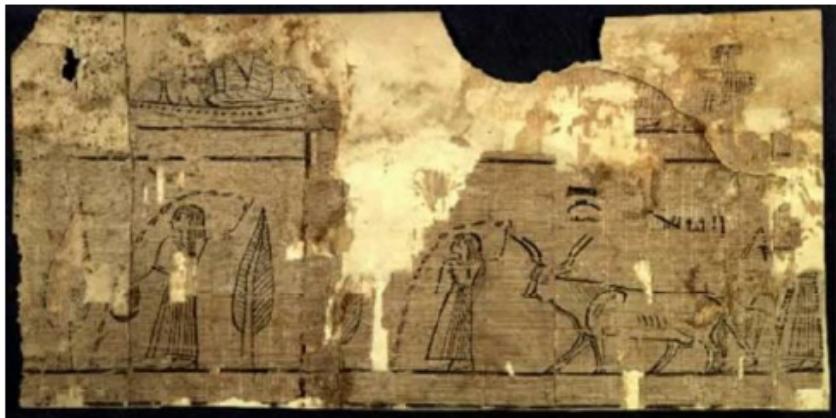


Plate 4. Joseph Smith Papyrus II. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Plate 5. Joseph Smith Papyrus III. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Plate 6. Joseph Smith Papyrus IV. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Plate 7. Joseph Smith Papyri V (right) and VI (left).  
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Plate 8. Seti I, assisted by Isis, anoints the Osiris standard of Abydos. Temple of Seti I, Abydos. Painting by Amice M. Calverly. Courtesy of the Egyptian Exploration Society.



Plate 9. Seti I unwraps the white-robed image of Osiris. Temple of Seti I, Abydos. Painting by Amice M. Calverly. Courtesy of the Egyptian Exploration Society.



Plate 10. Birth of the sun. Final chapter of the Book of Caverns. Tomb of Tausert, ca. 1190 B.C. Courtesy of Araldo DeLuca/White Star.



Plate 11. The Lady of the Sycamore offers refreshment to the high priest Userhat, his wife and mother. He and his wife appear as two pairs of ba-birds. Reconstruction from tomb of Userhat, ca. 1320 B.C.

## Commentary, Part 2

# Initiation Rites and Entering the Temple

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 8–14

8. Speak the words (Recite as follows):  
**Hail, Osiris, God's Father and Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-**
9. Amon, *Wsir-Wr* [JSP: **Hor**], **Justified**, son of one of like offices, *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy* [JSP: **born to Tay[khebyt]**], Justified!  
Thou art pure,
- 10 (1/10). thy heart is pure, cleansed is thy front **with washing, thy back with cleansing water** (*twr + water ideogram*), **thine inward parts with soda** and natron.
11. No member of thine causeth offense.

Purified is the Osiris, God's Father, *Wṣir-Wr*, **Justified**, Son of [JSP: born of]

12. *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy* [JSP: **Taykhebyt**],

**Justified, in the (these) standing waters  
of the Meadows of Rest on the north side**

13. of the Field of Grasshoppers. **Edjo**

(*W3dy.t, Uto*) **and Nekhbet have made  
thee pure in the eighth** [JSP: **fourth**]  
**hour of the night,**

14. in the eighth [JSP: **fourth**] **hour** of the  
day.

## Commentary

**Line 8:** “Speak the words (Recite as follows)”

The formula is rendered by Alan Gardiner as “the speaking of words.”<sup>1</sup> It is usually written in red ink as instructions for the reader rather than as part of the sacred text, and it indicates that a priest is to speak aloud what follows; it also shows that the text

contains ordinances in which a number of persons are participating.<sup>2</sup> In the longer Book of Breathings, the expression is written in red ink to allow the narrators to follow the progress of the ceremonies without difficulty, suggesting to Goyon that at some time this version of the Book of Breathings, “like the Book of the Dead, was recited in the course of the funeral ceremonies.”<sup>3</sup> In most texts, according to László Kákosy, the *dd mdw* (“speaking of words”) formula had lost all real significance by the second half of Ptolemaic times.<sup>4</sup>

## The Osiris Title: The Candidate as an Osiris

### ***Line 8: “Hail, Osiris (NN)!”***

The word for “hail (*hʒy*)” is a ritual greeting and always expresses joy and rejoicing.<sup>5</sup> The initiate is anything but a

doomed soul entering the last mile into eternal night. Note that the candidate's titles are being progressively reduced. From the full titulary in lines 4–6 we find that "Bull-of-His-Mother, upon his great throne" has been dropped in lines 8–9, and by lines 11–12 all that is left are the names of the candidate and his father with the priestly title "God's Father" and the indispensable "Justified." It is significant that the most exalted titles, and those of which the owner should be proudest—including that of "Prophet"—are the very ones omitted. Can it be that such offices are mere formalities, survivals from the original coronation ceremony, part of the package that the scribe would copy down?

For this phase of the ordinances, the subject is "an Osiris." The Osiris name that is assumed by all initiates at the outset is, Erik Hornung insists, merely "a title or

assigned role (*Rollenbezeichnung*)” and does not indicate real identity with the god, but shows, rather, “that through death the individual enters into a role prepared for him, designated by the name of Osiris.”<sup>6</sup> Identification with Osiris was strictly “a legal identification,” according to Étienne Drioton and Jacques Vandier,<sup>7</sup> guaranteeing the dead “the privileges of Osiris.” The fact that the individual, here and throughout, always retains his personal name shows that he is never absorbed into Osiris to the point of losing his own identity. Indeed, at the moment of reversing his course and directing his steps toward heaven, Unas, according to Joachim Spiegel, shed his Osiris title, which befitted him only in the world of the dead, to become a Horus.<sup>8</sup> As a Horus, the king rises above the status of Osiris.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, Walter Federn maintains that the designation “Osiris So-

and-so” indicates “an absolute certainty of identity with the divinity, a certainty that might be termed ‘mystical,’ ”<sup>10</sup> and cites Siegfried Morenz’s study of the subject. The latter notes that in the classical period there was a conspicuous tendency to adapt texts dealing with the rites of Osiris (whether from temples or libraries) for use as private funerary texts,<sup>11</sup> signifying an increasingly close and literal identification of the god with the defunct human—a steady “thinning of the boundary” between their natures<sup>12</sup> until that boundary completely disappeared. The removal of all distance between god and man was un-Egyptian, according to Morenz, who attributes it to Greek influence,<sup>13</sup> but at the same time it expressed a typically Egyptian wish to be as near to the god as possible hereafter.<sup>14</sup> It is possible, Morenz concedes, that “optimal proximity to the god,” as illustrated in funerary drawings,

might well signify “becoming Osiris” as “a new form of existence for the deceased,”<sup>15</sup> who, through ritual, acquired the nature of the god.<sup>16</sup> Kákosy uses the word *transubstantiation* to explain the sense in which the individual became an Osiris completely and totally<sup>17</sup> and detects instances of a special kind in which the dead took on “a new Osirian form,” becoming another type of being, before he could enjoy complete identification with the god.<sup>18</sup> The essence of the mysteries, according to Hermann Kees, was to become “a follower of Osiris.”<sup>19</sup> The embalming itself “was but an imitation of a treatment which the dead god Osiris was believed to have been the first to receive; the dead person, therefore, became an Osiris.”<sup>20</sup> To enjoy the blessing of Osiris—eternal life—one must do the works and suffer the vicissitudes of Osiris;<sup>21</sup>

hence the embalming table takes the same form as the altar of sacrifice: that of a lion couch.<sup>22</sup> As Gunther Roeder puts it, one becomes an Osiris only “by literally undergoing all the experiences of Osiris.”<sup>23</sup> The double prehistoric aspect of Osiris as dying vegetation-god and earthly king renders “the character of Osiris one of the most difficult problems presented by ancient Egyptian religion”;<sup>24</sup> but however conflicting the two roles of Re and Osiris may seem, both have in common the ability to overcome the powers of death and destruction and are thus fit to rule and lead. “According to the Egyptians,” writes Brede Kristensen, “man becomes in death the peer of the gods. Again and again he identifies himself with the victors of death, more especially with Re and Osiris. . . . The mystery of eternal life is identical for men and gods in every respect.”<sup>25</sup> “Behold, I shall be with Osiris,

and my perfection shall be his perfection among the great gods.”<sup>26</sup> Iamblichus says that the initiate becomes like the immortals when he is filled with the spirit of Osiris.<sup>27</sup> This intense personal relationship is reflected in the intimate feelings of the common people toward Osiris, displayed in the great variety of ways in which his name is found written among them, each representing some attribute of the god that had a special appeal to some ordinary individual; this, Adolf Erman concluded, was evidence of the great popular appeal (*Volkstümlichkeit*) of Osiris.<sup>28</sup>

## Mʒ‘-hrw, Justified

### ***Line 9:*** “Justified”

This is the famous *mʒ‘-hrw* formula. Deciphering the idea of *mʒ‘-hrw* “has exhausted the efforts of Egyptologists,”

wrote Alexandre Moret.<sup>29</sup> The usual rendering of *mʒ ‘-hrw* is to “be justified, vindicated, … [hence] triumphant.”<sup>30</sup> Gardiner interprets it as “‘True of voice,’ an epithet added to the names of dead persons and hence often practically equivalent to our ‘deceased.’”<sup>31</sup> Paul Barguet also notes that though the title indicates that the dead “has been declared just before the tribunal, … it often means simply the equivalent of our ‘the late So-and-so.’”<sup>32</sup> Thus in plain Anglo-Saxon, “Osiris NN *mʒ ‘-hrw*” may be read, “Osiris NN, who is dead”; and though, as noted, the rites engage and concern both the living and the dead, it is significant that the *mʒ ‘-hrw* title is applied almost always to the dead—which is not surprising since the texts came from tombs. Yet even here there are exceptions; one man declares, “I was one declared *mʒ ‘-hrw* on earth.”<sup>33</sup> Gertrud Thausing sees it characterizing a

*Zwischenstadium*—having a foot in either world, being “on the soul’s path of exaltation between death and resurrection” or, on another level, (on) the path of the initiate on earth.<sup>34</sup> The condition thus applies in both worlds, and Moret noted that to rule as an earthly king “was to renew on earth the condition of existence enjoyed by the celestial *mʒ ‘-hrw.*”<sup>35</sup>

It has been maintained that the concept of *mʒ ‘-hrw* originated in the law courts,<sup>36</sup> the archetypal case calling for vindication or justification of the candidate being that which, by justifying Horus, established his claim to the throne of his father.<sup>37</sup> Rudolf Anthes says that *mʒ ‘-hrw* in the Pyramid Texts probably means “the acclaim given to him is ‘right,’” meaning that the acclaim given to the new king at his coronation is confirmed by the priestly court at Heliopolis, which is “empowered to pronounce the

acclaim of rightness (*mʒ ‘-hrw=f*) and its opposite.”<sup>38</sup> Not only is the *mʒ ‘-hrw* candidate morally sound—a point emphasized by Reinhard Grieshammer<sup>39</sup>—but everything is ritually correct as well, the expression indicating that he is “cleared” to proceed to the next step, that everything is in proper order and the solemnities may go on. *Mʒ ‘-hrw* represents the initial, not the final, clearance, for the candidate was already *mʒ ‘-hrw* from the time he entered the temple.

## Purification: The Preface to All Important Rites

*Lines 9–10:* “Thou art pure, thy heart is pure”

The whole section following (lines 9–19) has to do with pronouncing the candidate clean. Among the Egyptians, “all religious ceremonies of Pharaonic times ... were

prefaced by some act of ritual cleansing.”<sup>40</sup> The order of the universe itself remains secure only while and because the beneficent power of Osiris remains sacred and uncontaminated, rendering “the life of all things pure and undefiled.”<sup>41</sup> First, in all major rites, according to Gustave Jéquier, came “a solemn lustration performed on the officiant himself by two priests” (see p. 145, fig. 37; p. 445, fig. 143).<sup>42</sup> The officiant must be washed before he can officiate. The daily temple cult began with purification: “Before entering the temple the priest had to purify himself in the sacred pool,”<sup>43</sup> and “the lustration which the king underwent before officiating as high-priest … was of a similar kind.”<sup>44</sup> Though the Egyptians were very health conscious and fanatically clean<sup>45</sup>—and the Osirian cult especially had an obsession with pollution,<sup>46</sup> the funerary texts

being full of prescriptions for avoiding physical filth and contamination of every kind—they were no less concerned with moral cleanliness: “God loves purity more than millions of offerings, more than hundreds of thousands of electrum [fine gold]; ... his heart is satisfied with [or delights (*htp*) in] great purity.”<sup>47</sup> “According to the *Book of Breathings*,” wrote Aylward Blackman, “the Osirian dead, before entering the Hall of the Two Rights, were purified ... ‘cleansed from all evil, every abomination.’”<sup>48</sup> He is “pure from head to foot” (fig. 33).<sup>49</sup>



Figure 33. In being baptized (indicated by the waters pouring over him), the subject also receives the breath of life (*snsn*), symbolized by a sail filled with wind. P. Wesay, Khary, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 9949 © Copyright The British Museum.

The purification rite, preceding all important ceremonies, is initiatory in nature, preparing one for another phase of existence or for some special office or calling;<sup>50</sup> it takes place not in the temple proper but in the *w'b.t*, or “purification room”—a sort of annex.<sup>51</sup>

Every Egyptian priest, *before* entering the temple or undertaking to officiate, had to “go

down (*hʒi*)” into a “sea” or “lake,” as did the priests in the temple at Jerusalem. Even the great Thutmose III had to “bathe in the lake (or pool) of *w'b* (or pure lake)” before visiting the temple at Karnak.<sup>52</sup> Siegfried Schott traces the custom back to the coronation rites, during which the king had to visit the temple in ritual attire, purifying himself beforehand.<sup>53</sup> Coronation reliefs regularly begin with a purification scene.<sup>54</sup>

The key word *w'b* occurs no less than eight times in this section of the Book of Breathings. According to Jéquier, the formula “I am *w'b*” really means that one is baptized and means it in every sense of the word, including that of being qualified by baptism “to participate in the divine life.”<sup>55</sup> He points out elsewhere that the translation “purification” fails to express the idea that this is “a veritable sacrament by which a person (*l'intéressé*) obtained rebirth, eternal

life, ... in reality a baptism by water.”<sup>56</sup> Gardiner compared it to Christian baptism since in it “a symbolic cleansing by means of water serves as initiation into a properly legitimated religious life.”<sup>57</sup> According to Jéquier, the living as well as the dead become *nfr*, “renewed,” through the ordinances of *w'b*—“immersion in the waters of the abyss.”<sup>58</sup>

## **Waters of Passage; the Sun Rising from the Waters**

As usual in Egyptian rites, cosmic associations lie ready to hand. “It is a typically Egyptian practice,” wrote Alexandre Piankoff, “to give several different symbolic formulations to one and the same event,”<sup>59</sup> and no rites offer a richer variety of profound associations than those dealing with water. For not only is water a symbol of cleansing, cooling, refreshing, and

reviving, but it actually does all those things at one and the same time, along with which it is, par excellence, the medium of passage; halfway between solid matter and tenuous spirit, it enables bodies to move from one place to another in a state of effortless motion and silent suspension, visibly hovering between the solid earth below and the empty sky above. Papyrus Louvre N. 3292 is introduced by a vignette showing the purifications before Re-Horakhty which take place at the passing of the horizon.<sup>60</sup> The passing of the horizon is itself an act of purification, a sloughing off of the impurities of a former life so that one may enter a new world in a state of perfect purity.<sup>61</sup> Hence the *w.b.t.*, or purification room, is an essential part of every structure of cosmic significance.<sup>62</sup> The first hour of the *Stundenwache* is devoted to purifications accompanied by hymns of jubilation hailing

the entrance of the god into his newly purified house, a typical New Year's motif that Friedrich von Bissing relates to the *sed*-festival<sup>63</sup> and that strongly suggests the Jewish Hanukkah.<sup>64</sup> In such initiatory situations, “heaven and earth unite (*sm3*)” in effusive purification ceremonies.<sup>65</sup>

For the archetype of the one who passes through the waters is the sun, emerging daily from the waters of the underworld, fresh and reborn at dawn.<sup>66</sup> “The conception,” wrote Jéquier, “is the same as that of the Christian baptism,” except that with the Egyptians “the passage through the water is a necessity and not a mere symbol.”<sup>67</sup> In the Pyramid Texts the Heliopolitan king bathes in the solar pool of the temple and so is reborn in the watery embrace of Osiris.<sup>68</sup> It is in the waters that the solar and chthonian elements meet and blend since the sun, upon leaving the underworld, must rise from the waters “of

the eastern pool of the temple of Heliopolis” after passing through those waters: “The old Heliopolitan belief in the rebirth of the dead through washing, … not … being revivified, but … being reborn with a new and mysterious body” is already apparent in the document in which King Snefru (the father of Cheops who built the Great Pyramid), through an ordinance of washing, becomes “identified with Osiris, and yet appears emerging like the sun-god, reborn, of course, from the horizon.”<sup>69</sup>

In theory, at least, every day the king of Egypt would arise and bathe at dawn, emerging from the waters of his ablutions at the very same moment that his father, the sun, arose from the waters of the eastern pool of Heliopolis; in the Pyramid Texts this rite appears as a symbol of resurrection and, as such, belongs to the funerary rites, in which it is represented by the washing of the

dead.<sup>70</sup> In this ceremonial bath—whether of the living or the dead, as so often appears in the cultic activities of the Egyptians—the coronation rites, the daily rites performed by the king (or priests representing him), and the burial ceremonials all come together.<sup>71</sup> Jaroslav Černý notes that “the ceremony of purification undergone by the living king was also performed on the body of the dead king.”<sup>72</sup> Hence Blackman can maintain that “the Solar-Pharaonic toilet” is nothing less than “the basis of all the other main Egyptian religious rites, namely the preparation of the body for burial, the funerary liturgy, the temple-liturgy, and the purification of the Pharaoh in the temple-vestry.”<sup>73</sup> It is no less fundamental to the greatest of all rites of passage—the coronation.<sup>74</sup> The formal washing of the king in the first hour of the *Stundenwache* was performed by Thoth and Anubis in the presence of all the gods; as he

pours from the *nms.t*-jug, the priest says, “I am Thoth ... who repelled evil in the water. The king is endowed with life—thou art pure. ... Cool water libations to revive Osiris. ... The fluid that came from thee, I bring to thee!” —the idea being that the washing restores life to the body by returning its vital moisture to it.<sup>75</sup> It is at the winter solstice of the new year that the owner of the Sensaos Book of Breathings prays to share the honors of Atum, the Great Ancient One, when the waters are purified for him in the House of the Prince (or of Thoth) in Heliopolis.<sup>76</sup> In another Breathings text, the purification is described as a “pouring” of glory over a person,<sup>77</sup> in the manner in which Homeric heroes are transformed in the shower bath (*asaminthos*).<sup>78</sup>

## **Waters of Life**

If the same rite could appear in different

contexts, it is found no less at different levels. Thus Jéquier notes that the baptism by which the Egyptian “becomes regenerate like a god ... is simply the image of the real baptism, which can only be acquired by death ... and must be renewed before every ceremony.”<sup>79</sup> The formal baptism with the four jars and the daily washings in the temple thus had the same symbolism and the same purpose—to prepare one to become a god by entering into a divine condition: the word *ntry* occurs often in our *snsn* papyrus and means to deify or sanctify, but at the same time, according to Morenz, it also means “to purify,” that being in fact its main sense.<sup>80</sup> Ernst Andersson-Akmar has demonstrated that the standard and primordial Egyptian glyph for divinity, the flag or *ntr* symbol, possibly “represents purity; he who is pure.”<sup>81</sup> “He who is pure (*w'b*),” writes Wilhelm Czermak, “can be a

servant of the gods, ... with the power to exalt, ... and be an assistant to the creator himself." He sees the hidden things of the exalted land which rose out of the waters.<sup>82</sup> As Horus and Thoth baptize the subject of Papyrus Herweben, they recite: "She is pure, she is pure! [She is pure] with purity (*or* purification) of Horus. Horus is pure, she is pure, her purification is the purification of Seth. Seth is pure, she is pure; she is pure, Thoth is pure! Thoth is pure, she is pure!" Here the recipient is ecstatically endowed with the status of her divine ministrants.<sup>83</sup> The concept is very old, as we read of a monarch of the Old Kingdom: "O Pepi, stand up! Thou art baptized (*w 'b*), thy *ka* is baptized, Horus has immersed (*s 'b*) thee in the *Qbhw*; thy baptism is the baptism of Shu, ... the baptism of Tefnut."<sup>84</sup> "Pepi is baptized with the same baptism which Horus administered to his eye."<sup>85</sup> As these words

indicate, the baptism was not a dumb show, a pantomime: the word *w'b* “signifies not only ‘to purify,’ but also ‘to give religious or moral instruction, to teach the truth.’”<sup>86</sup>

The *qbhw* here mentioned is the vitalizing principle<sup>87</sup> of Nun, the primordial waters from which the earth itself emerged and which therefore are preearthly, eternal cosmic waters.<sup>88</sup> The dead must be purified, “washed (*i'y.t*)” in heaven; passing the horizon, he must wash (*sty*) to become pure (*w'b*).<sup>89</sup> An inscription describes the temple of Hathor at Philae as “resembling the celestial ocean, which bears the disk which rises and sets in it every day.”<sup>90</sup> We are told that the temple pool at Edfu “came into existence at the Beginning.”<sup>91</sup> The dead “bathes in the pool of *Qbhw*.”<sup>92</sup> In theory, every tomb had its waters of Nun,<sup>93</sup> which adorn the cenotaph of Seti I and are labeled

simply with the heaven glyph =.<sup>94</sup> It is not too much to say that purification rites also effect a symbolic rebirth, sanctification or divinization, and enlightenment, with water, light, and air cleansing and giving life at the same time.<sup>95</sup>



Figure 34. Within the tent of purification, the god Anubis anoints a large fish wrapped in mummy bands placed on a lion couch between the four sons of Horus. Tomb of Khabekhnet, western Thebes, ca. 1250 B.C.

## Waters of Cleansing

**Line 10:** “thy front with washing, thy back with cleansing water, thine inward parts with

soda and natron”

In chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, we read: “I am pure! My front is pure, my back is pure! My middle is a place of Maat”;<sup>96</sup> and in the fourteenth hour of the *Stundenwache* Horus says to Osiris: “Thy front is pure, thy back is pure with ... cool water from the ocean. ... The gods embrace thee and unite (*snsn*) themselves to thee, so that their name becomes *Snsnty*,”<sup>97</sup> where relationship with the *snsn* motif is obvious.

The great purifying agent is, of course, water.<sup>98</sup> The entire sojourn of the dead in the embalming house (*w'b.t*) was regarded as a water purification, during which the subject was referred to as a fish in its watery element (fig. 34).<sup>99</sup> It was in the tent of purification that the dead received his daily lustral bath at the moment of sunrise, just as the living king did in such a tent;<sup>100</sup> at that

time the body was completely drenched with water “to permit its spirit to set forth in the celestial regions,”<sup>101</sup> the water running back into the Nile while the candidate moved on to heavenly realms.<sup>102</sup> In the Pyramid Texts, the subject (the king) is told to decontaminate himself “in the *qbhw*-pitcher of the stars” as he leaves the earth to enter heaven, the *qbhw* being the celestial waters that, among other things, purge one of all earthly defilement.<sup>103</sup> In the royal baptism, the dead person, god, or priest-king is drenched with water from two *hs*-vases, the vessels normally used in baptism.<sup>104</sup> These were tall, thin vases easy to lift and pour from without spilling. Four *nms.t*-jars, as described in Pyramid Text 510 §1140a, held purification water, and in Pyramid Text 536 §1293b–d, they come forth from the “palazzo divino,” or royal washroom, according to Claudia Dolzani.<sup>105</sup> In the later period, as is

well known, holy water was dispensed at the doors of Egyptian temples by means of coin-operated machines (fig. 35).[106](#)

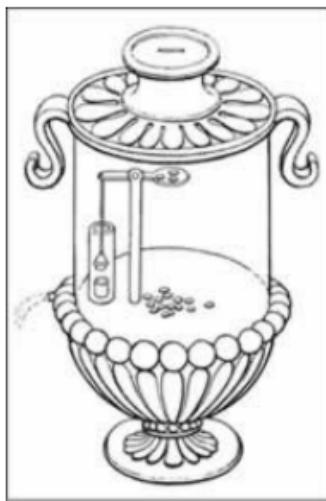


Figure 35. Heron of Alexandria, ca. 100 B.C., described a modern convenience in which the worshipper dropped a five-drachma coin into a bronze container; the coin struck a lever and opened the spigot, dispensing the holy water. 1851 reconstruction.

## Washing and Clothing

In Pyramid Text 471 §§920–31, “The attendants of Horus purify NN, they bathe him, they dry him off, they instruct him in the formulas of the right way (the correct

ordinances), ... how to mount up. NN then mounts up to the sky.”<sup>107</sup> It is the washing away of old dirt. “If a man sees himself in a dream plunging in the river,” says an Egyptian dream book, “good; it means absolution from all ills.”<sup>108</sup> The Osirian doctrine was much concerned with keeping the earth and especially the water free from pollution.<sup>109</sup> In the Book of the Dead, “the deceased not only drinks the water; he is washed in it. ... ‘I have washed myself in the water wherein the god Ra washeth himself when he leaveth the eastern part of the sky.’ This washing of the deceased was a ceremony of purification, but clearly it is also one of identification, as, incidentally, is the baptism of Paul and subsequent Christianity in contrast to that of Judaism. ... The washing of the corpse, however, not only was an important ritual for the ancient Egyptians, but is still important ... for the

modern Jew.”<sup>110</sup> At Delphi the initiate was bathed in and drank of the water of Lethe to wash away all memory of his past; later in the ceremony he was required to drink the water of memory so that he would remember all he heard and saw of the ordinances.<sup>111</sup>

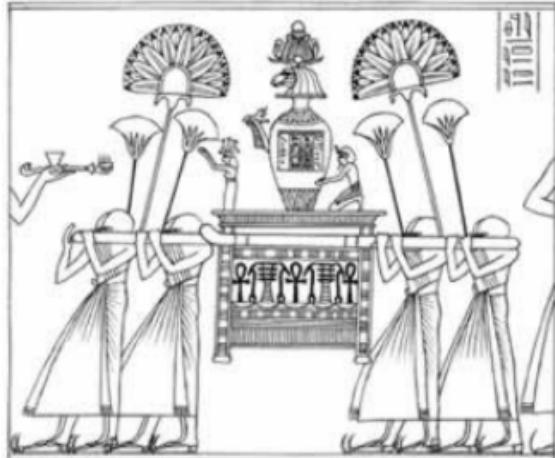


Figure 36. The ram's head wearing the *atet*-crown of Osiris sits atop the vase, whose spout is the *maat*-feather of truth guarded by the royal sphinx, a rebus writing of *nb m3'.t* “lord of truth.” The ark is carried by eight ritually pure priests. Tomb of Imiseba, ca. 1120 B.C.

But water does more than purify—it gives life, literally, to all organisms; the water of

life is a worldwide concept.<sup>112</sup> “The ramifications of the subject are enormous,” Gardiner observes.<sup>113</sup> There is no mistaking the meaning of the little *ankh* (life) symbols which pour from the sacred vases in Egyptian baptismal scenes such as in the temple of Ramses II at Karnak, which shows the king being baptized with *ankh* and *was* (divine power) symbols as he enters the temple and which bears the inscription, “Water for his father, that life might be given to him.”<sup>114</sup> Blackman makes a distinction between the water rite by which the king is reborn and that by which he is merely refreshed and cleansed.<sup>115</sup>

One form of baptismal vase is crowned with a ram’s head and was designated for purification at the time of the New Year, the solar significance of which, as well as its relationship to a new life, is well known (fig. 36).<sup>116</sup> It is interesting that Brigham

Young, in his New Year's proclamation for the year of 1852 as governor of Utah Territory, suggested some sort of ablution for the occasion: "And I recommend ... that they rise early in the morning of the first day of the New Year, and wash their bodies with pure water," thus beginning a new phase of life with a new resolve.<sup>117</sup>

One aspect of Christian baptism which has been quite overlooked is its constant association with the dead. The main calling of the Baptist was to fulfill promises made once to those now dead (Luke 1:72–79), to bring light and hope to those sitting in darkness (Luke 1:79), to have mercy on the fathers who have gone before (Luke 1:54–55, 72), and "to turn the hearts of the [dead] fathers to the children" (Luke 1:17).

Purification, rather than being an end in itself, always prepares the way for things to follow, being part of a larger sequence of

ordinances. It must precede each of the five basic Egyptian ceremonies: "All five rites, *viz.*; the daily temple liturgy, the ceremonial toilet in the House of the Morning, the preparation of the dead king's body for burial, the daily funerary liturgy, and the Opening of the Mouth," "closely resemble one another in their main features"—namely, washing, natron, robing, anointing, insignia, and perhaps a meal.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, as Moret has noted, the related rites of washing, anointing, and clothing are the same for the daily temple cult as for the dead,<sup>119</sup> which is not surprising since they are the normal business of every matutinal rising. The preparation and revival of the dead are described as the levee of a great lord preparing for the business of the day as he arises, bathes, is clothed in apotropaic garb, breakfasts, and goes forth amid morning salutations (see p. 100, fig. 22).<sup>120</sup> In

Pyramid Text 518 §§1195–98, we find the candidate inaugurating the New Year by “going down with the gods into the cool waters,” after which he finds them “standing clad (wrapped) in their garments with white sandals upon their feet.” In homage to the king—or, rather, in taking their New Year oath to him—“they cast off their white sandals and remove (*or* change, shift around)<sup>121</sup> their garments.”<sup>122</sup> This strongly suggests the ancient Israelite rite of “treading upon the garments,” described in Alma 46:21–22, as well as by Jonathan Smith.<sup>123</sup> In Christian Egypt the candidate received “the washing of grace and the indestructible garment,”<sup>124</sup> but it was especially the related sect of the Mandaeans whose cultic life centered around the association of baptism and garment. Ethel Drower relates the *manda*, or reed hut by the riverside in which ritual washings were performed, with the

prehistoric Egyptian House of the Morning in which Pharaoh was baptized.<sup>125</sup> Blackman designates the House of the Morning, where the king was washed at every dawn before entering the temple of Heliopolis, as “the temple-vestry” or clothing-room;<sup>126</sup> “when the lustration was completed,” he explains, His Majesty “was attired in one or more garments,” preparatory to officiating in the ordinances of the house.<sup>127</sup> With the bath, Pharaoh receives a special “garment” represented by a purified amulet “for the new day.”<sup>128</sup> Following his anointing, the subject is arrayed in the white *nemes*-cloth and insignia and goes forth like a prince.<sup>129</sup>



Figure 37. As Horus and Thoth pour life-symbols as water over the pharaoh, each declares him to be “very pure”; “thy purity is my purity!” Temple of Amenhotep II at Amada, Nubia, ca. 1420 B.C. As reproduced in Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, 5.3:65d. Courtesy of New York Public Library.

## Use of Natron and Incense

**Line 10:** “thine inward parts with soda (*bd.t*) and natron (*hsmn*)”

There are other substances besides water that cleanse and hence sanctify, and they too are essential to the ritual purifications: “I am pure, cleansed, censed with *hsmn*, ... with

*sntr*, ... with sweet fragrance that comes from the Horus eye.”<sup>130</sup> In the El-Bersheh tomb, the owner, Djehutihotep, is washed by his sons, who hold vessels labeled *bd*, or natron, and balls of “some kind of natron, such as *hosmen* or *niter*” (see p. 147, fig. 39).<sup>131</sup> A study by Dolzani identifies *bd* as a product of Nekhbet in Upper Egypt, symbolic of the saliva of Seth, and renders the verb *bd* as meaning “to purify with *bd*-soda.”<sup>132</sup> The chemist Alfred Lucas identifies natron as natural soda, “a compound of sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate, mixed with varying proportions of sodium sulphate and common salt.”<sup>133</sup> Louis Speleers maintains that *bd*, *hsmn*, *smn*, and *ntr* were synonymous,<sup>134</sup> while Robert Steuer holds that *bd* and *hsmn* are special mixtures of natron (*ntr*).<sup>135</sup> Junker notes that *bd* and *hsmn*, often mentioned together, are

types of natron,<sup>136</sup> with *sntr* sometimes appearing in the place of *bd*.<sup>137</sup> But while *bd* is called “the saliva of Seth,” *hsmn* is the saliva of Horus;<sup>138</sup> both are soda, Dolzani concludes, but coming from different deposits and therefore being of somewhat different composition. The word *hsmn*, she claims, is a variant of *smn*,<sup>139</sup> and both are *ntr*, which properly means “divine”;<sup>140</sup> hence the verb *hsmn*, meaning “to purify with soda,” is a synonym of the verb *ntry*, “to make or be divine.”<sup>141</sup> She sees a typical Egyptian play on words between *ntr(j)*, meaning “god, divine,” and *ntr(j)*, meaning “purification” and designating “the funeral rite which makes the dead king a god.” She also finds *ntr*, “incense,” interchangeable with *sntr*, the commonest Egyptian word for incense, which is also a verb meaning “to make divine.”<sup>142</sup> The play on words goes

back as far as Pyramid Text 423 §765b: “Take thy natron (*ntry=k*), that thou mayest become divine (*ntr=k*),” according to Morenz.<sup>143</sup> The substance was mixed with the water poured from the four sacred *nms.t*-jars in washing the dead and in baptizing the king (fig. 37; cf. p. 445, fig. 143), who at the same time was fanned by the breath-giving wings of Isis.<sup>144</sup> That *hsmn* is more than a mere cosmetic or symbol of purity is strikingly shown in vignettes to the seventeenth chapter of the Book of the Dead, in which the physical aspects of the resurrection are graphically set forth and in which the embryonic stirrings of life are shown taking place in what is designated as the “pool of *hsmn*” (fig. 38).<sup>145</sup>



Figure 38. Here the stirrings of life begin in what is labeled the “pool of *hsmn*” and the temple pool of Herakleopolis. The figure presiding is, fittingly, both male and female and is the Great Green One, meaning the ocean. P. Ani, BD 17, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 10470 © Copyright The British Museum.

This brings us to the *snsn* situation, in which the scenting of the air is important: “The incense and its smoke became for the dead the element of his respiration,” as we read in Pyramid Text 463 §877a: “This air that you breathe is incense, and thy wind of the north is the smoke of incense.”<sup>146</sup> Certainly, incense and libations regularly go together,<sup>147</sup> and the opening of the *Breathings* Papyrus Louvre N. 3292 shows purification by water and incense being carried out

together.<sup>148</sup> Since the incense represents “the exudations … of Osiris,” the censing of the body has the same effect as the ritual libation in “restoring to it its lost moisture,” by transfusion,<sup>149</sup> chasing away the evil demons of dessication.<sup>150</sup> Smoke, like water, has certain obvious, more-than-symbolic functions: as fumigation, it repels evil insects and demons and thus protects mortals and immortals alike.<sup>151</sup> In the Neferhotep inscription, the censing of the god signifies the driving away of his enemies from the sacred bark so that it can proceed over the waters.<sup>152</sup> Wherever the living pharaoh went, censing preceded him; evil influences were banished by the censing of conquered cities. Also, the same natron and incense substances were used in temples as at funerals.<sup>153</sup> On the positive side, the “odor of sanctity” attracted good spirits as effectively as it repelled bad ones—a

special sign of the presence of the divine was, as in the Christian traditions, a sweetness in the air.<sup>154</sup> Purification by burning incense as a form of fumigation<sup>155</sup> was natural in a land where sanitary disposal was not well provided and the air of human habitations and communities needed sweetening. Plutarch reports that in a land of swamps, where the air was heavy by night and day with marsh gases and other miasmic vapors, health, happiness, and holiness were all dependent on the sweetness of the air, which was achieved by the wholesale ritual burning of aromatic herbs and woods.<sup>156</sup> To decontaminate himself from air pollution, the Egyptian censed himself three times a day.<sup>157</sup> “Dwellings, clothes, and people were perfumed with smoke as in modern Egypt; ... incense was powdered, mixed with honey into balls and chewed, especially by the

ladies.”<sup>158</sup> Though the use of soda preceded that of incense in Egypt, according to Dolzani, their use and significance were the same—whether as smoke or as liquid, they both purified and sweetened.<sup>159</sup> Types of incense are listed in Papyrus Salt 825: *sntr* (the pitch of a terebinth, or turpentine tree), ‘*nty* (oliban or frankincense of Arabia); *sfy*-pitch, *tišps*, and *śdh* (a liquid).<sup>160</sup>

The restorative powers of incense provide an interesting link between the spirit and body in the rites of Unas, where the smoke of scented candles provides the first visible embodiment of the royal *ba*.<sup>161</sup> The rite of imbuing the king with life by pouring water over him was accompanied by the burning of incense, and in the Pyramid Texts, incense “washes” and “adorns” the dead just as water does.<sup>162</sup> Originally, the purpose of censing, according to Hans Bonnet, was “to supply one with the vital power of the

aroma, fragrance of divinity,” but later “it served to lead one into the circle of the gods and their heavenly kingdom.”<sup>163</sup> While Alfred Wiedemann held that censing began in the temples and was later taken over by the funeral rites,<sup>164</sup> Eberhard Otto maintains the opposite, that censing was borrowed by the temples from the royal funeral rites.<sup>165</sup>

Bonnet thought that the use of incense in the Osiris rites was secondary.<sup>166</sup> In any case, it seems less indispensable than the primal use of water. The purposes of the Second Book of Breathings are, according to Jean-Claude Goyon, to provide the dead externally with (1) “alimentary offerings (bread of Geb),” (2) “lustrations which guarantee health and perpetual youth (Nile-water), ... and, above all,” (3) “the breath of life, thanks to the fumigation with perfumed substances.”<sup>167</sup>



Figure 39. The Two Ladies as Maat supplying oil, water, and incense balls to a winged divine head wearing the *atef*-crown and a crescent moon. From a lintel near the pyramids of Begrawiya near Meroe, Nubia. Redrawn and restored from Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, 5.3:34b. Courtesy of New York Public Library.

Soda being the Egyptian equivalent for soap,<sup>168</sup> natron put into the water enhanced the efficacy of ritual washings.<sup>169</sup> Used as a mouthwash or chewed as natron balls (fig. 39), its refreshing and restorative qualities gave the sensation of having “the mouth of a newborn calf”<sup>170</sup> or an innocent babe, “fit to pronounce the formulae”;<sup>171</sup> it gave Pharaoh not only a clean mouth but a new mouth.<sup>172</sup> In the end, all purifying substances and offices belong together: “By being washed or

sprinkled ... and fumigated with incense, and by the chewing of natron, the king was mysteriously reborn, brought into contact with divinities.”<sup>173</sup> If censing seems to be a secondary operation, the ancients themselves had reason to limit its use on occasions where clear heads were required since the inhaling of the stuff, even in mild doses, can have a narcotic effect. In the same way, music can be a distraction rather than an aid in ordinances requiring a measure of concentration and memory.<sup>174</sup>

## Anointing

But the washing and censing is only half the picture. To be effective, it had to be followed by anointing: A man “should be anointed with oil and unguent, the censer being in his hand with incense. Natron must be behind his ears, *bd*-natron must be in his mouth, dressed in two new garments, having

washed himself in inundation water, shod in white sandals” —all this by way of achieving the purity necessary to read the particularly holy book of the Divine Cow.<sup>175</sup> Likewise, before reciting the Book of the Two Ways, a companion piece to the Book of Breathings, a man “must anoint himself and bathe in water of the Inundation, put on new garments and white leather slippers,” for that is what Thoth the scribe does, and “the servants of men shall do exactly as he does.”<sup>176</sup> In the pyramid rites, King Unas, after passing through the waters to unite spirit and body, receives an anointing and a garment.<sup>177</sup> The same basic combination marks the coronation of the Hittite king, “solemnized by a ceremony which included anointing with oil, clothing in special garments, coronation, and bestowal of a royal name.”<sup>178</sup>

Whereas incense and natron, as has been

noted, were in all probability later additions to the water purifications, the anointing with oil was as old as the latter and regularly accompanied them. If the fundamental idea is renewal and rebirth, with the initiate being treated as a newborn babe, then the inevitable routine is first washing, then anointing, then wrapping, and then feeding with honey to help the babe take the milk of the breast. This is the order of things followed in the Egyptian coronation, as well as the funeral, and it is also the sequence followed in the Book of Breathings. “The anointing with holy oil was necessary also to sanctify (*sacer*) the god or the dead who had been clothed . . . with royal and divine garments and insignia.” The oil “bestowed vigor and endurance on one’s body.”<sup>179</sup> Svein Bjerke notes that while washing prepared one to receive an office, the authority of the same was bestowed by

anointing: purifications “are only creating the capacity to hold office[; ] the anointing, on the other hand, is part of the ritual which installs the object in his office.”<sup>180</sup> Even the divinity of a god, as Edouard Naville puts it, depends “on his being anointed with holy oil which may never be missing from his brow.”<sup>181</sup> “The rite of anointing,” S. Mayassis observes, “is the most sacred moment of all the royal ceremonies.”<sup>182</sup> The reliefs in the temple of Seti I often depict the ritual sequence of washing, anointing, and clothing (see color plates 8–9). The oil “revives, preserves, and protects.”<sup>183</sup> In the temple of Ramses II at Karnak is a scene showing the king giving water and incense to Amon with the declaration, “I give [to thee] all life and all health”; in the following scene he is offering a model sphinx, while between him and the god stand four jars of oil.<sup>184</sup> In panel eighteen, the inscription

reports that we behold “Amon-Re, the primal water. . . . He giveth all life and all health,” while Amon himself says, “I give . . . life, endurance, well-being” (the symbols for these are the *ankh*, the *djed*, and the *was-scepters*);<sup>185</sup> in the next panel we see Khnum the creator “making ointment,” according to the inscription, “that life may be bestowed. He gives all life and health,” while the god himself says, “I give to thee the kingship of Atum.”<sup>186</sup> Thus, while the portrayal of the bestowing of ointment is often accompanied by inscriptions that leave us in no doubt that it represents an anointing, the actual act of anointing itself, unlike that of baptism, is never depicted. Our Book of Breathings may conceal an anointing rite in the peculiar writing of *w ‘b* in line 10, with a horn. The regular form of *w ‘b* is used except after *hʒ.t.*, which everyone translates as “front,” though its primary meaning is “forehead.”<sup>187</sup> The

proper oil of anointing is *h3t.t*, *Stirnöl*, the oil that is placed first on the brow.<sup>188</sup> Since the *Wörterbuch* gives no horn hieroglyph under *w'b*,<sup>189</sup> this may be a horn of anointing. Pyramid Text 418 §742 reads, “Hail to thee, O fine oil. ... I place thee upon the head (crown of the head) of my father NN as Horus placed thee on the crown of the head of his father Osiris.”<sup>190</sup> “Anointing and investiture constitute important episodes of all rituals,” writes Philippe Derchain, “but especially at the investiture of a king or god in the capacity of sovereign.”<sup>191</sup> In Egypt, the priest who actually crowned the king, called the *Inmutef*, bore the title of Greatest of Anointers.<sup>192</sup> When Akhenaton abolished all rites in which the human bodily form appeared, the one thing he preserved was the symbolic anointing: “the officiant, standing beneath the open sky, held up the unguent ... to the solar disk itself.”<sup>193</sup>

The Books of Breathings, concerned with the quality as well as the quantity of air, make much of sweet smells in both their restorative and ritual capacities. If water refreshes and revives and heals, so does sweet ointment; the oil no less than the water is a symbol and agent of resurrection. In very ancient times, Ptah, Horus, Seth, and Thoth all enjoyed the epithet of *hry b3q=f n ‘nh*, “he who possesses the life-giving olive-tree,” or as Konrad Hoffmann renders it, “N besitzt Leben,” “der unter seinem Ölbaum.”<sup>194</sup> In the archaic Ramesseum rites, at a feast where all partook of the life-giving eye of Horus as food, the people were anointed on the brow with *h3t.t* oil (*Stirnöl*), which represented the eye.<sup>195</sup> At the anointing of the eyes, the initiate was told: “Geb, who was the head of the firstborn of the Great Company of the Gods, has attached thy head to thy bones.” “He has brought

together thy flesh. ... Thy mother giveth thee birth on this day. She maketh thy two eyes to be in thee, thy two arms are made for thee. ... Geb has attached thy head for thee,” etc.<sup>196</sup> So in Breathings text Leiden T 32: “To thee is given ointment on the two arms of Šsmw (the “Anointer”) beside Neith in the House of *Mnnw* (asphalt?).”<sup>197</sup> This reconstituting of the dead body takes one to the old Judeo-Christian tradition of the oil of healing “to revive the body of Adam and with him to revive the bodies of the dead. ... And the oil of mercy shall be for generation to generation for those who are ready to be born again of water and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>198</sup> Only when the Son of God is baptized in the Jordan “shall thy father Adam receive of this oil of mercy,” which will restore him and his children to life,<sup>199</sup> in all of which the baptism and the anointing go together. The words of Ignatius on the anointing of Christ

(the Messiah, the Anointed One) might have been taken from a Book of Breathings: “The Lord received myrrh on his head that he might breathe immortality into the Church.”<sup>200</sup>

***Line 11:*** “No member of thine causeth offense (*or* is offensive; *nn ‘t im=k m isf.t*)”

*Isf.t* is evildoing in every sense.<sup>201</sup> This simply confirms what has already been said, consistent with the idea, expressed in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony,<sup>202</sup> of various members of the body as quasi-independent and responsible entities; the idea is familiar from the scriptures, specifically in Matthew 5:29–30 and 1 Corinthians 12:14–26.



Figure 40. In three different ways of expressing the same ideas, the *wedjat*-eye, representing the complete physical body, is seen in embryo or tadpolelike stage, while the two pools of life-making waters are conspicuous. In the first example, the sun appears through the open doors of the temple, while Re-Horakhty, he “of the horizon,” holds up the symbol of life. In the second, the sun is missing, the doors are shut, and instead of Re-Horakhty we see only the horizon-symbol under the door. In the third, the doors are open, but instead of the sun we see the dead man himself, following the way of the god in resurrection.

(A) TCD MS 1661/2 by permission of Board of Trinity College Dublin. (B) National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden. (C) P. Hunefer, ca. 1310 B.C.

## Moral Cleanliness

**Line 12:** “(cleansed, purified) ... in the standing waters of the Meadows of Rest”

The classic *rite de passage* is a passing through the waters. The morning toilet of the king was more than a purification; it was a passing through the waters: “It is clear that this water which the dead must cross is also the water in which they are purified and in which Re bathes before each sunrise.”<sup>203</sup> The idea of passing through waters of cleansing and renewal, even as the sun passes through the waters of Nun to emerge to a new life, “simply saturated the official and popular cult, from its beginning to its full development” (fig. 40; cf. p. 145, fig. 38).<sup>204</sup> By passing through the water, the dead king was thought to be regenerated “and also at the same time to be affiliated to the sun-god,

through the medium of the sacred water, ... identified not only with Nun, the primeval ocean, but also with the seed of the sun-god.”<sup>205</sup> Following the king’s example, every dead person, before his funeral, is about to cross a lake.<sup>206</sup> “You purify yourself on the horizon, leaving all unclean things behind you in the lakes of Shu,” says Pyramid Text 222 §208,<sup>207</sup> illustrating the identity of lustral waters, heavenly journey, and temple pool. Considerable confusion has resulted from the Egyptian practice of giving a variety of names to one and the same sacred lake or temple pool, as Hartwig Altenmüller has noted;<sup>208</sup> at the same time, identical rites could take place at a number of pools, which might accordingly be taken for only one.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, a variety of rites could all symbolize the same thing and thus be identified with each other. Thus the passage from earth to heaven was a water journey by

ship<sup>210</sup> or reed rafts;<sup>211</sup> or it was a bath,<sup>212</sup> a washing, or a libation. The waters of passage are variously designated as the lakes of the *duat*,<sup>213</sup> the *qbhw* (celestial ocean),<sup>214</sup> the horizon, the “sacred lake”<sup>215</sup> in the *w'b.t* or “pure place,” the Nile, Nun (the primordial ocean),<sup>216</sup> the “Winding Watercourse”<sup>217</sup> (*š n hʒ*),<sup>218</sup> the waters of birth, the voyage being the birth passage,<sup>219</sup> etc. The passage in chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead that says, “The expelling of whatever sin is upon me. I have purified myself in the two pools of Heracleopolis,” is explained by some Egyptian scribes as referring “to the day of my birth,” by others as “the day of offerings to the great god who is there, brought by the human race,” and by still others as the two great world oceans.<sup>220</sup>

## Pool and Meadow

The otherworldly waters are dark and

dangerous, and the four main ways in which the Egyptian passes ritually through them are (1) by baptism, (2) by drowning, (3) by swimming, and (4) by boat, all ritually related.<sup>221</sup> *Baptism* may be taken to include bathing, drenching, foot washing, hand washing, or face washing since “no distinction is made between the different ordinances of purification (*die verschiedenen Reinigungshandlungen sind nicht geschieden*).”<sup>222</sup> Thus an elaborate lustration could be supplanted by a mere libation without losing any of its solar or funerary significance.<sup>223</sup> The ideas that “the dead are in primeval waters from which they can be reborn like the sun”<sup>224</sup> and that the dead hoped by passing through the waters of Nun to put off the old life and put on a new one in the manner of the nocturnal sun on his journey<sup>225</sup> are certainly akin to Jewish and Christian concepts; even the solar

significance is not missing in the latter, for, as is well known, early Christian baptism took place at sunrise and in some regions could be performed only at Easter. In Egypt in the later period, “to the waters of the ocean, identified with Osiris, were transferred all those regenerative properties which were originally ascribed to the waters of Nun, the primeval ocean.”<sup>226</sup> In short, the lustration water “was identified with that of Nun, or of a pool sacred to the sun-god,” the waters from which Pharaoh was born.<sup>227</sup> In the Second Book of Breathings, “the virtue of this water, which perpetually renewed itself and possessed a magical power of regeneration, is supreme. It guarantees eternal life”; it is the water of the Nile, of Nun of the primordial ocean.<sup>228</sup>

*Drowning*—or, properly, “apotheosis by drowning”—is a much-studied theme among Egyptologists.<sup>229</sup> Ramses II reports that his

father, Seti I, was ritually drowned, either literally or in effigy.<sup>230</sup> In the Shabako text of the Memphite theology, Osiris is drowned and spends three days in the waters of the Nile, from which he emerges resurrected to “follow in the footsteps of him who shines on the horizon, upon the ways of Re on the Great Throne.”<sup>231</sup> A parallel to this is the drowning of the Apis-bull at Memphis in the body of water called the *qbhw*, representing the primeval heavenly waters.<sup>232</sup> It is very probable, Jéquier finds, that the temple lakes were for drowning sacrificial bulls, whose souls would join with Re in the manner of Osiris, the archetypal sacrifice.<sup>233</sup>

*Swimming* is a rather surprising variation of the theme, suggested by the “Natatorium” at Abydos and in Hadrian’s villa.<sup>234</sup> Pharaoh makes ritual swims on occasion, which appear as dangerous undertakings, as he passes through the lake, river, or ocean “on

the night of great fear.”<sup>235</sup> His way is led by the Heavenly Cow—“she who swims through the lake,” *Nm.t š.*<sup>236</sup> “On his journey to heaven the dead [king] has to pass a dangerous pond”;<sup>237</sup> he must escape the Archerousian lake, the “spiritual power (*Geistermacht*)” of the “great lake,” represented by the fearful embrace and confinement of the coffin.<sup>238</sup> The Archerousian lake is important in the early Jewish and Christian views of the hereafter.<sup>239</sup>

## Way of Passing through the Waters

*Navigation* is, of course, the safest and most convenient way to pass through the waters (see p. 223, fig. 66). The voyage of the sun-god and morning star to their point of rising was the “sailing … upon the Nun,” the heavenly ocean.<sup>240</sup> In the Pyramid Texts, as in the Book of Breathings (lines 98–99), the

coffin is treated as a boat, towed by ropes through the waters of the cosmic sea, which is represented by drenching the coffin with water as it is pulled through narrow passages from one chamber or world to another.<sup>241</sup> The “Imperishables” and the “unwearied Stars” are the crews that tow the dead “through the waters with their solid cables.”<sup>242</sup> The well-known ferry to the other world is not missing,<sup>243</sup> and the pyramid complexes include landing places where real and very ancient boats have been found moored (fig. 41).<sup>244</sup> Indeed, one of the commonest Egyptian expressions for dying is *mni*, meaning to moor a ship or arrive at a landing place. Royalty did sail on ceremonial lakes in sacred barks,<sup>245</sup> and the “Lake of Life” that furnishes the water of purification is the same water on which the ceremonial bark of Amon at Thebes, the “Sokar-bark,” navigated at the New Year;<sup>246</sup>

it is the “pool of Khonsu” which figures so prominently in our Book of Breathings. The sun-god “uses several barks” to negotiate the underworld, according to Hornung, to match the variety of forms he takes during the journey,<sup>247</sup> but for all that there is only one solar ship, though it may change its name along the way;<sup>248</sup> it is the ship itself that makes the changes (*hpr:w*) so that the passengers need never transfer from boat to boat.<sup>249</sup> The passage of the sun-god by boat through the underworld matches the royal progress of Pharaoh, sailing the length of Egypt to present the Ramesseum drama at the principal holy centers of the land, showing himself everywhere in a ship, as the god does to his people in the underworld.<sup>250</sup>

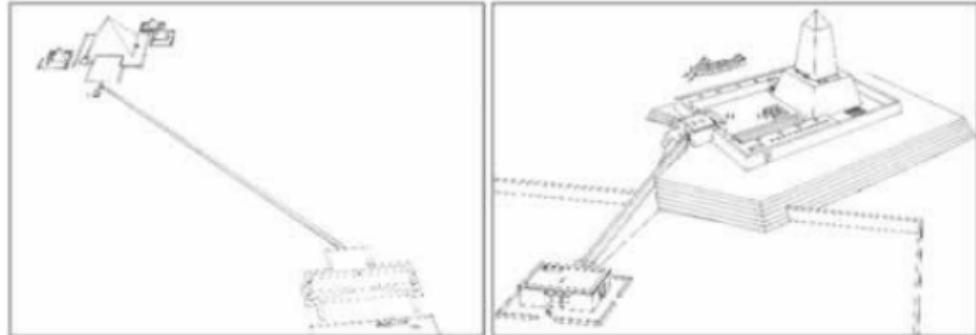


Figure 41. The surprisingly large ramps leading up to this valley temple of an Old Kingdom pyramid demonstrate their ritual nature. Pyramid of Pepy II, ca. 2150 B.C. In the same way, the large mud brick replica of a boat evokes the movement of the sun in the heavens. Sun temple of Niuserre, Abu-Ghurob, ca. 2300 B.C.

The Egyptian obsession with ritual ships was natural, as Émile Chassinat points out, to people who spent their days on the water and had to go everywhere by boat.<sup>251</sup> With all this concern for water, it is significant, as Hornung notes, that the Egyptians have no word or concept personifying water or waters in general: they have no god of seas or lakes, as other people do, and have no fish or fishy gods of any kind.<sup>252</sup> They were

nearer to reality than that in their ordinances. For them, all things are renewed with “the reawakening of the world after the flood,” quite in the biblical sense,<sup>253</sup> and the rebirth of all things from the waters suggests some sort of real historical event.

## Meadows of Rest

**Line 12:** “Meadows of Rest”

Why this rendering instead of the conventional “Field of Offerings”? Because we think it fits the context better. The word for field, *sh.t*, here employed in the plural, is “marshland, field, country,” with marshland coming first;<sup>254</sup> it is *Feld, Weideland*.<sup>255</sup> It is a lush bottomland in which there is lots of water, so that we may think of it either as land with water everywhere or as water with land everywhere, as indicated in the first part of the Papyrus Westcar or in Greek and Roman pictures like the Praeneste mosaic; it

is “a region of fertile fields washed by water. ... It is an archipelago.”<sup>256</sup> The ideogram for *sh.t* depicts a tract of land “covered or bordered by rushes”; in the language, “*sh.t* designates a muddy or marshy terrain,” which is just what all Egypt was at the time of the retreating or advancing inundation. Because the *sh.t* was “that lower land which ... remained wet into the summer,” it was a paradise on earth, the greenest, lushest, wildest part of the country.<sup>257</sup> In the Amduat, the name given throughout to the successive fields of the *duat* (underworld) is simply *n.t*, meaning “body of water,” *Wasserfläche*.<sup>258</sup> In our Breathings text, the *sh.t htp* (Field of Rest or Offering) is definitely a place, written with the determinatives both for sitting down (*hms*) and for “village” or “inhabited region.”<sup>259</sup>

It is peculiar that “nowhere [do] the texts

state clearly that the *sh.t htp.t* is in the West, but they rather place it in the sky.”<sup>260</sup> Victor Loret suggests that the Egyptians, for whom it was a real place, first transplanted it to Asia and then to Phoenicia, moving it ever farther north until it ended up as an imaginary place in the sky, near the Great Bear.<sup>261</sup> The Field of Rest (*sh.t htp*) is constantly identified with the better-known Field of Reeds (*sh.t i ȝrw*), flooded and green,<sup>262</sup> for the reed must grow in both land and water at once. Indeed, Kees renders *sh.t i ȝrw* as “Reed-field” or “Reed-pond.”<sup>263</sup> The place was not a swamp, however, but prime farmland, a *domaine de l’abondance*;<sup>264</sup> indeed, as usually described, the Field of Reeds is “the City (of Re); its walls are of bronze, its barley is five cubits high,” etc.<sup>265</sup> In Coffin Text 159, it is a great cultivated enclosure,<sup>266</sup> and in a Thirteenth Dynasty

inscription the Field of Reeds is the temple itself.<sup>267</sup> The two fields seem to have been side by side—"My booth is in the Field of Reeds, I have *ȝgb* in the Field of *Htpw*"<sup>268</sup>—and hence were confused by the

Egyptians,<sup>269</sup> whose pictures of heavenly and earthly waters and fields are already jumbled together in the Coffin Texts in a perplexing mosaic.<sup>270</sup> In Papyrus Sekowski, the Field of Reeds is preeminently the "pure place,"<sup>271</sup> which may account for the strange fact that it is never mentioned in the dark and sinister Amduat.<sup>272</sup>

Between the choice of "fields" and "ponds" which Kees gives us for *sh.(w).t.*, we choose "meadows" as the best middle ground, being strongly prejudiced by the memory of an old and extremely sentimental Mormon hymn, which resounded through our childhood but is heard no more, about "the

meadows of rest.”<sup>273</sup> “In the famous 22nd *Yasht* ... at day-break, the soul of the pious man seems to be among plants and sweet-smelling things, ... ‘the most fragrant wind I have ever smelled.’”<sup>274</sup>

In the Amduat, almost every strenuous and dangerous leg of the journey is followed by the formula *htp m-ht*, or, more commonly, *hp.t in hm n ntr pn '3 m (qrr.t tn n.t)*, the former rendered by Hornung *verweilen danach* and the latter meaning “resting by the majesty of this great god in (this cavern of) ...,” indicating that the new stage of his journey is introduced by a rest after what has just been passed through. Here, the coming forth from the waters, the sailing forth of the ship, the sunrise, and the labors of birth are all equated and all followed by brief but necessary rest.<sup>275</sup> Upon completing a leg of the dangerous water journey, the traveler sets foot in the “resting place of the underworld

dwellers.”<sup>276</sup> Just so, Re, after his victory over the waters, ordered that “a Field of Repose (*htp*) be stretched out, and so the Field of Rest came into being”;<sup>277</sup> and in the important beautiful festival of the valley, the king crosses the river to land at a specially prepared place called “resting place for the head of the gods.”<sup>278</sup> The ultimate stage or goal, in fact, of any royal or divine procession was a special resting place, a state of *htp*, which is the fitting reward for all righteous effort and weary journeying.<sup>279</sup> After the king defeats Apophis, who tries to prevent his crossing of the waters, his “heart rejoices in thy secret domains; thou reposest (*htp=k*) in thy Meadows of Turquoise.”<sup>280</sup> Jéquier, emphasizing the watery aspect of the place, renders Sekhet Hotep (*sh.t htp*) “Sea of Repose,” specifying that *htp* here means rest and not offerings,<sup>281</sup> whereas Jan Zandee

calls it “the field of foods.”<sup>282</sup>

There is no great conflict here, however; the contestant, traveler, or candidate who has undergone strenuous purifications—or, for that matter, the babe who has just passed through the birth shock<sup>283</sup>—needs not only rest and recuperation but also nourishment to restore exhausted strength. *Sh.t htp* is rightly rendered “Field of Offerings,” since a sacral meal is the first thing on the agenda after completing the ritual trial or journey; the candidate crosses “in the ferry-boat of flame” to the Field of Offerings for a feast in the presence of the great gods of Heliopolis.<sup>284</sup> The normal activity of resting after a journey includes the taking of refreshment, and the funeral meal was such a refection. The typical order of the events is seen in the following: “Every god in his *sh.t* is on the way of your bark. ... You bathe in the pool of *Qbhw*. ... You are clothed in the

linen of Ptah, washed by Hathor; you have ample room in the bark ... they bring a box of natron ... you eat the pure bread of Letopolis ... and Heliopolis.”<sup>285</sup> As a purification, the Christian baptism was always followed up by a ritual meal. Barguet gives us another rendering of *sh.t htp* when he calls it the “Champagne des Félicités (*htp*),” which is a “domaine de l’abondance ... un lieu privilégié de séjour, de repos par excellence,” in which the food offerings are very much in place but rest and relaxation are the main concerns.<sup>286</sup> The candidate, washed and cleansed, is “like *bwt* crossing heaven in death; crossing these two heavens, bringing me with you. I eat where you eat, drink where you drink. I hasten through heaven; I travel about in heaven. My booth is in the Field of Reeds, my fill of eating (*ȝgb*) in the Field of *Htp*.”<sup>287</sup> Throughout the ancient world, the ritual booth of green

boughs is the scene of the feast of abundance by the waterside.

*Htp* can mean rest, peace, offerings, food, contentment, satisfaction, felicity, etc., all of which are essentially related in the present context. We give priority to “rest” because of strong resemblance to the Christian *anapausis*, or *refrigerium*, the place or state in which all spirits find themselves immediately after death for a period of rest and recuperation while awaiting things to come. Roman Catholic scholars have been quick to recognize the Egyptian-Osirian origin of the concept.<sup>288</sup> The four great releases that call for thanksgiving and relaxation, according to the Talmud, are (1) the crossing of the sea, (2) the crossing of a desert, (3) recovery from illness, and (4) release from prison,<sup>289</sup> all of which fit the present situation of the dead.

# Meadows of Grasshoppers

**Lines 12–13:** “on the north side of the Field of Grasshoppers”

To try to locate the real prototype of such a place in the Egyptian terrain does violence to the texts, Grieshammer protests, since they only mean to depict an unworldly place of transition (*Zwischenreich*), a spirit land.<sup>290</sup> No doubt most Egyptians had seen fields full of grasshoppers. Were such fields desirable places for sojourn or not? Does being on the north, or windward, side mean that one was free of the pests? It could be a miscopying, for in the corresponding passage of the Book of the Dead we read: “No member of me is without Maat! I am pure in the southern place; I am saved in the northern city. Pure is the Field of Grasshoppers” (fig. 42).<sup>291</sup> Thausing suggests that this field represents “the realm of earthly power (*die irdische*

*Machtsphäre).*”<sup>292</sup> But why grasshoppers, of all things? Their devastating hosts made them, for the Egyptians, a symbol of both vast multitudes and debilitating weakness;<sup>293</sup> but the grasshopper also appears in important funerary scenes, such as at the psychostasy, or weighing of the soul (fig. 43),<sup>294</sup> and in scenes in which the dead mount to heaven as grasshoppers.<sup>295</sup> Drioton suggests that the mention of grasshoppers in Book of the Dead 125 (the source of our Book of Breathings passage) has a hermetic or secret significance, referring perhaps to the idea that grasshoppers may turn into the souls of the dead.<sup>296</sup> In Pyramid Text 467 §891d, Pharaoh goes to heaven in the form of a grasshopper,<sup>297</sup> a creature whose capacity to transfer itself from one place to another through the void by effortless but instant projection is even more spectacular than the performance of birds. The dead who

receives the water of life from the lady in the sycamore tree (see p. 279, fig. 92) in the well-known scene from the Book of the Dead is also shown as a locust.<sup>298</sup> Ludwig Keimer concludes that the “Field of Grasshoppers” is perhaps a place where the dead “live in [that] form,” though that does not exclude the existence of infested fields in Egypt.<sup>299</sup>

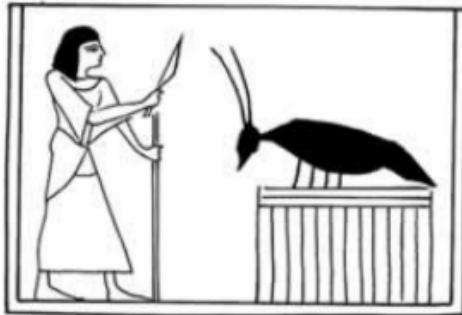


Figure 42. The deceased approaches the cricket on the tomb. From BD 36, as reproduced in Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, 1: pl. 49. Courtesy of National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden.



Figure 43. Anubis steadies the heart plumb bob as well as the Maat figure on the left to balance the heart of the deceased on the right. The cricket waits at the foot of the scales of psychostasy. Redrawn; courtesy of Cairo Museum.

What makes the grasshopper a special representative of spiritual reality is not so much its uncanny power for negotiating empty space as its unearthly and immortal voice, its “spontaneous natural song better than the measured strains of Eunomus.”<sup>300</sup> Apparently, the ancients were aware of the strange circumstance that grasshoppers can sing their song regardless of what is done to their sound organs.<sup>301</sup> The voice of Tetyx is certainly the nearest thing in nature to that of a disembodied spirit;<sup>302</sup> the ancients

believed it lived on air alone.<sup>303</sup> Even more mysterious is the association of the grasshopper's rhythmic singing with the sun,<sup>304</sup> the timing of the creature's chirps bearing a definite relationship to the temperature of the summer air.<sup>305</sup> It is the dawn, Eos, who is the patroness of the all-but-disembodied song of Tithonos,<sup>306</sup> and it has been found that grasshopper eggs always hatch either at dawn at twenty-two degrees Celsius or at sunset at eleven degrees Celsius, thus establishing that uncanny relationship between the life-cycles of sun and grasshopper of which the ancients seem to have been aware.<sup>307</sup> The ancient Cretans placed the grasshopper at the entrance to the underworld as a guide of the dead,<sup>308</sup> in which office the grasshopper or mantis appears in Book of the Dead 76 and 104.

In Book of the Dead 76 and 104, the soul is led by the insect *b3y.t* or *bb3y.t*, a

cicada.<sup>309</sup> Suzanne Ratie, examining real grasshoppers found on the persons of Egyptian mummies, asks whether they could have been put there deliberately in “a rite purposely designed to facilitate the wakening of the dead and his identification with the sun.” She notes that, besides the remains of grasshoppers, the bones of birds are found with the mummies, perhaps symbolic of that other creature of the sun, the *benu*-bird.<sup>310</sup> In very ancient rites the dead was “transformed,” first into a grasshopper “to prevent his dying,” and then into a bee “in which there is nothing perishable.”<sup>311</sup> Since the bee was believed throughout the ancient world to possess the secret of immortality, the presence of the grasshopper in this context must also be taken seriously.

## The Ladies Edjo (W<sup>3</sup>dy.t) and Nekhbet

**Lines 13–14:** “Edjo (*Wʒdy.t*, Uto) and Nekhbet have made thee pure in the eighth hour of the night, in the eighth hour of the day”

In the Kerasher Book of Breathings it is the ninth hour of the night, in the Joseph Smith version the fourth (Baer reads it as the third) hour; but in most versions it is the eighth. Though in the Osiris mysteries “every hour had its special protecting god and its particular rites,”<sup>312</sup> the texts show great flexibility in the assignment of ordinances and ministering deities.<sup>313</sup> It is important that rites be timed for coordination with the motions of the cosmos.

Though Anthes maintains that it is impossible to derive the name Edjo or Uto from *Wʒdy.t*, the name written here,<sup>314</sup> still both names are ever associated with the papyrus stalk and the serpent. The lady is represented holding a papyrus stalk (*wʒd*) or

standing on one (*hry.t wʒd=s*). Her companion, “Horus in Buto,” is also called “Horus on his papyrus stalk (*Hr hry wʒd=f*),” being himself the youthful “Sprout in Khemmis.”<sup>315</sup> Khemmis is in the marshes of the north, “which we have found it impossible to locate.”<sup>316</sup> There the lady hid the infant Horus from his deadly enemy Seth, taking the equally deadly form of a serpent to protect him.<sup>317</sup> Acting also as the nurse of the youthful god, Edjo (Uto)—who protected “the living falcon, son of Re,” with his papyrus scepter of life—shot her arrows or venom<sup>318</sup> against his enemies as she did against the enemies of Re in the primordial age when her name was Sekhmet.<sup>319</sup> Horus-falcon and king are often called *wʒd*, “Sprout,”<sup>320</sup> referring to whatever is green and fresh;<sup>321</sup> the name Edjo refers specifically to the fresh green of the young

papyrus. The *wʒd* or green thing on which the lady is supported can also be a lotus, with all its symbolism.<sup>322</sup> As *Wʒdy.t* (Edjo, Uto, or Buto)<sup>323</sup> takes care of the divine infant at birth, so she presides also over his rebirth; it is she who announces that Osiris is resurrected as the newborn Horus, “Onnophris the Blessed, who rejuvenated himself.”<sup>324</sup> Her special function is to help in getting things started, for which reason she is called “The Opener of the Two Lands.”<sup>325</sup> As “the Green One,” she causes things to thrive and flourish, especially the dead body.<sup>326</sup> The sound of her name suggests all these things and more, as does the symbol with which it is written, until we end up, as Derchain notes, with “pure verbalism,” all things returning to the set theme of life.<sup>327</sup> Thus in Pyramid Text 438 §810, Horus is called “the First One of Khemmis,” Khem being *Hm* or Letopolis, also called Buto; in

turn, “Buto on her lotus stalk protects the son of Osiris” since she is “the embodiment of Utit-Buto (as a serpent) in Pe and Dep [prehistoric shrines], sitting on her lotus stalk to give protection to the infant in his nest.”<sup>328</sup> Khemmis is often called the Nest and is written with the nest ideogram.

Nekhbet was the companion of *W3dy.t* (Edjo), working with her to take care of the infant Horus. She is the vulture-lady, but she is also a plant—the lotus of Upper Egypt; with her Lower Egyptian counterpart she protects the babe in the nest, making his crown terrible to all his enemies in the powerfully prophylactic form of a deadly serpent.<sup>329</sup> At the beginning of Papyrus Carlsberg I, Nekhbet is shown as the vulture of El-Kab (Nekheb) enthroned on a papyrus thicket, while the sun rises out of the waters, as in the beginning, as a falcon, “on the southeast side, behind Punt.”<sup>330</sup> Even as

Nekhbet can assume a serpent form like her sister Edjo, so the latter can, on occasion, take the form of a vulture.<sup>331</sup> It was because she was worshipped from prehistoric times at Nekheb, south of Thebes near the ancient capital of Hierakonpolis (the hawk city), that Nekhbet in time became the lady of all Upper Egypt, according to Bonnet. As “the White One,” she is both the white crown of the south and the white headcloth worn by the king.<sup>332</sup> As a vulture, she hovers protectively over the king and so “fuses with the Theban vulture-goddess Mut,” whose name means “mother” and whose arms overshadow the king from the ceiling of his funeral chamber and the lid of his sarcophagus.<sup>333</sup> The need for two ladies to receive the newborn infant or spirit is readily explained by Herman te Velde, who points out that it was normal in Egypt for important infants to be equally close to

mother and (wet) nurse<sup>334</sup>—Nekhbet is Mut, the mother, and Edjo the nurse. At his coronation, the youthful Ramses II is shown seated between Nekhbet and Edjo, who embrace him together.<sup>335</sup> These two ladies are identified with the much better known pair of Isis and Nephthys, a reminder that in the mysteries everyone has two mothers,<sup>336</sup> an earthly and a heavenly. Indeed, according to Spiegel, *all* Egyptian goddesses are to be identified by their names and epithets as the mother-goddess.<sup>337</sup>

In the fourteenth hour of the Amduat, while the washing with *sntr* and *hsmn* takes place, the candidate is told, “Nekhbet is on thy south side and Edjo on thy north side to protect thy *ka*.<sup>338</sup> The presence and office of these ladies makes it clear that the subject is being introduced into a new and unfamiliar world and needs protection during his time of helpless innocence, in the

manner of the infant Horus—innocent because, in passing through the waters of birth, he is also cleansed of all former faults: “He who was in a state of weakness cometh. ... The Osiris, the royal scribe, hath appeared on the thighs of Isis, and he sitteth on the thighs of Nephthys. ... Isis, give thy breast to Osiris,” etc.<sup>339</sup> The midwives are the Two Ladies themselves, who receive the child and then wash it; in the Eighteenth Dynasty, Nekhbet was identified with Heket, goddess of childbirth.<sup>340</sup> The Two Ladies “bear Osiris” by bringing him forth from the waters.<sup>341</sup> The five basic Egyptian rites of washing, anointing, clothing, naming (and other insignia), and feeding are all essential to welcoming a newborn babe into the world (see p. 445, fig. 143).

In Papyrus Bremner-Rhind we see the ladies treating the king first as a newborn infant<sup>342</sup> and then in much the same manner

as a bridegroom.<sup>343</sup> Even at the coronation, “quite unexpectedly, his spouse Amaunē suckles the young monarch, for that very purpose spirited back into babyhood.”<sup>344</sup> In the same spirit, finally, the dead is washed and dried, rubbed and censed, and nourished “to stimulate his physical powers,” even receiving nourishment from the breast.<sup>345</sup> Even in their serpentine forms as *Rnn.t*, the ladies represent “the growing and nourishing principle.”<sup>346</sup> They hail the king as Onnophris, the newborn Horus, and as “Sprout,” the green and growing one.<sup>347</sup> The identification of both ladies with the lotus (Uto means lotus town, while Nekhbet actually means lotus bud) combines the ideas of fragrance and refreshment with rebirth. Identification of the *hsmn* of our text as “soda of Nekhbet in Upper Egypt”<sup>348</sup> further involves the lady Nekhbet in lustral operations. The fact that each of the ladies

has a waterpot reminds Elliot Smith of John 3:4–6, “born of water,” or the mother’s womb.<sup>349</sup> Papyrus Bremner-Rhind makes it apparent that the reception of the young king by the Two Ladies was actually dramatized in a ritual presentation—“The entire temple shall be sanctified, and there shall be brought in two women,” etc.<sup>350</sup>—where we are dealing with a temple ordinance and not just a funeral rite. Anthes would carry ritual identification to the limit, suggesting that the king not only bears the titles of the Two Ladies but actually *is* the two, even as he really is a female serpent<sup>351</sup>—all of which emphasizes the importance of the matriarchal principle in Egyptian royal succession, a point that receives particular stress in the Book of Abraham.

With regard to the infancy of the candidate, Macrobius recalls that “on the shortest day of the year the Egyptians bring from the

temple an infant who represents the newborn sun.”<sup>352</sup> This is related to our Breathings text by a Berlin papyrus in which, at the winter solstice, twin priestesses, representing Isis and Nephthys, would carry out the dramatization of the birth of Horus, calling out to the newborn god: “Thou comest as ... the sun and the moon!” They invite Horus to come and be nursed, while they summon his father Osiris to behold his son as king of gods and men.<sup>353</sup>

The birth of the sun as the child Harpocrates takes place when the winter solstice falls at the full moon, at the Isia festival, when the Egyptians would put on white clothes and crown themselves.<sup>354</sup> Neith of the White Crown is also Nephthys of the Red, and her androgynous beard emphasizes her ambivalent character.<sup>355</sup> The birth of the god at the solstice was also his resurrection, marked by the setting up of the

green sheaf, or *djed*-pillar.<sup>356</sup> In *Oedipus at Colonus* that hero, preparatory to being introduced into the mysteries, must be washed by his two daughters, who then become his mourning women, exactly in the manner of Isis and Nephthys.<sup>357</sup>

## The Opening of the Mouth Rite: Its Purpose and Origin

This is one place to discuss the famous Opening of the Mouth ceremony, a very ancient sequence of rites which, in the longer texts, contains in reduced form the entire Egyptian initiation or endowment (fig. 44).<sup>358</sup> The Opening of the Mouth rite can represent at one and the same time both baptism and coronation, libation and ritual meal.<sup>359</sup> In the Joseph Smith and de Horrack versions, it comes as the final step to preparing the initiate for a journey: “Thou seest with thine eye, thou hearest with thy

two ears, thou speakest with thy mouth, thou walkest with thy two legs.”<sup>360</sup>

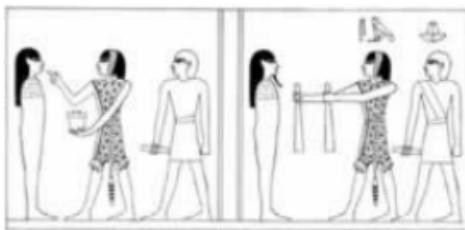


Figure 44. Some steps in the Opening of the Mouth in which the *sem*-priest, clothed in a leopard-skin garment and representing the son, anoints the mouth of the statue or mummy, while the *hry-hb*, or master of ceremonies, text in hand, presides. The subject then receives sacred white scarves or bandlets from the *sem*-priest. Tomb of Petemenophis, ca. 600 B.C. As reproduced in Dümichen, *Grabpalast des Patuamenap*, pl. VIII.

This is a typically reduced version of the formula. Here it begins not with the mouth but with the eyes, the symbol of complete restoration and possession of one's faculties, and gets no farther than the walking with the two legs, indicating that the purpose of introducing it here is to get the initiate

started on his way. The purification accompanying the Opening of the Mouth is “before all else an act of reanimation,” its purpose being, according to Otto, “to insure the physical integrity of the deceased”;<sup>361</sup> it is a “baptism” having the physical effect of counteracting the decay of the body.<sup>362</sup> The Opening of the Mouth itself was nothing less than “a miracle … which restored to each [organ] its proper functions.”<sup>363</sup> The main purpose, wrote Maspero, is to restore all the parts and organs of the body so that they will never be lost again.<sup>364</sup> By it, the organs and parts of the body, after having been properly assembled, are put again “in working order.”<sup>365</sup> The Opening of the Mouth is “the final ritual of incorporation,” and “only when the ritual of ‘Opening the Mouth’ has been performed has his [the deceased’s] position ultimately been fixed in the beyond.”<sup>366</sup> The ordinance insures that each

part of the body, by virtue of remaining pure and intact, will never again lose its proper function.<sup>367</sup> It is specifically an anointing to seal the body up against the day of the resurrection, its total restoration being anticipated by a ritual reversing of the effect of the “blows of death” on each member of the body. It thus fulfils the same function as mummification—namely, that of restoring or re-creating the members of the body on a permanent basis.<sup>368</sup>

The Opening of the Mouth ordinance is of prehistoric antiquity.<sup>369</sup> By the Pyramid Age it had undergone so much alteration and reprocessing that “no historical reconstruction of the ritual … can be given,” and it is quite impossible at this date to reconstruct the complex original rite from the sources.<sup>370</sup> But though, among the eighty-odd versions studied by Otto, no two are exactly alike, it is apparent that all have a common

nature and background,<sup>371</sup> the basic structure being preserved intact down through the ages.<sup>372</sup> The peculiar formula by which the survival of the age-old ordinance can be readily and easily recognized turns up in every age, now in one ritual context and now in another, but always with the same purpose of restoring the function of the various bodily organs. What we have in our Book of Breathings is only a fragmentary snatch of the Opening of the Mouth, but this is typical: "Thou seest with thine eyes, (or, mayest thou see, etc., that thou mayest see, etc.), thou hearest (Mayest thou hear ...) with thy two ears, thou speakest with thy mouth, thou walkest with thy two legs." The Goyon Book of Breathings makes more of it, referring to the rite three times: "Ptah, Father of the Gods, (turn) thy face toward me that thou mayest open [my mouth?] for me; mayest thou open for me my two eyes, as thou didst

for Sokar in the Golden House at Memphis. Open my mouth with the adze of meteoric iron.”<sup>373</sup> “Mayest thou give me my mouth for speech, my legs for walking; let me have my two arms to overthrow all mine enemies.”<sup>374</sup>

“I am mighty like Atum! I walk with my legs, I speak with my mouth, I see with mine eyes, I hear with my ears; I am Lord of life, renewing life eternally!”<sup>375</sup> Here the legs come first because this passage has been describing the initiate as one marching against his enemies. This Breathings source lays strong emphasis on the identity of the officiant who carries out the rite as Ptah, par excellence the creator-god of the Egyptians from the earliest times, thus making it perfectly clear that resurrection can only be effected by the same power and authority which brought about the creation, being actually a new creation on a new level. Thus in the tomb of Petosiris we read: “Ptah [and]

Sokar open thy mouth! ... I am Ptah who opens thy mouth. ... Thy body is the body of Atum forever!”<sup>376</sup> And at the creation of man in the Book of Breathings, “it is Atum in the capacity of Ptah who activates the heart.”<sup>377</sup>

The importance of the rite, as well as its antiquity, is attested by its prominence at an equally early time in both Egypt and Babylonia. Though “the Egyptians did not get the rite from the Babylonians,” as Blackman sees it, “it is just possible that the Babylonians borrowed the rite from Egypt.”<sup>378</sup> It is also found in ancient India.<sup>379</sup>

Though the Opening of the Mouth belongs to the funeral rites, it plainly did not originate as such: Otto notes that none of the typical funerary priestly titles appears in any known version of the rite, and both he and Morenz point out that the business is plainly not funerary in origin but is, by very nature, an ordinance for the living and takes place in

the temple.<sup>380</sup>

Though originally it centers entirely around the person of the king,<sup>381</sup> the rite of Opening the Mouth is found in private tombs as early as the Fourth Dynasty,<sup>382</sup> when adapted to the Isis cult, the Opening of the Mouth ordinance was thought of as taking place in the next world.<sup>383</sup> The ceremony is not limited to a narrow situation but “was evidently performed in a great variety of situations.”<sup>384</sup> It takes place in “the ritual place, … which is not a tomb … but a chamber or workshop (*Werkstatt*).”<sup>385</sup> While the gods figure prominently in the mortuary rites, there is no mention of gods at all in the Opening of the Mouth ordinance until the sixteenth scene, when the reason for their appearance is, according to Otto, “uncertain.”<sup>386</sup> Though by the New Kingdom it had taken the form of a dramatic

presentation,<sup>387</sup> Otto holds that it was originally neither mythical nor dramatic.<sup>388</sup>

The substitution of a statue for the dead in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony readily gave rise to the false idea that the rite was, first and last, concerned with animating the statue instead of the individual for which it was substituted.<sup>389</sup> The operation begins with “the candidate standing on sand, facing south, nude, by day, his clothes behind him,”<sup>390</sup> obviously a living person. This would be awkward when dealing with a dead subject, and so his mummy—or, more convenient still, his statue—took his place.<sup>391</sup> The twelfth scene is the making of the statue, which represents the creation of the body of man and is also compared to conception and birth, thus making clear that the real object of the rites is not the statue as such but the living body.<sup>392</sup> The fact that the statue is baptized, anointed, and clothed just

like a living person shows that it is substituting for such.<sup>393</sup> Certain important episodes originally had nothing to do with statue rites with which they later became confused, according to Otto, the actual Opening of the Mouth being performed on the king's own mouth and not on any statue.<sup>394</sup> If the Opening of the Mouth was “supposed to open not only the mouth of the statue, but the eyes and ears as well, indeed endow it with the faculties of a living person,”<sup>395</sup> the emphasis was all on the living person, who was revived and resurrected by the offices, which were all performed in his name. Indeed, those persons upon whose statues ordinances of exaltation (*Erhöhung*) were performed in the temples were more often living people than dead.<sup>396</sup>

## The Opening of the Mouth Rite as an Anointing

Basically, the Opening of the Mouth rite was an *anointing*. As Moret sums it up, “One was anointed on the mouth, eyes, ears, and different parts of the reconstituted body. ... Thus the mouth, eyes, and ears can breathe, speak, and eat; see; and hear [Thus the mouth ... can breathe, speak, and eat; the eyes can see; and the ears can hear]; the arms can act, and the legs can walk.” Moret is careful to specify, however, that the oil always follows a washing with water<sup>397</sup>—the necessary preparation, as we have seen, for all important ordinances.<sup>398</sup> In Babylonia and India, as in Egypt, the Opening of the Mouth was an integral part of washing and purification rites,<sup>399</sup> of which it could be either a part or the whole. Thus, in the old pyramid rites it seems to have been the first step in more than one major phase of the ordinances: it must come before the king receives the oils, the garments, and the

simple ritual meal.<sup>400</sup> Later, when the wooden coffin is placed in the stone sarcophagus to initiate an important phase of the ritual journey, the corpse is sanctified by a new series of ordinances, beginning again with an Opening of the Mouth.<sup>401</sup> As preparations are underway for the final heavenly ascent, the “mystery play” is performed again, first preceded by an Opening of the Mouth performed on the statue, as it had been the preceding time done on the corpse itself in the coffin chamber.<sup>402</sup> Thus the Opening of the Mouth can be performed repeatedly in the course of a long initiation, each time as the first act of an important and distinct phase of the divine progression. The Opening of the Mouth is not the last service performed for the dead, but it must immediately precede it.<sup>403</sup>

The reconstituting of the body by the Opening of the Mouth rite assured its rebirth

to a higher existence, the ultimate goals of the ordinance being, according to Otto, exaltation (*Verklärung*, *śzh.t*, transfiguration) and *sn̄tr*, which means both purification and deification.<sup>404</sup> In Babylonia, a corresponding rite was performed “on priests at their consecration and on other occasions,” whenever they needed to renew their spiritual power.<sup>405</sup> This Babylonian version took place in the *bît têdišti*, the “House of Renewal,” where the subject, after being washed, was clothed first in red to signify death and then in white, portending his future glory.<sup>406</sup>

## The Oil of Healing: Reversing the Blows of Death

The purpose of the oil, as of the water, was to revive the parts anointed: “I have filled thy face with metchet [*md.t*] oil,” the formula begins—meaning, as Budge points

out, restoring it completely.<sup>407</sup> “O thou oil upon the brow of this Horus! ... Thou shalt be placed by me on the brow of the chief Her-heb ... and the possession thereof shall make him to become an *akh* [i.e., give him superhuman perception]. Grant that he may have power over his body, that his eyes may be opened that he may see.”<sup>408</sup> The scene entitled “Anointing” in the Opening of the Mouth texts is specifically “to restore the face.”<sup>409</sup> The oil most commonly used was *b3q*-oil, as the oil of the *Moringa arabica*,<sup>410</sup> though olive oil is found in the private Opening of the Mouth rites as early as the Fourth Dynasty.<sup>411</sup> In their love of scents and unguents, the Egyptians elaborated the oil motif: “I have filled thee, O A.men-Rā ... with the Eye of Horus—Metchet [*md.t*]-[oil, the] Festival Scent [*hb.t*], ... [the] Oil of Praise [*hknw*], ... Sefi-oil [*sft*], ... Nem-oil. ... ‘The Eye of

Horus ... is united to the oil. Tua-oil [*dwʒ*]. ... Hātent-āsh oil [*hʒt.t- 's*]. Hātent Thehennu oil [*hʒt.t-thnw*]. ... A.ber oil [*ibr*]. ... Beq oil [*bʒq*]. ... Anoint thyself therewith!””<sup>412</sup>

Like the other initiatory ordinances, the Opening of the Mouth is an imitation birth—or, rather, rebirth rite—and the use of the oil is conspicuous in that connection. The “anointing” scene<sup>413</sup> ends with the declaration: “O NN! Thy mother hath borne thee on this day. Thou art created to be one who knows what is not known; Geb hath made thee immortal (invulnerable). ... He gives thee thy head; he joins thy members together ... after thou hast received thy head, ... thy two eyes. ... He joins thy head to thy bones. ... (The *sem*-priest speaks): Ointment of *hk̄nw*-oil. O Osiris, ... I fill thy face for thee with ointment!”<sup>414</sup> And in another version: “Ye unguents, ... place yourselves before Osiris. I have made him to be happy

through you. I have made him to become *Akh* through you, placing his power in his body. ... I have filled your eyes with *Md.t*-oil, your head with *Md.t*-oil.”<sup>415</sup>

“It hath knitted together thy bones, it hath gathered together thy members,” etc.<sup>416</sup> The whole Opening of the Mouth rite, being “a miracle ... which restored to each [organ] its proper functions”<sup>417</sup> and the “main purpose” of which, indeed, “is to restore all the parts and organs of the body so that they will never be lost again,”<sup>418</sup> was by nature a healing of the sick.<sup>419</sup> By precept and example, we are taught that the purpose of the Opening of the Mouth is to reverse the blows of death.<sup>420</sup> As sickness is not a normal state of things, so the final disaster that befalls the body was never thought of as a mere running down or breaking down but always as the result of a willful attack against it by destroying powers. The famous

*wedjat*-eye, the perfect or restored eye, is the completely resurrected flesh, healed of the blows inflicted on it by the enemy; it is the moon restored to its fulness, just as the *ȝh.t*-eye is the Sun's Eye, "the Right Eye of Re," restored to its fulness after eclipse.<sup>421</sup> Before Pharaoh can sit on the throne again at the periodic ritual renewals of his power, he must be "cured of his deadly wounds,"<sup>422</sup> inflicted on him by his mortal enemy, Seth. The king on the lion couch feigns death, but "he falls beneath the blows of his enemies only to rise again triumphant and glorious," embodying the victory of light over the darkness.<sup>423</sup> In another papyrus, "The Great One awakes. . . . Osiris has risen to his feet. Verily, his son Horus saved him from Seth. . . . [H]e heals the pain which was in his flesh. His arm is given to him by Horus. His feet are given to him by Geb."<sup>424</sup> The Breathings text of Sensaos designates the

initiate as “Horus the Great, who has healed (caused to be *nfr*) the members of Re and placed Horus on the throne of his father.”<sup>425</sup>

The funerary rites of the Anchnesneferibre coffin open with Thoth addressing Osiris: “I have come from the Great House with the divine command to provide thee with protection. Anubis will heal thy wounds. He will reunite thy members and thy flesh.”<sup>426</sup> The flesh of Osiris is restored in the *w'b.t*, the place of washing and anointing.<sup>427</sup> Atum assists, telling the candidate Osiris that he has driven off Apophis, the destroyer, “and healed thy wounds.”<sup>428</sup> This particular rite is for the restoring of a sick person whose condition is compared with that of the smitten Osiris and whose ailment is attributed to the blows of the enemy, the serpent.<sup>429</sup> The king of the Hittites went through a rite, the formula of which closely follows that of the Opening of the Mouth and

which is meant to be both a restoration and a healing. “Anoint ye the King, anoint his eyes, take away his illness, ... take away his *harnapistas*, take away the sickness of his head, take away the evil doing of man, take away care, take away weakness of the knee, take away sickness of the heart. ... He goes to the mountain ... youthful vigor has been restored to him, strength he has restored to him.”<sup>430</sup> Likewise, the Babylonian Gilgamesh, after he had lost his bout with death and the serpent, received a washing at the “washing-place,” *namsû*, which removed his defilement and healed his sores.<sup>431</sup>

The symbolic inflicting of the blows of death is an important and dramatic part of the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth ordinance. As soon as the creation of the body is completed in the form of the finished statue,<sup>432</sup> the workers begin to beat the statue with blows that are described as both painful

and damaging, while the *sem*-priest cries: “Do not smite my father! Do not seize his head!”<sup>433</sup> The officiants who do the beating ask absolution of the *sem* for the crime of beating his father, eager to clear themselves of a charge of sacrilege toward a holy object.<sup>434</sup> This reminds one of how the priest who made the first incision in a body being prepared for mummification was ritually execrated and pursued as a murderer, showing that the embalming begins with a ritual murder.<sup>435</sup> The Egyptians smite the dead, says the ancient satirist Lucian, after he has already been murdered.<sup>436</sup> In the Opening of the Mouth rite, the word used for “smiting” the statue is *hw̄i*, which means “smiting to slay,” indicating that it is the dramatization of a sacrificial death. At a later phase (or, rather, reduplication) of the rites, the Horus-eye is smitten with the *nhʒnhʒ*-whip.<sup>437</sup> Though the *sem*-priests order

the workers to stop the smiting,<sup>438</sup> it is an indispensable part of the story; and in some versions the priest himself regretfully inflicts the fatal blows, saying, “I am thy beloved [or loving] son,” whereupon he smites the statue with the staff in his right hand: “I have cut off his leg; . . . thou hast cut off thine eye; thy soul is in it.”<sup>439</sup>

Next, animals are slaughtered, with the cutting off of various members.<sup>440</sup> The *sem* smites “the bull of the South,” tears its heart out, and cuts off its left foreleg (fig. 45); then “two gazelles and a *smen*-goose” are beheaded; then, with the announcement “No further attack shall be made upon this god!” the heart of the bull is taken to the statue,<sup>441</sup> while the severed leg is held to its mouth, both to revive the dead and to assure his deliverance by a substitute sacrifice (fig. 46). At the same time, the chief priest (*hry hb*) holds aloft the *shm*-scepter<sup>442</sup> as a proof

of divine power. In the next scene, the mouth is officially opened by the adze of meteoric iron closely resembling the leg in shape and size. The ultimate test of magical or divine power in Egypt was to cut off a member of the body and then restore it again, as we learn from the famous episode in Papyrus Westcar, wherein the holy man, Dedi, forbids the experiment on a human being as improper.<sup>443</sup>



Figure 45. A bull is sacrificed and its left foreleg (called the “arm”) is cut off for a demonstration of power, while the *sem*-priest holds aloft the ‘*bȝ-* or *shm*-scepter, the symbol of power over physical things. Tomb of Petemenophis, ca. 600 B.C. As reproduced in Dümichen, *Grabpalast des Patuamenap*, pl. I.



Figure 46. The foreleg is brought forward “to open the mouth and eyes,” as the inscription says, by its touch. The subject, Seti I, is standing on a bag of sand. To the right, an adzelike instrument of meteoric iron is substituted for the leg to open the mouth; the instrument is shaped both like the severed leg and the constellation of Ursa Major and is called the “Great Magician.” Restored and adapted from the tomb of Seti I, ca. 1290 B.C.

Throughout the ancient world, the paradox of resurrection is visualized as an active reversal of the blows of death. Thus in the Metternich Stela, the Opening of the Mouth formula is recited by “Thoth who has come from heaven” to expel the poison of a serpent from the body of a victim, member by member.<sup>444</sup> Osiris, fatally wounded by Seth, is called upon to “Arise and live ...

that thou mayest reverse (*wd*) the damage inflicted on thee!" It is always Horus the Avenger, the Protector, who makes good the damage after it has been inflicted, reversing the blows by the Opening of the Mouth.<sup>445</sup> The theme is restitution: "They have brought me my bones and joined together my members; they have brought to me what was taken from me.... My eyes have been opened that I might see with them ... My ears have been opened that I might hear with them. ... The green is at my throat, breath is not cut off from my nose, there is wind in the passages. ... Geb supports me, my staff is in my hand, I have power over the destroyer."<sup>446</sup> In the ever-popular motif of the "contest of the magicians," we see that every poison has its antidote and every blow its counterblow.<sup>447</sup> Thus in an old Babylonian version, "each time Enki names an organ of the body that pains him, ... Ninhursag announces the birth

of a corresponding deity” to reverse the blow and remove the pain.<sup>448</sup>

According to Kurt Sethe, the most important secrets of the Egyptian mysteries had to do with certain wounds (*Verletzungen*) inflicted on a divine personage.<sup>449</sup> They had to do with sanctification, for in Egypt at all times the “smiting [of] a man or animal … was an act of consecration or dedication,” making the smitten thing “the property of the god.”<sup>450</sup> In sacrificial situations substitution is important, and in the earliest times part of the Opening of the Mouth was the enveloping of the candidate in the skin of an animal,<sup>451</sup> a sacrificial beast with which he was identified.<sup>452</sup> These ideas are reflected in the important Spell 132 of the Coffin Texts: “I give sacrifice (praise) to the gods, even a blood sacrifice (an ox) to the Lord of Heliopolis, I being with their bonds because

I am truly the sacrificial bread of Re, fainting from wounds.”<sup>453</sup>

## Jewish and Christian Parallels

What it is all about can be better understood from Jewish and Christian sources, which are by no means unrelated to the Egyptian. Indeed, Czermak compares the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth to the awakening of Adam in the Genesis account,<sup>454</sup> and an early Christian tombstone found in Egypt compares the deceased to Adam, who has been smitten with the blows of death.<sup>455</sup> This last refers to the old Hebrew tradition that when Adam fell and sinned he became subject to the blows of death. For when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, God said, “Behold, I will bring upon thy body, seventy blows; with divers griefs, shalt thou be tormented, beginning at thy head and thine eyes and thine ears down to

thy nails on thy toes, and in every separate limb." This is the chastisement for "all our race."<sup>456</sup> The like applies to Adam's posterity, for when Israel falls, God says, "Since thou hast abandoned my covenant, I have brought upon thy body seventy-two strokes; the trouble of the first stroke is a pain of the eyes, the second stroke an affection of the hearing, and likewise in turn all the strokes shall befall thee."<sup>457</sup> The wages of sin is death, and the dead body is chided at an old-fashioned Jewish funeral because its members no longer function, and each one is struck an impatient and accusing blow. This is the *chibut ha-keber*: "On the third day the departed is treated with increased rigour. Blows are struck on his eyes because he would not see, on his ears because he would not hear, on his lips because they uttered profanities, on his tongue because it bore false testimony

against his neighbour, on his feet because they ran toward evil-doing.”<sup>458</sup>

Accordingly, when at the end of his life Adam felt the accumulating effect of these mortal blows upon him and sensed the approach of death, he implored Eve, “Go with my son Seth near to paradise . . . and pray God to . . . send his angel to paradise, and give me of the tree out of which the oil floweth, and bring it me, and I shall anoint myself and shall have rest from my complaint.”<sup>459</sup> He was asking for the “oil of mercy,” which alone could reverse the seven blows of death inflicted as a result of the fall.<sup>460</sup> For the ultimate healing of the oil of mercy was not to be given to men until the coming of the Messiah, as Eve and Seth were informed by an angel who met them on the way back to the garden to fetch the oil for Adam.<sup>461</sup> When the Messiah did come, according to the *Clementine Recognitions*, he provided that all who come to his kingdom should be anointed with the oil of

the tree of life, the very oil with which the Father had anointed him to be the *initium omnium*.<sup>462</sup> The final culmination of the whole plan of salvation, according to a very old Judeo-Christian writing, will be when Michael opens the gates and bestows the healing oil on the righteous as “the hundred-fold reward of those who have worked and toiled diligently.”<sup>463</sup>

The idea of the reversing of the blows of death by a special anointing is a common link between the pious Jewish sectaries and the early Christians. Thus in the very early Syriac *Testament of Our Lord*, the candidates for baptism are exorcised by the bishop, who blows on them (cf. *snsn*), signing them upon the brow, the nostrils, the breast, the ears, etc. Then he blesses the oil and says, “I anoint you with oil for the liberation from all evil spirits and from all evil.” Upon emerging from the water, the

candidates are again anointed “with the oil of grace” (Adam’s “oil of mercy”).<sup>464</sup> The Christian Coptic rites seem to hark back to the old Egyptian tradition, for the purpose of the anointing is to bring together again those “members which have been scattered [and separated] since the foundation of the world,”<sup>465</sup> that being also the purpose of the Opening of the Mouth rite, as we have seen.

In the *Gospel of Philip*, the real meaning of the story of the Good Samaritan is pointed out, for the wine and oil and the meal provided for the sorely wounded man could, to the faithful, refer only to the ordinances of anointing and sacrament, by which one is healed from the mortal wounds of this sinful world.<sup>466</sup> Theologians are just beginning to see the implications behind these things.<sup>467</sup> In early Christian sources, the ministry of Christ pointedly reverses the work of Satan, the destroyer. One of the earliest texts tells

how Christ redeemed Adam and healed the wounds inflicted on his posterity by the enemy, death.<sup>468</sup> Another tells how the Lord descended to the lower world and “treated with healing medicine the wound which the Enemy had inflicted on His Son. . . . He brought back Adam again to the state wherein he was at first, and he forgave them.”<sup>469</sup>

Christ’s first recorded miracle shows how closely healing and forgiving go together.<sup>470</sup> His healing miracles were pointedly a reversal of Satan’s blows, many expressly performed by the denouncing and driving out of evil spirits (see Mark 1:23–25); in Mark 6:13 he uses olive oil; he touches the eyes to heal them (Matthew 9:29; Mark 8:23–25); he heals the blind and the deaf *daimonizomenos*, one who is possessed of an evil spirit (Matthew 12:22).

One may often detect echoes of the

Opening of the Mouth rite in early Christian literature and liturgy. Thus in the *Psalm of Thomas* the gatekeeper asks of the candidate, “Do his eyes see well? Does his mouth speak the truth? Are his hands pure? Is his heart firm? Do his feet run in the path of truth? ... Who drinks of this wine is made strong in his eyes, ... heart, mind, etc.”<sup>471</sup> So also in the related *Odes of Solomon*: “In Him I have acquired eyes, ... ears have become mine and I have heard this truth. ... I have walked towards him in the way of truth. ... Death has been destroyed before my face.”<sup>472</sup> And in the rites of the Mandaean one is blessed at the washing “to see with your eyes, speak with your mouth, hear with your ears,” etc.<sup>473</sup> The Jewish equivalent of the Pythagorean “cup of Lethe” is the well-known tradition that, at the moment of birth, an angel gives every child a blow on the upper lip (the mark can still be seen there!),

which makes him forget everything he knew before coming into this earth life, and that at the resurrection another blow will reverse the effect of the first.<sup>474</sup> One purpose of the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth is to cause the initiate “to remember what he had forgotten”<sup>475</sup>—that is, to awaken the mind to its full potential in the manner of the awakening of Adam in a new world.<sup>476</sup> Baptism, says Cyril of Jerusalem, is “the antitype of Christ’s sufferings,” including an anointing from the crown of the head to the feet for the sake of making one a “son,” a complete participant.<sup>477</sup> For this, “the head and brow are anointed to reverse the blows against Adam” and to make the mind clear and perceptive. “Then your ears, that you might receive the audible parts of the holy ordinances. . . . Next come the nostrils . . . that you may say, ‘We are the sweet odor of Christ to God among the saved.’”<sup>478</sup>

As every Christian knows, Christ's ministry was one of healing. He sends the twelve out like an army to heal, drive out demons, and "preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:1–2); and later, Paul "went about ... healing all those who had been smitten by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). After the evil one has laid a heavy hand on his victims, Jesus lays *his* hands on and they are cured. The early fathers recognized the significance of this: "Christ suffered death," says Polycarp, "and was raised from the death, thereby *undoing* the bonds of hell."<sup>479</sup>

A Babylonian text speaks of an evil spirit who has subjected one to "the ordinances of death," against which God (Ea) performs the ordinances of life. The evil ordinances are the familiar ones—but in reverse. The candidate is washed with filthy water, he eats unclean things, he anoints himself with evil-smelling oil, and in the end his spirit

joins the evil spirits when the blows of death are inflicted upon him.<sup>480</sup> Ignatius refers to “the evil-smelling oil … of this world” with which the wicked are initiated into its ways,<sup>481</sup> and the *Gospel of Philip* makes pointed contrast between the oil with which the good Samaritan healed and the evil-smelling oil of this world.<sup>482</sup>

He came to mend (*ad reparationem*) a defective world, says Peter in the *Recognitions*.<sup>483</sup> He comes to reverse, as it were, the laws of entropy and decay: “Tell John … that the blind see, the lame walk, … the deaf hear,” etc. (Luke 7:22; cf. Matthew 11:4–5), the exact reverse of the usual order of things. “The Antichrist came, but Christ also came,” writes Cyprian, “the Enemy raged and rampaged, but forthwith the Lord followed, to avenge our sufferings and wounds.”<sup>484</sup> Most enlightening is the way in which the events of the crucifixion exactly

reverse those of the creation: the three glorious beings become three condemned criminals (or, rather, the Creator's counselors are two thieves); the acclamations by the host of heaven become the mockings of a mob; the garments of glory become carnival frippery; the one who gave life to all is now put to death—they “killed the Prince of life” (Acts 3:15); the new wine of the kingdom is vinegar; the foundations of the earth, instead of being established, are completely shaken; instead of light of the new age breaking forth, a great darkness covers the earth; instead of Satan being cast out, he formally declares himself the victor (Luke 22:53); he who heard Adam's call for aid and came to him now utters Adam's cry for help (Matthew 27:46); the veil of the temple is parted—in reverse and by violence (Matthew 27:51); the spirits, instead of coming down to earth, come up out of the

earth (Matthew 27:52); the stone is sealed, not to assure but to prevent resurrection (Matthew 27:66), etc. It is all backwards. The most impressive reversal of ordinances is in the case of Judas: he gives the kiss or embrace, the *aspasmos* of the initiate, but it is for betrayal (Matthew 26:47–49). In his case, the Opening of the Mouth is reversed, according to the Coptic Bartholomew: his tongue is cut out, his eye destroyed, his hair plucked out, etc.; his name is removed from the roll of the Saints, the book of life; his inheritance is taken away; his tablet (seal) is broken in pieces; his oil is poured out; his garment is rent; his office (*episkopē*) is removed; his crown is snatched away from him; his lamp is put out, etc.<sup>485</sup> All this is consistent with the reversal of the order of the creation, which Judas initiated at the crucifixion. In Papyrus Salt 825, death and the “deceitful tomb” become themselves the

victims of decomposition and dissolution!<sup>486</sup> Thoth has so arranged that Horus and Seth inflict exactly equal blows on each other and so end with a perfectly even score, after which both are healed.<sup>487</sup> In the Egyptian story of Truth and Falsehood, it is the very knife which was the cause of Truth's undoing that, in the end, vindicates him and destroys Falsehood.<sup>488</sup>

## The Number of Blows (7 and 70)

The *number* of blows administered is a significant clue to the common origin and great antiquity of these things. As we have seen, the “oil of mercy” was to reverse the effect of the seven blows of death inflicted upon Adam. The seven blows of death are mentioned in early Jewish and Christian writings in other connections.<sup>489</sup> In the *Testament of Abraham*, that patriarch is shown “the 7 heads of death” as dragon

heads, “and the fourteen aspects of death,” which specifically represent “the different modes of death” possible.<sup>490</sup> According to an early Coptic Christian writing, these seven blows go back to the premortal existence and were shown to Adam.<sup>491</sup> A well-known variation of the seven is the seventy and the seventy-two blows that afflict fallen Adam and fallen Israel respectively. A Twentieth Dynasty Egyptian papyrus “enumerated seventy different kinds of death, or rather seventy different agents . . . of death.”<sup>492</sup>

Besides the number, we are told explicitly what the blows are. They are against the “seven natures: the flesh for hearing, the eyes for seeing, the breath to smell, the veins to touch, the blood for taste, and bones for endurance, and the intelligence for joy”;<sup>493</sup> or against life, sight, hearing, smell, speech, taste, procreation.<sup>494</sup> There is an eighth

spirit, which is that of sleep. The lists differ, but the idea is always the same: man has certain spirits or functions placed in the body, and “each of these spirits has an evil spirit to abuse and oppose it.”<sup>495</sup>

Ages before the texts from which we have been quoting were written, the concepts they convey were familiar to the Egyptians, who specifically mention the use of seven oils in the Opening of the Mouth ritual<sup>496</sup> and “the fourteen holy members” of the body to be treated.<sup>497</sup> Speaking of the ritual death of the god, “some (Egyptians) say that … the members of his body were afflicted by undergoing seven blows.”<sup>498</sup> The picture of Moses’s serpent-staff consuming seven Egyptian serpents in a contest with the magicians is anticipated in a purely Egyptian version of such a contest: “I am the serpent, the bull of the Ennead who is not subject to magic (*lit.* who does not obey *hkʒw*).”<sup>499</sup> “I

swallow the seven serpents. ... I have not yielded to evil charms. ... I have placed my enemies beneath my sandals, and made myself their master, as Re commanded.”<sup>500</sup> “NN is this serpent the bull of Nut, ... the Great One of Atum, who swallows the seven uraeuses,”<sup>501</sup> etc. Apophis, the great serpent who represents the powers of death and destruction in the ritual texts, is rendered helpless by being smitten with seven knives (fig. 47).<sup>502</sup> In our Book of Breathings, the candidate is put in jeopardy seven times.

Adam did not get his oil of mercy, as noted above, because Eve and Seth were met on the way to the garden by an angel, who told them that it was not to be had until the coming of the Messiah.<sup>503</sup> According to Rabbi Akiba, when Michael and Gabriel finally lead all the sinners out of the lower world, “they will wash and anoint [them], healing them of their wounds of hell, and

will clothe them with beautiful, clean garments and bring them into the presence of God.”<sup>504</sup>

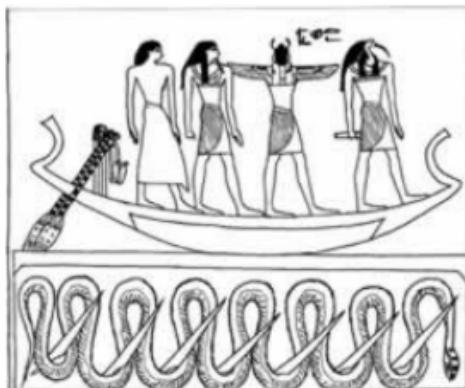


Figure 47. The serpent (Apophis), attempting to arrest the eternal progression of the subject (here represented by the scarab “Ra” of “becoming,” or transition, and the heavenly wings), is smitten and rendered helpless by seven deadly knives. Thoth, with the written authorization and instructions, stands resolutely at the prow. After P. Louvre N. 3292, a Breathings text. Courtesy of Louvre Museum, Egyptian Antiquities Department.

## The Members Affected

The lists of members touched in the Opening of the Mouth vary in length and

content, sometimes reflecting the special purpose for which the rite is performed, as in Pyramid Text 213 §135, when the object is travel: “Thy forearms, arms, belly, back, buttocks, feet are those of Atum; thy face is that of Anubis. Thus thou journeyest through the regions of Horus and the domain of Seth.”<sup>505</sup> Typical of one of the fuller lists is the anointing of Re himself, who receives the oil on head, cranium, brow, eyes, nose, mouth, tongue, teeth, lips, chin, back, arms, heart, belly, buttocks, thighs, legs, feet, and toes, in that order.<sup>506</sup> The specific function of each part is usually named, as in the tomb of Tutankhamen: “I open thy mouth that thou mightest speak with it, thine eyes that thou mightest behold Re, thine ears that thou mayest hear the words of glorification (or exaltation), thy legs to walk with, thy breast and thine arms to drive off thine enemies.”<sup>507</sup>

The rite is called the Opening of the Mouth

because that must come first, that being the organ by which one may breathe, receive nourishment, and speak: it is the oral passage that makes higher organic life possible. So the mouth comes first; but to rise above mere vegetation, life must become conscious and aware, so that the opening of the eyes immediately follows. With these two organs the individual is, so to speak, in business. The mouth is necessary if the dead is to "possess the physical capacity and the divine qualities necessary to receiving and enjoying the sacrifices, and hence to endless life."<sup>508</sup>

"All the forces of life are in thee; thou eatest with thy mouth, thou seest with thine eyes, thou hearest with thine ears,"<sup>509</sup> but the mouth necessarily comes first in animating and reviving the body. The Egyptian, however, valued the mouth most for its highest function, that of speech; the initial impulse to life is the divine word, and

whoever utters such a word must first have his mouth opened and purified. The Egyptian could only attain to divinity “through the creative word,” by which “he speaks what God himself speaks; i.e., he thinks and he acts.”<sup>510</sup> Whereas other sense organs do but one thing each, the mouth not only conveys sustenance and air to the body—as well as the most elemental forms of awareness and enjoyment in taste and feeling—but, in the other direction, emits the highest expressions of thought, the divine words, before the council of the gods.<sup>511</sup> Ben Sira preserves the Egyptian order of priority: “He created for them tongue and eyes and ears and He gave them a heart to understand.”<sup>512</sup> A very early Christian hymn tells us how God has given us “a tongue for harmony … and taste, … and power to see, and to hear the sound, and breathing of the air, and hands to work, and feet to go about on,”<sup>513</sup> again giving the

mouth first place. Accordingly, the cleansing of the mouth comes first; and as the king of Egypt was washed by two priests masked as Horus and Thoth, they gave him natron to chew to make his mouth “like the mouth of a calf of milk on the day it was born,”<sup>514</sup> “as pure as that of a newborn babe,” “like that of a newborn calf of Mother Isis,” he being the youthful sun-god.<sup>515</sup> For the Babylonians also, the washing of the mouth was the first step in reviving the body.<sup>516</sup> Moses hesitated to address Pharaoh with ritually impure lips (Exodus 6:12, 30). The priority of the mouth is affirmed in the Shabako text, which at first sight seems to refute it: we read that the great council of the gods created the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the breath of the nose to convey information to the heart, and the heart to bring forth all knowledge through the mouth by agency of the tongue; but it was the uttering of the creative word in the first

place that made all this possible.<sup>517</sup>

If the first motion toward life and creation is with the mouth, the consummation of the process is the opening of the eyes. As Erich Ebeling puts it, “Acceptance [among the gods] is achieved by the solemn opening of the eyes. . . . The divine child can henceforth see. The last act of the new creation is completed.”<sup>518</sup> In the *Stundenwache*, the creation of Osiris by Geb is completed only when he opens his eyes, “his blind eyes.”<sup>519</sup> Indeed, the *wdʒ.t*, or completed eye, is the symbol of the whole restored body. In the formula “O my father, I have opened thy mouth and eyes!” the essentials of the Opening of the Mouth are completed, the rest being secondary.<sup>520</sup>

As to the implements that were used, we see Horus—always representing (or represented by) the son of the deceased<sup>521</sup>—as he “pressed with his fingers, or touched

with ritual instruments, the mouth, the eyes, the ears, the various parts of the body, imitating the movement proper to each organ, restoring to Osiris the use of his eyes to see with, his ears to hear with, his mouth to eat and talk with, his hands to work with, and his legs to walk with.”<sup>522</sup> The son would touch the mouth with his little finger (see color plate 8, as well as p. 435, fig. 138) or open the mouth and eyes by touching them with an artificial finger made of electrum “in a gesture of transmission of life,” which suggests to Otto the healing episode in Mark 7:33.<sup>523</sup> Various forms of contact and stimulation seem to have been tried, to judge by modern interpreters: “They opened the mouth and the eyes … either by massaging them with the detached members of the typhonian victims, or by touching them with special instruments, or else by imitating the gesture of consecration by the use of cloths,

vestments, or oils.”<sup>524</sup>

But the special instrument for the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth was a kind of chisel made of meteoric iron or copper and shaped like an adze, which seems to have been sort of a conductor of power.<sup>525</sup> It was called the *ntr.ty*-implement, meaning “that which makes divine,”<sup>526</sup> and the *psš-kf* “with which the mouth of every god and goddess is opened.”<sup>527</sup> “Thy mouth is opened ... by Ptah, ... by Sokar, with the chisel of bronze with which the mouths of the gods were opened.”<sup>528</sup> It was also known as the “Great Magician” or “Wonder-Worker,” since its operation was not understood: “It is a miracle ... which restored to each [organ] its proper functions.”<sup>529</sup> Since this same chisel (*nw, stp*) is shown in the hands of priestly artisans cutting out statues and mummy cases, its creative function is obvious: it is at once the instrument of creation, of sacrificial

death, and of resurrection.<sup>530</sup>

Many drawings and reliefs show the *sem-* priest touching the mouth of an image or mummy with this implement. He goes over the whole body, reciting: "I open your mouth that you may breathe, eat, and speak; I open your ears that you may act, your eyes that you may see." By this act, the faculties of the body are rendered *d.t.*, physically everlasting.<sup>531</sup> The strange adzelike tool has rich cosmic associations aside from its meteoric iron. Its shape is patterned after the constellation of Ursa Major, or the Big Dipper, and the four members (legs and arms) of the person treated are likened in the Pyramid Texts to the four sons of Horus because they carry him and represent four stars of the bowl of the dipper, leading the whole company of seven—the seven stars of the constellation known as *mshtyw*, which is also the name given to the instrument.<sup>532</sup> The

material of the gadget, as well as its name, suggests a sort of conductor of electrical power from the sky, an impression strengthened by the requirement that the recipient of the Opening of the Mouth always stand on a mound of perfectly sterile sand or on a Stone of Truth<sup>533</sup>—an effective nonconductor, reminding one of the heavily insulated (with wool) stone on which the Roman *haruspex* sat when in contact with the powers of the sky.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 14– 20

14. ... Come thou, Osiris, God's Father,  
*Wṣir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-*  
15 (1/15). *t3.wy*, **Justified, that thou  
mayest enter into the broad Hall of the  
Two Maats since thou hast been  
cleansed from all defilement**  
16. and all sin. Stone of Truth is thy name!

- Hail, God's Father, Prophet of Amon-Re,  
17. King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon,  
*Wsir-Wr* [JSP: **the Osiris Hor**], **Justified**,  
Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*,
18. Justified! **Thou enterest into the duat** in  
a state of **perfect (great) purity** (*or by*  
**the great purification**), with **which** the  
Two Maats **have washed thee** in the great  
hall (*or court*).
19. There has been performed for thee, yea,  
there has been performed for thee a  
washing in the Hall (*or Court*) of Geb; thy  
members have been purified **in the Hall**  
(*or Court*)
- 20 (1/20). **of Shu.**

## Commentary

The initiate is addressed with the same titles as those preceding lines 11–12. The express purpose of the preceding washing and clothing is to prepare the candidate (the

king) “to go to the temple.”<sup>534</sup>

## Purification in the Annex

**Lines 14–15:** “Come thou, Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsir-Wr*; Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified, that thou mayest enter into the broad Hall of the Two Maats”

The imperative followed by *sdm=f* indicates that the candidate, having completed the preliminary rites, is now free to enter the temple proper. Blackman, on the evidence of this very text, notes that “the Osirian dead” had to be “*cleansed from all evil, every abomination,*” “before entering the Hall of the Two Rights.”<sup>535</sup> At Edfu, the *pr-md3.t*, or House of Books, was a small room “on the west part of the south wall of the antechamber of the temple,” matching a like room on the east side of the wall, where the king was purified, “baptized,” from eight golden jars.<sup>536</sup> After the first hour in the

w<sup>'</sup>b.t,<sup>537</sup> one passed into the glories of the heavenly house.<sup>538</sup> “The two great wise women who washed her say, ‘Let him enter, all the sins which she committed in her earthly life having been purged away’ [or, by a play on words, ‘All her sins having been removed in his temple on earth’ (*m wndt=f tp td*)].<sup>539</sup> Let her not raise her voice (*lit.* shout), for she must know that such noise is an abomination to me and has no place (*lit.* does not enter) in my house.”<sup>540</sup> The same order of things follows in Coffin Text 35, where the candidate is first purified<sup>541</sup> and then enters into the main building (*hm wr*),<sup>542</sup> where he is “introduced into the secret teachings.”<sup>543</sup> Inscriptions in Egyptian temples make it clear that the worship was not static but moved from room to room,<sup>544</sup> the basic feeling of the thing being that of penetrating ever deeper into the building and

the things it teaches.<sup>545</sup> “You leave the chamber of Osiris,” says Breathings text Leiden T 32, “and circulate in the broad Hall of the Two Maats; ... you proceed through the temple without being held up,” everything being described in terms of initiation.<sup>546</sup>

## Entering the Great Hall

A momentous step was the entering of the first room of the temple proper: the great hall (*wsh.t*), representing “the first part of the other world.”<sup>547</sup> In the Sensaos Breathings papyrus it is called the “Great Hall of the Field of Reeds,” being connected with the washing rooms.<sup>548</sup> The great hall is either the first room of the temple or the court adjacent to it. At Karnak, according to Helck, it was the large court between four pylons at the entrance, where washing and clothing took place preparatory to entering the temple

itself;<sup>549</sup> in the Eighteenth Dynasty the purification took place in the court before the entrance to the fourth pylon, acting as a sort of annex.<sup>550</sup> Petition for entrance to the next world refers to this as “the Hall of the Field of Reeds” : “O gods who inhabit the Great Hall of the Double Maat, gods who inhabit the Great Hall of the Field of Reeds! ... Turn thy face toward me, O Hathor, Regent of Amenti, and thou, O Maat, by whom one reaches Amenti, that I may enter.”<sup>551</sup> In the Book of the Dead, chapter 125, which matches our Breathings text: “Words spoken on entering the Hall of the Two Maats to behold the countenances of the gods that are there. The shedding of all the sins of a man’s mortal existence.”<sup>552</sup> Thausing suggests that the Hall of the Two Maats is the same thing as “the Land of Maat—the Beyond,” a higher state of existence.<sup>553</sup> Thus the *w.b.t* of embalming in the funeral rites is to be

regarded as the same room as the *w'b.t* of washing in the temple ordinances (fig. 48).<sup>554</sup> Bernhard Grdseloff suggests that the *pr w'b*, or house of purification, was an embalming establishment immediately adjacent to the archaic “tent of purification,” being “in direct imitation of the valley temples,” the funerary washing being an adaption of the washing of the living in the temple rites.<sup>555</sup> Kees notes that the temple service, or function of the house of worship (*ir.t pr dwȝ*), called for a vestry of some sort, large enough for the “ritual purification and investing with ritual garments and insignia before entering the inner rooms of the temple,”<sup>556</sup> the *w'b.t*, or washing room, being equivalent to *pr dwȝ*, or place of worship. Certainly, funerary scenes showing the washing of the dead “resemble … the scene of the Pharaoh being purified in the ‘House of the Morning,’ and were possibly

intentionally approximated to it.”<sup>557</sup>

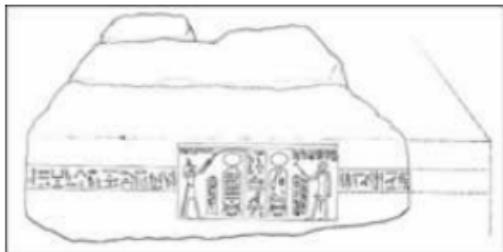


Figure 48. Alabaster slab of Sheshonq I, who took to Egypt the treasures of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 14:25–26; 2 Chronicles 12:2–9). The inscription says that he ordered “as a splendid work” for his father a *w b.t*, meaning in this context a washing place. Is this a Stone of Truth? It is interesting that the name of Sheshonq also appears in Facsimile 2, fig. 8, of the Book of Abraham. Drawn from fragments on site of the embalming house of the Apis-bull at Mit Rahina, ca. 930 B.C.

As part of his final examination, the candidate is going to be asked to name the parts of the Hall of the Two Maats.<sup>558</sup> As this is the first room in the temple, to enter this great hall is to enter the temple itself. Once one is there, the main problem—that of getting into the place at all—is solved; the

initiate has as good as graduated, for the gate of the temple was itself the entrance to heaven.<sup>559</sup> In stepping over its threshold, one leaves the mundane world behind; the holy place was “like heaven,” as the pilgrims’ graffiti report. Some suggest that the two pylons at the entrance of every temple are the Two Ladies, as they are the two lions

(Yesterday and Tomorrow).<sup>560</sup> The two lions of the “Aker” figure, always facing in opposite directions and having one body, are often identified with Isis and Nephthys, the ladies who renew and purify the dead

Osiris.<sup>561</sup> The two towers of the temple pylons are also the two mountains between which the sun rises to new life on the morning of creation, etc. (fig. 49; cf. pp. 230–31, fig. 69D).<sup>562</sup>



Figure 49. The sun rises over the temple pylon. At the same time, it is seen on the horizon, mounting to heaven between two lions known as Yesterday and Tomorrow. This drawing is part of a well-known scene representing that interval of time while the body remains in the tomb and the spirit dwells in a pleasant paradise, awaiting the resurrection. P. Wesay, Khary, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 9949 © Copyright The British Museum.

The presence of Maat is necessary at the moment one enters the temple to guarantee that one is a bona fide candidate for eternal glory and is qualified to enter the holy place. For Maat's presence signifies that all is correct and in order<sup>563</sup>—the equivalent of a temple recommend. Maat alone, of all deities, participates in all the rites of the temple.<sup>564</sup> Even in the Amduat, it is the Two Maats who tow the god's bark through the first gate at the first hour of his journey.<sup>565</sup>

The high official who, after performing initiatory purification, opened the two doors of heaven and the gates of the shrine, clothing and anointing the image of the god in the daily temple rites, was both identified with Maat and called the “lieutenant of Maat”;<sup>566</sup> while the proper and correct observance of the temple ordinances, as well as the officials administering those ordinances, are characterized as being “completely filled with Maat.”<sup>567</sup> Maat herself is not a regular deity: she has no temple, cult, or mythology of her own;<sup>568</sup> and though she preserves her identity, she is more easily adapted to representing abstract ideas than any other Egyptian divinity.<sup>569</sup> She can also be substituted for any other deity more readily than anybody else since she represents par excellence “the embodiment of every principle of social order.”<sup>570</sup> As “both a concept and a goddess,” representing

“truth, justice and order in corporate life ... based on the cosmic order,” she “constitutes the fundamental idea of ancient Egyptian religion” of all truth being encompassed in one great whole.<sup>571</sup> Hence there is no objection to *her* being encompassed in one great whole: Maat “is the symbol (*Merkmal*) ... of the entire concept of godhead.”<sup>572</sup> Her presence is the assurance that what is being done is not only in accordance with the mind and will of God but duly and legally registered according to every correct form and procedure.

Texts and pictures of the mysteries always begin with the candidate presenting an offering (fig. 50; cf. p. 240, fig. 72, and color plate 6) and requesting permission to enter and “behold the god,” that being his ultimate objective. Thus the scribe Ani begins his initiation by bringing offerings to Re just at sunrise with the petition that God endow him

with “glory, power, and righteousness (*mʒ ‘-hrw*)” so that he may “go up” and “look upon Re-Harakhti” (see p. 378, fig. 120).<sup>573</sup>

Pharaoh Piankhi, having been purified and having received the *sdb*-garment, mounts the stairs of the temple of Re at Heliopolis “to behold the god”;<sup>574</sup> while in another temple the candidate, having been washed and clothed, passes through a door bearing the inscription: “Come with me into the House of God and behold thy father the speckled bird,”<sup>575</sup> that being the symbolic form of Re-Horakhty.



Figure 50. The candidate petitions for admission,

usually at sunrise. Between the upraised hands of praise and supplication (the spiritual *ka*-symbol) are the food offerings she has brought, and on the floor are vessels of water and ointment for her washing and anointing. JSP IV (BD 105). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

## Significance of the Two Maats

But why “the Two Maats”? The Great Hall of Judgment also goes by the name of the Hall of the Two Maats, which Sethe calls the “Halle der beiden Wahrheiten.”<sup>576</sup> Bruno Stricker takes *mʒ'.ty* as a *nisbe* form and reads, not “Hall of the Two Maats,” but rather “the Hall of the Truth-lovers”,<sup>577</sup> but that leaves altogether too much unexplained. In psychostasy scenes, the dead is seen standing between two *mʒ'.ty* to be judged.<sup>578</sup> Thausing suggests that the Two Maats represent “esoteric and exoteric truth,”<sup>579</sup> or the inner and outer truth of things<sup>580</sup>—an idea that Bonnet also favors.<sup>581</sup> Breasted saw a

grammatical force in doubling the lady as an “idiom of intensification.”<sup>582</sup> Others posit that the duality reflects that mystic dualism which invests all aspects of Egyptian belief.<sup>583</sup> Of course, the Two Maats have been held to represent Upper and Lower Egypt in the manner of the Two Ladies Edjo and Nekhbet,<sup>584</sup> later identified with Isis and Nephthys (fig. 51).<sup>585</sup>



Figure 51. A goddess (sometimes identified with Nephthys) holding two *maat*-feathers is the intermediary between the depths of the tomb and the highest heavens, to which the beetle (scarab)

represents the necessary stages of transition. This fragment of a coffin lid shows the connection between the breathing motif (note the superabundance of wings and feathers) and the lion-couch theme of Facsimile 1 of the Book of Abraham.

Photograph from Nibley Archives.

Since Maat is the constant companion of the sun,<sup>586</sup> she takes on the dual aspect of his journey naturally as the Two Daughters of the sun-god; and when she is in the underworld, she is “Maaty (Two Maats) on the Ways of Darkness.”<sup>587</sup> The two solar barks are also called the *m3.ty* (Two Maats),<sup>588</sup> and the god’s nocturnal bark is towed over the “waters of Re” by the Two Maats.<sup>589</sup> The Two Maats can also be the two heavenly eyes of day and night.<sup>590</sup> It is specifically in their association with Re, the sun-god, that the Two Maats express the “dualistic thinking of the Egyptians,” according to Grieshammer.<sup>591</sup> Maat, in the role of Isis,

Hathor, Nephthys, etc., can also represent the female element in things “analogous to the male universal God,” with whom she is associated and even identified.<sup>592</sup> Her peculiar power to identify with others while remaining uniquely herself is in itself a special claim to duality. Though already mentioned in Pyramid Text 260 §317a, the Two Maats first make their formal appearance in the Book of the Dead in the Hall of the Two Maats.<sup>593</sup> “The interpretation of the Two Maats,” Jan Bergman concludes, “is still completely unsettled (*äusserst umstritten*)” among Egyptologists,<sup>594</sup> a verdict confirmed by te Velde: “Duplication of a goddess or pairs of goddesses [is] often found in Egyptian religion. ... In all these cases we have little or no indication as to the nature of the division.”<sup>595</sup> In Israel “the voice of Jacob ... is attached to two females, ... the Wisdom

which is ... Thought" and the Wisdom which is uttered.<sup>596</sup>

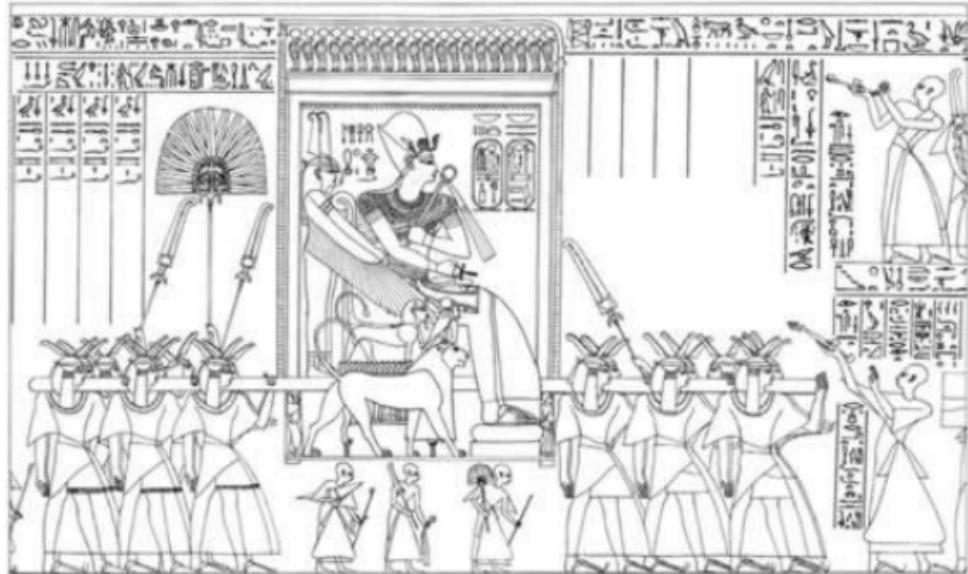


Figure 52. The Two Maats, wearing *maat*-feathers, enfold Ramses III in their protective embrace. They give him "protection, life, stability, dominion around him like the sun." He is carried in his golden throne shrine flanked by lions and sphinxes. The officials also wear *maat*-fathers. Restored drawing from the funerary temple of Ramses III, Medinet Habu, ca. 1180 B.C.

As Edjo and Nekhbet represent the north and south respectively,<sup>597</sup> the Two Maats

would seem to represent the east and west banks of the Nile, which are united even as the Two Ladies join and fuse, with pointed play on the word *snsn*.<sup>598</sup> In the temple reliefs at Medinet Habu, as the Two Maats stand behind the king on his throne, they not only have the same face as each other, but they also have the same face as the king, while the entire attendant multitude are seen wearing the two feathers that stand for the Two Maats, they too being in a condition of “Maat” (fig. 52).<sup>599</sup>

On one important point the students seem to be in general agreement: the Two Maats are not just a mechanical doubling or pair of mirror images (fig. 53). They always seem to represent a kind of polarity—esoteric/exoteric, north/south, day/night, living/dead, etc.—and so while Maat, by all accounts, stands for the basic principle of law and order by which all things exist, she

can only do so by presenting fundamental duality, or the law of opposites, by which, according to the Egyptians, there “must needs be ... opposition in all things” (cf. 2 Nephi 2:11–15).

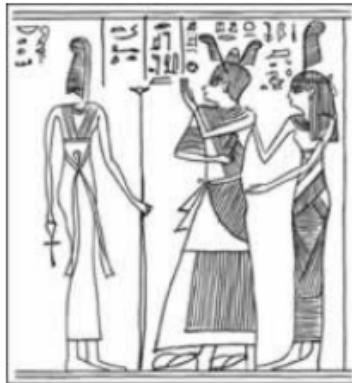


Figure 53. The abstract nature of Maat is clearly shown here, as well as the ease with which she can be doubled. Instead of a woman’s head, we see only a feather, the symbol of spirit, breath, light, and truth. The subject being introduced to her wears the two *maat*-feathers and is introduced by “Maat, the daughter of Re.” P. Pa-khar-khonsu (P. Turin 55), ca. 150 B.C. Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

## Recurrent Washings: Declared Clean

**Lines 15–16:** “since thou hast been cleansed from all defilement and all sin”

*Iw=k w 'b*, taken as the familiar circumstantial usage, indicates that the candidate may enter the great hall because he is now clean since the purification takes place “before the entrance of the temple.”<sup>600</sup> Thus, “*Wr.ty-hk3w* (the Two Great Wise Women) have purified you and introduced you into the great sanctuary of the secrets of Abydos”;<sup>601</sup> again, the candidate is washed and censed “that he may enter the great sanctuary (*hm*, place of ordinance) with the initiates, that he may enter the secrets” among them;<sup>602</sup> only he who has been purified has the power to see “the hidden things” and enter into the secrets.<sup>603</sup>

A number of washing rooms are mentioned in this section, and in line 18 we are told that the Two Maats make the initiate clean in the

great hall. We need not think that there is only one ablution with sacred water in the temple. Kees has called attention to a series of temple reliefs in which the king is first drenched with water, then “stands quietly,” after “receiving the apron (*Schurz; Shendot*),” and next sits “on a simple throne” washing his hands in a basin; the final scene is labeled “entering the temple of Thothmes III.”<sup>604</sup> Kees gives other examples of multiple washings<sup>605</sup> and notes the Egyptian capacity for telescoping various rites into a single gesture.<sup>606</sup> *S-w 'b* may in this case mean to declare clean or to pronounce clean, as it does in referring to the consecration of temple servants.<sup>607</sup> In a related case in Papyrus Sensaos, the expression *sm3 '-hrw* “is not ‘make justified,’” according to Stricker, “but recognize (*erkennen, acknowledge, pronounce*) as justified”<sup>608</sup>—hence *sw 'b*, “to pronounce clean.” Before he

can enter the Hall of the Two Maats, one leaves all one's old sins behind,<sup>609</sup> just as later one is already vindicated (*sm3 '-hrw*) before he is ever permitted to enter the sacred Judgment Hall of the Two Maats.<sup>610</sup>

*Hw.w*, “defilements,” are any worldly impurities or physical dirt that, if retained, would desecrate the sacred place into which the candidate now enters. It is more than physical dirt, however; it is also evil deeds in the sense of “impurity from which the shrine is purged.”<sup>611</sup> *Bw.t*, the other word used in our text, is ritual defilement, “taboo,”<sup>612</sup>—the breaking of regulations and statutes rather than deeds of moral turpitude. With the Egyptians, as with the early Christians, moral, ritual, and physical defilement are definitely related.<sup>613</sup>

## Stone of Truth

## Hebrew and Christian Parallels

## **Line 16:** “Stone of Truth is thy name”

Everybody agrees on this translation, which is indeed inescapable. But what on earth can it mean? It is obviously important; standing out alone in a terse, self-contained sentence apparently not connected with anything else, it is a portentous utterance. Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, the main source of our Book of Breathings, gives ample justification in seeing in this Stone of Truth a thing of highest significance (fig. 54).



Figure 54. Osiris stands, covered with a sheath, on the Stone of Truth (the *maat*-symbol), facing the four sons of Horus. In front of each one, a stand resembling the *wadj*-column of rebirth supports a jug of oil. The Two Ladies are labeled Isis and Nephthys, while their vulture and serpent headdresses show

them to be Edjo and Nekhbet; they are bestowing life and health on the god. The god Shu holds a *snsn*-sail at the end of the procession. Redrawn from Osiris chapel on roof of temple of Isis, Philae, ca. A.D. 210.

“According to the *Book of Breathings*,” wrote Blackman, “the Osirian dead, before entering the Hall of the Two Rights, were purified by Uto and Nekhbet. ... As a result of this lustration they were ‘*cleansed from all evil, every abomination*,’ and received the name ‘*Stone of Righteousness*.’”<sup>614</sup> This illustrates the principle of receiving a new name at an important stage of initiation; at this point, one also receives a token—name and stone go together. At once, one thinks of Revelation 2:17: “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” The use of such a tangible seal as a means of identification and

certification in the course of the mysteries is frequently met with.<sup>615</sup> In the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth rite, perhaps the oldest form of the complicated purification rites, “his mouth is opened ... by the Two Stones which are in the house of purification,” being thus associated with the Two Maats as “stones of truth.” Otto calls attention to T. J. Colin Baly’s suggestion that the mysterious object called ‘*b.t*’ used in opening the mouth was a rhomboid alabaster stone and suggests connection with a number of white stones found in prehistoric Egyptian graves.<sup>616</sup> A Pyramid Text elaborates: “Thy mouth is opened ... by the Two Stones, ... by Horus with his little finger,”<sup>617</sup> which suggests interesting ties between Egypt and Israel. The infant Abraham was nourished by two white stones, one of which gave milk, the other honey.<sup>618</sup> The Talmud reports, commenting on this, that in Egypt it was

believed that all abandoned babies (Abraham had been abandoned) were fed by two such miraculous stones—plainly showing where the legend came from.<sup>619</sup> A twelfth-century genizah says it was Gabriel who suckled the infant Abraham, giving him water from his little finger,<sup>620</sup> recalling that in the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth ritual the little finger could be used instead of a stone and that “Isis nursed not with the breast but with the finger.”<sup>621</sup> The association of Abraham with yet another Egyptian ordinance calls attention to the surprising interest among some mid-twentieth-century Roman Catholics in viewing Abraham, rather than Peter, as “the Rock.”<sup>622</sup> This is because Abraham was thought of as the foundation stone of God’s work on earth. David Flusser designates the stones of the high priest’s breastplate in Israel, the stones of Revelation 21, and those of 1QS VIII, 1,

in the Dead Sea Scrolls all as “foundation stones” since, among other things, they represent the twelve tribes and so are equivalent to the twelve apostles—the pillars and foundation stones of the church—representing both the temple and the New Jerusalem.<sup>623</sup> Abraham began his process of initiation at Bethel; he then passed on to Egypt, and upon being fully “endowed” returned again to Bethel, “the Perfect Stone.”<sup>624</sup> In the *Odes of Solomon* we read, “He was established upon the Rock of Truth.”<sup>625</sup> In the same source the initiate, upon completing his test, receives “an everlasting crown of Truth. Blessed are they who set it on their heads; a Stone of Great Price it is; ... and Righteousness [cf. the Egyptian Maat] hath taken it and given it to you”—in Egypt, Maat conveys the crown—“and all those who shall be written in the book.”<sup>626</sup>

According to Rabbi Eliezer, each of the twelve tribes was represented by a stone on the breastplate of the high priest, and it was said that Joshua could tell which tribe had sinned when that tribe's stone was dim.<sup>627</sup> In the text known as the Pastor (or Shepherd) of Hermas, the members of the church are stones; each is tested at the gate, and those found to be “sons of iniquity” are cast aside.<sup>628</sup> The same idea meets us in an early Coptic writing: “Narrow is the gate through which the Lord leadeth His chosen, according to the word of the stone of truth, Matthew the Evangelist.”<sup>629</sup> The Stone of Truth is thus a stone of testing, like a touchstone: “And I found the Stone, the Great Interpreter. He took my hand and he gave us his,” says the gardener, describing how he met Jesus at the garden tomb on Easter morning, according to the very old *Gospel of Bartholomew*.<sup>630</sup>

J. Massingberd Ford calls the stone of Peter and Abraham “the Jewel of Discernment,”<sup>631</sup> thus lending belated support to Joseph Smith’s interpretation of John 1:42 JST: “Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a seer, or a stone.” The image of Peter the Rock, now viewed as an old and authentic Hebrew concept,<sup>632</sup> throws a new light on a remarkable account of the setting apart of Peter found in one of the oldest of Christian writings, the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, in which the Lord says to Peter, “Come to me on this stone, that I might give thee a blessing and a name in all the world.” Peter then sits on the stone; the Lord proceeds to pronounce over him something like the Opening of the Mouth formula: “Thy head shall never pain thee, neither shall thine eyes fail thee,” nor thy fingers falter, etc.<sup>633</sup> And the name he gives him is Peter—Seer Stone, Stone of

Truth. He gave him that name in return for Peter's recognition "that Jesus was Anointed,"<sup>634</sup> while the talk of gates and keys refers to the "much desired admission to ... the Temple," with special "contrast between the inescapable mass of the dead and the community of the living";<sup>635</sup> the whole episode must be viewed in "the Temple context," according to Vacher Burch.<sup>636</sup> There is much evidence that all-important Matthew 16:18–19 refers to temple work as understood by the Latter-day Saints.<sup>637</sup> The Coptic *Apocalypse of Adam* says that in the last days the righteous will be found "on a high mountain, upon a rock of truth (*hijn ou-petra nte-me*). Therefore they [the mountain and stone] will be named, 'The Words of Immortality and Truth.'"<sup>638</sup>

In all this we are dealing with a stone which, "like the Urim and Thummim, ... judges between good and evil," a "jewel of

discernment” which Ford equates with both the “precious … stone” of Isaiah 28:16 and the “stone … of offense” of Isaiah 8:14—22.<sup>639</sup> Also, the Babylonian “tablets of destiny may have been engraved precious stones like the Urim and the Thummim,”<sup>640</sup> reminding us that in Israel “the Tablets of [the] Law, as well as the Urim and Thummim … [were] the instrument[s] by which the will of the deity is communicated”—stones of truth.<sup>641</sup> “Only a high priest who was permeated with the Holy Spirit” could operate the Urim and Thummim.<sup>642</sup> There is evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls that a priest should be able to operate a Urim and Thummim in judgment but that if the priest is not expert, they should judge by lot, lots being another form of divination.<sup>643</sup> Even so, every man of truth may have his share of the Urim and Thummim coming down from Adam through the high priest: “A man of

discernment discerneth the Word, and the Law is faithful unto him as the Urim.”<sup>644</sup> Finally, we come down to the philosopher’s stone, from which the Arabic numerals and the alphabet and all the other basic aids to civilization are derived.<sup>645</sup> Joseph Smith carried out the economy of the stone even to the earth’s final state of glory when “this earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom … will be manifest to those who dwell on it. … Then the white stone mentioned in Revelation 2:17, will become a Urim and Thummim to each individual who receives one, whereby things pertaining to a higher order of kingdoms [even all kingdoms] will be made known. And a white stone is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom,

whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word” (D&C 130:9–11). In a famous Egyptian story, the great King Cheops is denied possession of the “seals” of the mysteries, which are hidden in the temple of On in a flint box called Testing.<sup>[646](#)</sup>

The stone is a source and transmitter not only of light, but also of *power*. It was no less than the symbol of high priestly authority. At his coronation, Solomon received the four stones of dominion from the angels; by them he ruled all animals and spirits on earth, and with them he could summon the angels, for on the first of the four was inscribed: “To God belongs the greatness and might.”<sup>[647](#)</sup> The Jewish doctors interpret Abraham’s stone as meaning that “Abraham had a sort of magnetic power, or possessed some extraordinary means of

healing all physical defects by his mere presence.”<sup>648</sup> This was represented as a stone that he wore suspended from his neck, “which possessed the power of healing the sick who looked upon it.”<sup>649</sup> Following the type of the primordial Adam, according to Geo Widengren, both the Phoenician and the Israelite ruler wore the heavenly tablets when they passed judgment, deciding the destinies of the world. They were fastened to his breast in a pouch in exactly the same manner as Marduk wore them in *Enuma Elish* IV, 121–22, and were the prototype of the Urim and Thummim.<sup>650</sup> Ingolf Friedrich has shown that a pectoral, adorned with jewels like the king’s pectoral, not only belonged to the pure priestly vestments of Israel, but, like the ephod and robe that went with it, exactly matched the ritual appointments worn in all Egyptian sacred functions.<sup>651</sup> Finally, as his “guarantee of

dominion (*Unterpfand des Reiches*)," the Byzantine emperor held a great round jewel at his coronation; this passed from the hands of the emperor Manuel Comnenus to appear again in the hands of Baldwin at his coronation as king of the Franks (who later became king of Jerusalem and, hence, of the world).<sup>652</sup> This was the sphere, globe, or *Reichsapfel* of clear crystal, the possession of which was thought to be both the symbol and source of world dominion in the Middle Ages.

## **Stone of Truth as a Foundation Stone**

The Stone of Truth is a *foundation stone*, as the cornerstone of the Hebrew scriptures was a pyramidion or sun-stone, Egyptian style,<sup>653</sup> the headstone of the corner.<sup>654</sup> As mentioned, Flusser designates the stones of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, of

Peter and Abraham, of the high priest's breastplate, of Revelation 21 and 1QS VIII, 1, all as *Grundsteine*, or foundation stones.<sup>655</sup> Ford sees in the precious stone, the Urim and Thummim, the ultimate foundation stone that provides the foothold in empty space which is the first prerequisite for creating anything—it is the temple, the pyramid.<sup>656</sup> There is a tradition that “the foundation-stone upon which God founded the True Temple—the *hagion kosmikon*, [i.e.] the World itself— ... was the ‘living Rock’—the patriarch Abraham.”<sup>657</sup>

This is the *eben šetiyyāh*, which was formed when twelve gems fused into one, which became the center of the earth and the center of the temple and has the name of the Messiah engraved on it: the knowledge of this made a man master of life and death; it is the navel of the earth, the pillar which becomes God's house.<sup>658</sup> When Jacob went

to Bethel to behold the three degrees of glory<sup>659</sup> and to receive the same ordinances that his father and grandfather had received there, he built his altar of twelve stones; then, according to Rabbi Eliezer, “Jacob returned and found the stones turned into one stone. . . . The Holy One placed his right foot and sank the stone to the bottom of the depths, and he made it the keystone of the earth, just like a man who sets a keystone in an arch; therefore it is called the *foundation* stone.”<sup>660</sup> As God sits in the heavens, the doctors report, there is before him the archetype and model of the temple, “with the Glory of God in the middle of it: a costly stone on the altar having the name of the Messiah engraved on it, and the stone was supported by the Spirit of God.”<sup>661</sup> Compare this with the striking parallel in Moses 7:53: “I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the Rock of Heaven, which is broad as eternity.”

In the Book of Two Ways the initiate must draw a complex of creation figures on the ground “with a special kind of stone.”<sup>662</sup> Among the Quraish was a tradition that there were two jewels of paradise, the *rukñ* (support, foundation, elemental substance) and the *maqām*, and that God extinguished the light of them, which would otherwise have completely outshone all other lights.<sup>663</sup> Another account tells how when God proposed the creation, he ordered the angels, “Build me forthwith, in a direct line downward to the earth, a temple,” that sinners may obtain mercy; then he gave Adam a diamond of paradise, which at the fall became the black stone.<sup>664</sup> The diamond of Adam, which served as a cornerstone in the first temple, and the emphasis on the four gates of that temple<sup>665</sup> present a striking analogy to a charm in a Twentieth-Dynasty papyrus in which Seth as the evil serpent

“speaks against the four bricks of crystal,” two of which were broken in certain year-rites at Heliopolis.<sup>666</sup> Likewise only the high priest could wear and operate the twelve stones; he who “on his breast ... wore the oracle of God, as it is called, on which twelve stones of different kinds were inset, fastened together with gold. ... On his head he wore a tiara. ... This creates such awe ... as to make one feel that one has come into the presence of a man who belonged to a different world.”<sup>667</sup> The important Coptic Codex Brucianus recalls that Adam is the shining man and that the stone which is identified with him is the diamond, “the shining stone,” which became the cornerstone of the temple.<sup>668</sup> The Muslims have a related tradition that says that at the creation God gave to Adam a diamond of paradise that turned black because of human depravity and so became the famous Black

Stone of the Ka‘ba.<sup>669</sup> It was believed that the pectoral of the high priest in Israel had been worn by Adam<sup>670</sup> and that Adam himself was originally “transparent like crystal” so that, “just as we see through the air, so in the beginning Adam could see through the earth”<sup>671</sup>—as if it were a great Urim and Thummim.

Once in a study entitled “Strange Ships and Shining Stones,” we pointed out that the sixteen glassy stones of the brother of Jared’s handiwork would not shine in the dark until the finger of the Lord had touched them (Ether 3:4–6; 5:2–3); after that they were luminous, the symbol of God’s presence, since he had actually touched them.<sup>672</sup> Even so, the Urim and Thummim and the twelve stones “are a symbol of God’s presence.”<sup>673</sup> It has commonly been held that Urim means nothing less than light,<sup>674</sup> and the shining quality of the jewels

is constantly referred to: “The twelve shall shine in the judgment of the Urim and Thummim.”<sup>675</sup> In the Mandaean initiation the Proven One says: “If it please Thee, Great (Life), We will set up a pure Crystal … and arcane (secret things) that are written within it Shall be established, [and] … one by one Will come into being. There will be a Pearl that will enlighten darkened hearts.”<sup>676</sup> One is reminded that as Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by aid of the Urim and Thummim, “in the darkness the spiritual light would shine.”<sup>677</sup> The Urim and Thummim as well as the word *zohar* were often referred to as precious shining stones that led the righteous safely in dark and dangerous places.<sup>678</sup> The Stone of Truth gives light.

The Stone of Truth (Maat) in our text is necessarily a shining stone, for “Maat seems to signify ‘reality’ on one hand, and ‘light’ on the other....Light created all reality. Maat ...

is this reality.”<sup>679</sup> The prehistoric symbol of Maat is the *maat*-stone, shaped like a chisel, that being the hieroglyph with which her name is written; the stone was cut in a special way and mounted in the walls of the oldest temples to direct the rays of the sun for ritual purposes. Thus, as Wolhart Westendorf informs us, Maat is, before all else, the conveyor of light, especially the sun’s light, to men in holy places.<sup>680</sup>

Theophrastus tells us that the king of Egypt received a huge emerald (*smaragdon*) from the king of Babylon and that such a gem was set “in the obelisk of Zeus”—that is, the sun-stone, or *bnbn*, at Heliopolis, the prehistoric center of solar worship in Egypt.<sup>681</sup> The Egyptians, who saw in luminosity the very essence of divinity, strove to achieve miraculous lighting effects in ritual, covering sacred images with “effluorescent salt of unusual composition”

to make them shine<sup>682</sup> and making use of luminescent stones that would shine for a while in the dark after being exposed to sunlight.<sup>683</sup> Pliny says that they devised other means as well of capturing and conveying the sun's light, notably by the obelisk, a static or solid solar ray between heaven and earth. King Mespheres, who ruled at Heliopolis, had a dream, according to Pliny, in which he was commanded to build an obelisk of light-conveying stone, and King Sesothes followed his example.<sup>684</sup>

The whole mystique of the shining stones is reflected in early Mormon doctrine: "With truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. ... The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed" (D&C 88:7, 13).<sup>685</sup> This last is what the Egyptians would

call Maat, she being the light-bringer who represents “the law by which all things are governed.”

To match the Egyptian sun-stones, the Hebrew *eben tōbāh* and the *margālît* (jewel or pearl) were two miraculous healing stones (though some say they were one and the same), which Abraham always wore around his neck and which, upon his death, God “attached … to the wheel of the sun”<sup>686</sup> so that the healing power now resides in the sun’s rays.<sup>687</sup> A damaged passage from Qumran Cave 4 reads, “Its interpretation concerns the twelve [...] giving light in accordance with the Urim and Thummim [...] that are lacking from them like the sun in all its light.”<sup>688</sup>

## **Stone of Truth as a Stone of Washing**

In the *Odes of Solomon*, that ancient

Christian writing which presents so many striking points of resemblance to our Book of Breathings, we see one standing on the Stone of Truth while being washed, just at the moment that the sun wakens to life.<sup>689</sup> one then puts on a new garment of light, while the Lord, who is “like the Sun[,] shines upon his face. ... My nostrils enjoyed the pleasant odor of the Lord.”<sup>690</sup> Hence when the hymn singer of Qumran cries, “My feet are on the rock,”<sup>691</sup> it may be the “rock of truth” on which the initiate is “established,” as in the ode. There is no better known parallel to this than the primal initiation of Adam and Eve, who stood on special stones in the Jordan and the Tigris, respectively, while the waters washed over them during the night; they emerged from their bath at sunrise.<sup>692</sup> Classical and even European literature is full of parallels, such as Herakles’ being initiated in the Alpheus and the well-known

Druid initiation; but it suffices here to show that the idea goes back as far as the Egyptians. Cyril of Jerusalem describes the Christian convert at the moment of his baptism as fleeing “to the mountain, to Jesus Christ, the stone cut without hands and filling the whole world,” where the “cut stone (*tmēthenta lithon*)” is the precious stone (*timēthena lithon*).<sup>693</sup>

## Green and White: Canonical Colors

The Egyptian sacred stone is either white or green or both. Most often it is green.<sup>694</sup> The candidate is named “Stone of Truth” as he is cleansed or declared clean by Two Ladies, having been just washed with water by two others, Edjo and Nekhbet, both of whom are represented by green plants symbolic of the life that sustains the cosmos itself.<sup>695</sup> Anyone entering an Egyptian temple

had to undergo ritual ablutions “in a shallow tank or bath,” or squatting or standing “upon a stone pedestal.” Such a pedestal has been found at Karnak (fig. 55); it bears an inscription specifying that it was to be used by priests to purify themselves before they officiated in a temple. It was of alabaster, and the inscription read: “Purification-pedestal of alabaster of Hatnub, for the use of the priests, that he may make an ‘endowment-with-life like Re forever.’”<sup>696</sup>

Giuseppe Botti has pointed out that the Stone of Truth in the Book of Breathings is definitely connected with renewal by washing and calls attention to a parallel document in which the ceremonial foot washing is done “in a silver basin on a foundation of turquoise.”<sup>697</sup> A Greek visitor got the impression that “the Egyptians worship ... a foot-washing basin or stand (*podoniptra*).”<sup>698</sup>

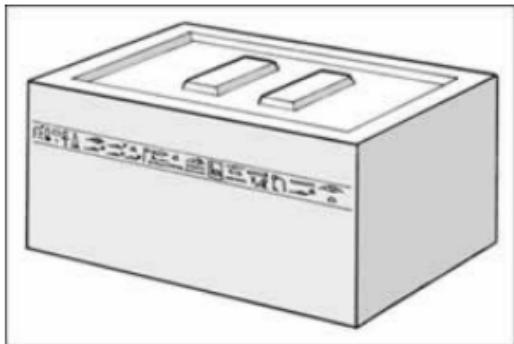


Figure 55. This polished alabaster block supported the priests as they stood upon it to be washed and anointed. Reconstruction. Temple at Karnak, ca. 1000 B.C.

Turquoise, being green, has the same life-giving power as the lady Edjo, the Green One.<sup>699</sup> “The green stone of Upper Egypt was snake-colored, the best of all stones of the mountain. It is the papyrus because nothing is better than papyrus.” If papyrus is a water plant, its counterpart is the green stone: “A green-stone amulette will not grow in water, and a papyrus stalk will not grow in the desert”; and, just as the papyrus is compared with the green fruit of the persea tree, the most valuable thing in Egypt, so the

green malachite of the desert represents the green grain fields that are the life of Egypt. “Fair is (the word) green. ... He says: The stalk is nourishment and preserves all mankind alive.”<sup>700</sup> The *nmh=f*-stone found on mummies must be both very hard and green to symbolize “lush vegetation encroaching on the red aridity of the desert, as well as moral and physical stability.”<sup>701</sup> So the life-giving washing and the green stone are tied in many ways. The *hrp*-scepter, the supreme symbol of administrative power in earthly affairs, was originally of reed or papyrus and hence was green.<sup>702</sup>

“O Papyrus-plant which issued from Wedjōyet [the Green One], you have gone forth in the King, and the King has gone forth in you, the King is powerful through your strength.”<sup>703</sup> The marvelous *Jalakānta* stone of Hindu tradition was a shining stone that

enabled one to pass through the waters; it was a banded stone of green and white, and when the stripes crossed, the stone was able to protect against poison or the dangers of any water crossing.<sup>704</sup> The migrating Horus, coming to Egypt for the first time, had such a stone: “Bring me my eye,” he cries, referring to a carnelian stone, “that it may open up the waters, the ship-lady who opens up the lakes.”<sup>705</sup> Likewise, the *nmḥ=f*-talisman of the Book of the Dead is a very hard green stone which “is never overwhelmed in the water.”<sup>706</sup> It was in the rites of the newborn sun that the red carnelian eye (the sun low on the horizon) turned into the green faience eye,<sup>707</sup> for green symbolizes both the overcoming of “the red aridity of the desert” by living verdure and the moral and physical stability (*wʒd*) of the world order;<sup>708</sup> it represents the greening of the landscape after the redness of the dawn.<sup>709</sup> The wounded red

eye of Horus, upon healing, becomes the proper *wedjat*-eye, the word meaning perfect, sound, flourishing, and green after rising from the waters.<sup>710</sup> As the oil of anointing makes “green,”<sup>711</sup> so in clothing “the green bandlet … with its greenness, it maketh perfect … it maketh green those who are in its greenness, and one reneweth his youth through it.”<sup>712</sup> While the garments of the light-seeking candidate are necessarily pure white, the green absorbs the red, leaving only white and green as the canonical colors of the temple.

Sethe discovers in the First Dynasty a ritual in which white was identified as the *Nationalfarbe*, or state color, of the kingdom of Hierakonpolis in the south, while green and red were the colors of Buto in the north; yet the Red Crown, *dšr.t*, Sethe notes, is called *wʒd.t*, the Green One, in some Pyramid Texts.<sup>713</sup> “I abhor red (*dšrw*,

contention)," says a Coffin Text,<sup>714</sup> and another tells how the fiery red of conflict is quenched, "red" and "anger" being the same word (*dšrw*), according to Zandee.<sup>715</sup> What came just before the Opening of the Mouth, it will be recalled, was the washing and anointing, for which one stood on a special stone of green and white. The fabulous pyrophilus stone was green and white, and while it bore the name of "Firestone," its special function was to help its holder pass safely through the waters.<sup>716</sup> The impressive background of this odd combination is found in a great deal of folklore, noted by Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, in which, at the creation, a green fire under the foundation stone in some way destroys all impure elements.<sup>717</sup> Rabbi Aqiba condemns the popular custom in Israel of crying, "Water! Water! ... whenever you find stones of pure alabaster" (using the Egyptian word

*šiš* for alabaster),<sup>718</sup> the idea being that white alabaster is “the link between water and earth.”<sup>719</sup> Green and white stones occur in a number of ritual texts, in which they consistently serve (1) to identify the initiate as a living and growing entity and (2) in some way to combat heat or fire, exercising peculiar power in both offices.<sup>720</sup>

The Book of the Dead contains passages identifying the green stone with the Stone of Truth. Thus chapter 105 (one of those included in the fragments of the Joseph Smith Papyri—number IV) is very close to our Breathings text as the dead person speaks: “Homage to thee, my *ka*. In my lifetime (*or at my arising*), behold, I have come to thee, appearing in glory; a *ba* am I, endowed with power, initiated (*bs*). I have brought to thee *bd* and *sntr* that I may cleanse thy parts with them, thy limbs (*sn.t*) being knit. Those evil things which I have said, those impure ('*bw*)

things which I have done, there shall now be a recompense for them. For I am the green stone *wadj*-amulet, the protector of the throat of Re, giving verdure to the inhabitants of the horizon. As I am green, so they are green; as my *ka* is green (*or* flourishing), so they are green; my arising (*or* lifetime) is green like them; the nourishment (*dfȝ.w*, food offerings) of my *ka* is like theirs. He who is weighed in the balance, may his righteousness ascend to the nose of Re in the day when my *ka* is there.”<sup>721</sup>

The green apotropaic amulet at the throat of Re certainly suggests both the green-stone Maat pendant, which every Egyptian judge wore around his neck, and the thick cedar wreath, which every Hopi kachina dancer must wear for strength and protection.

In Book of the Dead 159, “a *wadj*-column of green feldspar,” signifying that the wearer “has taken possession of the magic power of

his father," is placed on the neck of the subject "as a symbol of verdure and eternal youth."<sup>722</sup> An inscription on such a *wadj-* column of green feldspar states that the object shows that the wearer is without physical defect and that the green feldspar is that which never dries out (*swšr, sšr*).<sup>723</sup> The strange and baffling rite in Book of the Dead 125, in which a green stone of glass and a flaming torch are smashed, extinguished, and buried, has been interpreted by Thausing,<sup>724</sup> Barguet,<sup>725</sup> and Mayassis.<sup>726</sup> What they are agreed on is that the rites represent the renunciation of all earthly passions and desires by the candidate, who thereby proves himself to be an initiate of Osiris.<sup>727</sup> It is an act of consecration.

## Locating the Duat (Dat)

**Line 18:** "Thou enterest into the *duat (dat, dwat)* in a state of perfect purity (*lit. in*

great[est] purification, or as purified greatly”

*Duat* (or *dat*) is usually translated simply as underworld. “Although the texts differ in regard to the position of the *dʒ.t.*,” writes Zandee, in the Pyramid Texts, “*Dʒ.t* and *Nwn* are a Sheol . . . , a dark subterranean realm of the dead, where the inhabitants lead a gloomy existence.”<sup>728</sup> But not always. The original meaning of *dwʒ* is “to worship in the morning,” and properly, “Duat is the morning star, hence the starry heaven itself, only later becoming the underworld.”<sup>729</sup> Selim Hassan suggests that it was at the end of the Sixth Dynasty when the “Paradise of the royal dead” in the sky was “brought down to the *Dwʒt* for the delight of the followers of Osiris” and that only later did the priests develop the *duat* “into a veritable hell of fire and darkness”;<sup>730</sup> and it was not until the New Kingdom that “the original solar *Dwʒt*

has been placed in the underworld and regarded as a place of gloom in which Osiris (*Wsîr*) dwells.”<sup>731</sup>

From the beginning, Egyptologists found the Egyptian hereafter disturbingly divided between heaven and hell. Even in the Pyramid Texts, according to Speleers, “It is not always possible to discern with certainty whether certain terms apply particularly to heaven, to earth, or to both at once.”<sup>732</sup> In the Amduat, the adversary of the god, Apophis, is overcome “in the Dat, in this cavern, although his place is in the sky.”<sup>733</sup> In the Berlin companion to our Book of Breathings, while Horus “flies to heaven, earth, and the underworld,” four parallel verses relate the dead at the same time to heaven and the underworld.<sup>734</sup> There might be a solution in the suggestion that “the *Dwȝt* was situated in the Heavens” and can be seen in the red glow before sunrise, being that mysterious

region of transition just below and above the horizon.<sup>735</sup> Thus in the Amduat the first hour of night is set in “the first fields of the Dat,” and yet it is not in the underworld, but in a desert which serves as a sort of “in-between realm (*Zwischenreich*).”<sup>736</sup>

On the other hand, Hornung notes that, according to the Amduat, the *duat* is located outside of *both* the funerary and celestial realms, in a region of outer darkness which the sun never visits in his course, “a vast, chaotic unreality with which the gods ... have nothing to do since dominion is possible only in an ordered universe.”<sup>737</sup>

Taking the opposite view from Hornung, Bergman holds that the *duat* comprises all that is *inside* the cartouche that represents what the sun encompasses in his journeying, the cartouche itself being actually the symbol of the *duat*.<sup>738</sup>

The identification of the *duat* with the

necropolis is misleading because of the natural tendency to view the latter as the most static of places, the end of all roads, after which there is nothing to be done or said. On the contrary, in all its contexts the *duat* is, before all else, a place *through* which one journeys, following the example of the sun, who enters and leaves it daily;<sup>739</sup> even so, “the deceased, identifying himself with the Sun-god, enters the *Dwȝt* paying homage to Osiris (*Wsir*) and at the same time lightening the darkness with his rays of light, just as we see *R* ‘ in his Solar-boat.’”<sup>740</sup>

Following the example of the sun-god, the king descends to the *duat*, not to remain, but to bring his light to each of the dark chambers in turn, teach those who are there, draw them to him, and conduct them out to the light.<sup>741</sup> Of course, this irresistibly suggests the *descensus* motif of the early Christian writings, with the bringing of a

great light “to them that sit in darkness”  
(Luke 1:79).

## A Series of Washings?

**Line 18:** “in a state of perfect (great) purity (*or* as very pure; *m w'b wr*, *or* with the great purification) with which the Two Maats have washed thee in the great (main, broad) hall (*or* court)”<sup>742</sup>

Does this refer to a special ordinance, a washing supreme among others?

**Lines 19–20:** “There has been performed for thee, yea, there has been performed for thee a washing in the Hall (*or* Court) of Geb; thy members have been purified in the Hall (*or* Court) of Shu”

The repetition seems to be intentional and strengthens the impression that we have here a rhetorical repetition, or parallelism for emphasis, rather than reference to four

separate washings in four separate halls.<sup>743</sup> In the companion text to this, Book of the Dead 125, the Hall of the Two Maats is, appropriately, a law court in which the candidate is cleared of all moral turpitude, just as he is cleansed of all impurity.<sup>744</sup> Thus *sw 'b.tw=k* is paralleled by *sm3 '-hrw*, meaning “declaring or recognizing the candidate as justified or purified” rather than indicating a repetition of ordinances.<sup>745</sup>

## The Hall of Geb and the Hall of Shu (Creation Room)

**Line 19:** “the (broad) Hall of Geb”

The broad hall or court (*wsh.t*) was, in early times, a place where supreme legal decisions were made.<sup>746</sup> The possibility that there may have been two washings in Halls of the Two Ladies and also in Halls of Geb and Shu receives some support from the rites

adumbrated in Papyrus Salt 825, requiring four separate buildings, incarnations of Geb, Nut, Isis, and Nephthys.<sup>747</sup> Since Isis and Nephthys are often identified with the Two Maats, and since Nut is the wife and counterpart of Shu, these houses—primitive huts placed to the four quarters of the compass—may well be our four washing rooms. It was in the body of Nut (or his father, Shu) that the candidate began his career, emerging from “the womb of Nut” to be received and washed, oiled, clothed, and fed by the Two Ladies, Edjo and Nekhbet, often identified in this capacity with Isis and Nephthys. In the version of Papyrus Salt 825, Isis and Nephthys have the office of protecting the newly born initiate,<sup>748</sup> while Nut is “hidden in his [sic] secrets” and Geb is “hidden in his form.”<sup>749</sup>

**Lines 19–20:** “in the (broad) Hall (or Court)

of Shu”

Shu, “clothed with the breath of life as with a garment,” also belongs in the washing room.<sup>750</sup> Shu takes us back another step beyond Geb in the nature of things. If Geb is the earth in its very beginning, Shu is the force that filled the immensity of space before ever Geb was. It was Shu and Tefnut of the skies who begot Geb and Nut, the local earth and heaven.<sup>751</sup> Before Geb “crowded him out and replaced him,”<sup>752</sup> Shu was the proper “father of the gods”<sup>753</sup> and is represented as the oldest father of all, the perfect primordial king (fig. 56).<sup>754</sup> Ombos, the oldest Egyptian shrine, was his; his father fled there from his enemies, and there Shu slew those enemies, taking the form of Horus with the spear.<sup>755</sup> Thus Shu as Horus is, like Geb, the royal successor and transmitter of kingship.<sup>756</sup> A temple inscription of Ramses

II designates Shu as the son of Re-Atum and brother of the king, both being sons of Re; Pharaoh, like Shu, exalts the heaven in a rite carried out symbolically with the king standing before Shu. The rite is called “the holding-up of heaven” (see p. 338, fig. 105),<sup>757</sup> for Shu, as the substance and support of the heavens, provides the ultimate groundwork of all physical being—everything necessarily begins with him.<sup>758</sup> “I am Shu whom Atum-Re created. . . . I was not formed in the womb, I was not composed in the egg; I was not born of normal birth; . . . my sister Tefnut . . . came forth from my back”—this taking place while Shu was asleep during Atum’s creative work.<sup>759</sup> The parallel with Eve’s appearance is obvious.

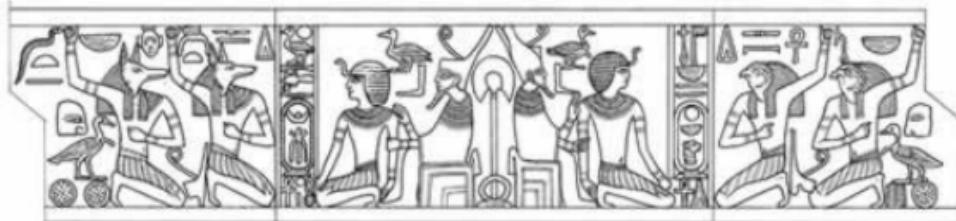


Figure 56. The god Geb, here shown twice in the center, acknowledges his son with a gesture of paternal affection. Rollout drawing of a gold and lapis lazuli bracelet of Ahmose presented to his queen, Ah-hotep, ca. 1540 B.C. Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

Shu represents the mystery of space, which cannot be empty since life passes through it. He is the light- and life-conveying ether or air that fills the space between heaven and earth.<sup>760</sup> His name is written with the symbol of the feather, šw, denoting both air and the rays of the sun,<sup>761</sup> both air and light being spiritual qualities. Thus we read, “I am Shu born to Atum; clothed with the breath of life, I go forth according to the word of Atum [the feather also represents justice—Maat], providing a wind on my ways. I make the sky’s light after the darkness.”<sup>762</sup> The feather is the perfect embodiment of “the sweet and refreshing breeze, the vibrant light scattering the darkness”—hence, of life-giving light,

truth, and justice. When the king emerges from the chamber representing the *duat*, he comes like a wind, “bearing Maat with him”; and as he comes, he sends out “an explosion” of light as the son of Shu.<sup>763</sup> In his complex but lucid capacity as god of air, wind, breath, and light, Shu is designated in our *Breathings* papyrus by the double symbol of the feather and the downward radiating solar disk, for he is called “the image of Re, who sits in the inmost apple of his father’s eye” (fig. 57)—in the midst of the solar disk, of which he is the emanating light—hence, also, “his name is Aton.”<sup>764</sup>



Figure 57. Facsimile 2 in the Joseph Smith Papyri was designed to represent the pupil of an eye, ca. 170 B.C. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

As the master of space, Shu is the intermediary between the worlds: "O ye

eight *Hhw*. . . which Shu created, . . . tie the ladder of Atum (or Shu) to meet your Father who is in me.”<sup>765</sup> This offers a nice problem of priority. The eight *Hhw* were the Seekers (*hh*), the eternal ones (*hh*), “who embrace heaven in their arms; who hold together heaven, the middle region (*zkr*), and the earth (*gb*). Shu begot you. . . I am the *ba* of Shu . . . who leaves heaven when I please and go down to earth when I please, being met and greeted by the gods” (fig. 58).<sup>766</sup> In the archaic rites of Abydos, Shu is the one who spans the space between heaven and earth.<sup>767</sup> All space was thought to come together at the binding point of his temple, encircled by eight tent shrines marking the major points of the compass and facing the central shrine.<sup>768</sup> Since Shu is the self-shining light of the sky, he accounts for the radiance of the sky after sunset and before sunrise, which may be caused by zodiacal light as well as

sunlight;<sup>769</sup> he makes “the hues of the sky which rise up, the wind at dawn,” all the restless and spectacular changes in the heavens before sunrise.<sup>770</sup> If it is Shu who gives the breath of life to his successor “by the breath of his own mouth,”<sup>771</sup> it is also “Shu, secreted in the disk,” whose solar blasts destroy the wicked: “I am Shu who makes ashes of your corpses”;<sup>772</sup> he is the destroying flame of lust,<sup>773</sup> but also the physical “flame, heating (illuminating) the heaven, making light for the heavens, illuminating *Hh.w*, lightning of the heavens! Tie the ladder that I might ascend and reach the repose of” the sons of Shu. “O he who swallows the breath of the mouth of Shu, blow forth the wind which is on the mouth of Shu!”<sup>774</sup>

The next clause may be a dependent clause: “where you are about to see ... (*iw=k hpr m33*).” In view of the nature and

functions of Geb and Shu, it would seem that the dramatization that follows, the creation of man, takes place in the creation room—the Hall of Geb and Shu.

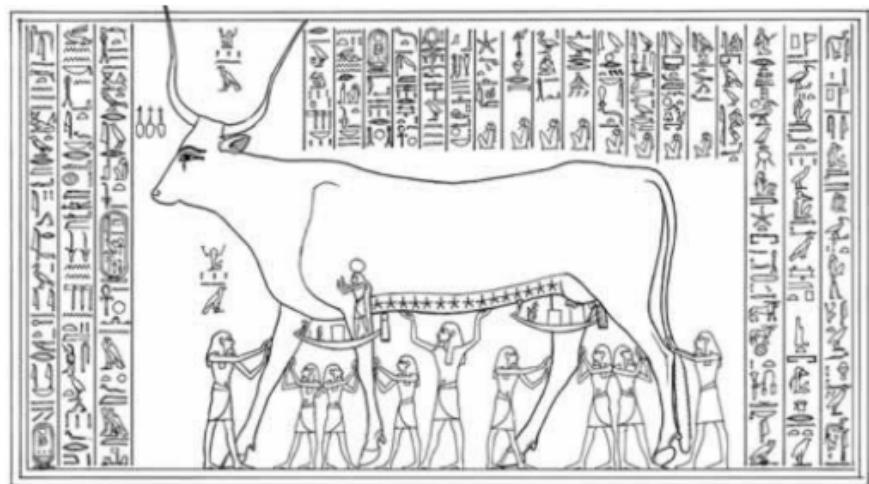


Figure 58. The eight *Hh.w* gods, along with Shu, support the four legs of the heavenly cow, representing the four corners of the world. The two solar boats float in the heavens among the stars on her belly. Redrawn from a photograph and drawings of the golden shrine of Tutankhamun, ca. 1330 B.C.

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# The Creation (Resurrection) of Man

**Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 20–22**

- 20 (1/20). . . . Thou art about to behold Re in his coming down, Atum in the evening; Amon is at thy side, bestowing upon thee  
21. breath (of life), while Ptah forms thy body (members). Thou enterest (*or that thou mayest enter*) the horizon in company with Re; they receive (*or that they may receive*) thy *ba*  
22. into the *nšm.t*-bark along with Osiris. They deify (sanctify, exalt) thy *ba* in the House (*or Hall*) of Geb; thou art justified for time and eternity.

# Commentary: Dramatic Presentations in the Temple

**Line 20:** “Thou art about to behold (*or herewith you behold, next you see*) Re in his coming down”<sup>1</sup>

All preparations being in order, the candidate proceeds to another room, the “‘House of Gold,’ i.e., the sarcophagus chamber”<sup>2</sup> (the Hall of Geb and Shu—i.e., the creation room); the show, so to speak, is about to begin (fig. 59; see color plate 6). It is an abrupt change of subject; the washing and anointing, about which so much fuss has been made up to this point, are not mentioned again. The transfer from one setting or room to another during the rites could, however, “be carried out merely in a symbolic way (*ein Ortswechsel also nur symbolisch vorgenommen*).”<sup>3</sup>



Figure 59. The subject greets Ptah, the Creator, with rejoicing (“expansion of heart”). JSP IV (BD 106). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

According to Joachim Spiegel, the first half of the rites celebrated in the pyramid of Unas presenting “the mythical process” of the resurrection took the form of a complete dramatic presentation (*vollständig dramatisch*) in the manner of a “mystery play,” with stage, props, and actors (see p. 119, fig. 30).<sup>4</sup> The Osiris drama was “a mixture of dogmas, enigmas, and mysteries,” as Plutarch found it, or doctrines, symbols, and drama requiring a special interpreter.<sup>5</sup> But it was a real drama. The first of “the four cultic principles,” as Claas Bleeker sees

them, is dramatic presentation, the other three being the mythic-ritual material presented, the magical tenor of the thing, and the prevailing mood of mystery.<sup>6</sup> Though the illusion of the otherworldly and of passing from one state to another could be effected by dreams and drugs,<sup>7</sup> still, form and discipline are essential to cult; and if the initiates are all to follow faithfully in the true path, they should all experience the same things. The initiate is invited to ponder *ta deiknymena kai dromena* (what is both explained and acted out in the temple).<sup>8</sup> For the Egyptian, nature itself was a stage for the self-dramatizing life of Horus.<sup>9</sup> In the mysteries, priests become actors.<sup>10</sup>

“Egyptian ritual texts,” according to Dieter Müller, “abound in … ‘functional’ self-predication”—that is, in speeches in which a deity introduces himself or herself as an actor in a play.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the formula “I am Thoth” means, according to Siegfried Schott, that the speech that follows is spoken by one playing the role of Thoth in a ritual drama—usually the lector-priest, for which reason one is justified in seeing in the Egyptian “art of the lector-priest” the art of acting.<sup>12</sup> Wolfgang Helck points out that even the ancient Ramesseum drama, though performed on the eve of the *sed*-festival, which required a funeral, was not a real royal funeral, but only a dramatized one.<sup>13</sup> The Egyptian text carved on the Shabako stone is the story of the creation, a drama in which certain key scenes were presented by actors, while the story as a whole was recited and explained to the temple audience by a lector-priest or, as Kurt Sethe frankly designates him, *Theaterdirektor*.<sup>14</sup> According to Iamblichus, the message of the Egyptian mysteries was conveyed by a mixture of mimes and

symbols in which one thing could represent another;<sup>15</sup> the lessons are neither spoken outright, he says, nor concealed, but are indicated by signs and tokens.<sup>16</sup> Any means of conveying the message was acceptable, if duly modest and effective; statues and even puppets were useful.<sup>17</sup> If a statue could represent the deceased, “perhaps a priest sat down to partake vicariously of the food” brought to the statue itself.<sup>18</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, in the beginning of his *Lectures on Mysteries*, maintains that “seeing is much better than hearing for these things, … to take you out of this perplexity (*peira*) and lead you to the brighter and more fragrant meadows of this paradise.”<sup>19</sup>

“A ‘coherent account of creation’ is lacking” in Egyptian because what happened was described “not in a dogma but in cultic forms,” which are “narrative by nature and … completely void of any contemplative

tendencies.”<sup>20</sup> It is straight narrative that is being told in these dramatic presentations, often containing more reality than symbol. The temple drama is not a dramatized myth, but the other way round—myth is a later attempt to explain a drama, the literal content of which was no longer understood;<sup>21</sup> it is a “*literary treatment*” of “divine *history*.<sup>22</sup> It all began, supposedly, not with speculation but with real happenings. The rites and stories are for nothing more remarkable than the absolute lack of invention and creativity they reveal; once the story was told in the beginning, “no one ever claims to produce anything really new.”<sup>23</sup>

According to Hellmut Brunner, “creation stories are a focal point of Egyptian religious literature, … the very spring of life (*Lebensquell*) of pharaonic Egypt.”<sup>24</sup> Even in “the dramatic presentation at the tomb,” the deceased appears as Horus receiving his

kingdom from “Atum, father of the gods,” in the heavenly council at the creation.<sup>25</sup> In telling how things begin, the Egyptians take liberties with the characters and props and episodes of the play, but they never invent new ones; and if it is “permissible to equate individual elements (*Glieder*) by swapping one for the other,”<sup>26</sup> it is because they are familiar and readily recognized—no one is fooled by the taking of such liberties.

## **Creation of the Earth and Creation of Man**

In our short Book of Breathings version, it is the creation of *man* that receives the emphasis. The creation of the earth itself—the main theme of the Shabako stone—receives more attention in the longer Breathings text Leiden T 32, with references to the council in heaven and the planning of the creation. The prologue in heaven is

treated in the latter as a spectacle viewed by the initiate: “You have watched the ceremony ... in Busiris and Abydos. ... You witnessed the divine Son taking over the inheritance of his father, in the night when the primordial gods met together,” etc.<sup>27</sup> “Your name was called out at the celebration in heaven on the day that the sheaf was bound. ... You rested on the first, sixth, and fifteenth days of the month, worshipping Osiris on the day of the New Moon.”<sup>28</sup> Such combinations<sup>29</sup> combine various archaic creation motifs,<sup>30</sup> which occur in older texts.<sup>31</sup> In the temples of Edfu and Esna, the forecourt of the temple was the scene of the creation drama.<sup>32</sup> For “the origin of the sacred domain was conceived as a definite act of creation of the Earth which resulted in the origin of the temple.”<sup>33</sup> The rites which marked the ascension of the king to the throne and demonstrated the legitimacy of his power to the world

represented the restoring of Egypt according to the original divine plan—not only this, but the officiating pharaoh claimed to be actually repeating the creation of the world:

“Everything the king does is creation.”<sup>34</sup> Or, as Henri Frankfort put it, “The concepts of creation, sunrise, and kingly rule are continually merged.”<sup>35</sup> It is interesting that a fundamental religious activity of the ancient Hebrews was going up to the temple “to read the story of Creation.”<sup>36</sup>

Staged in the temple and pivoting about the king, the creation story is concerned equally with the creation of the earth and the creation of man as episodes of the same miraculous process, whose miraculous result none can deny. The story of the earth’s creation does not, of course, begin on the earth but is taken back to another setting and then brought down to earth and continued. Our Breathings text introduces the creation motif with

celestial visitors coming to establish man on the earth, the creation drama of the preexistence carrying over into the new world with the involvement of the creators in the creation and launching of the human race.

## The Creator Gods Re Comes Down

*Lines 20–21:* “Re in his coming down, Atum in the evening; Amon is at thy side, ... while Ptah forms thy body (members)”

Here are four creator-gods when we expect a triad, the three creators of hermetic tradition.<sup>37</sup> As Herman te Velde has recently shown, the importance of trinities of gods in Egyptian theology is not, as has been supposed, “an illusion of modern scholars preoccupied with Christian trinitarian doctrine” but was an attempt “to answer the problem of divine plurality and unity,”<sup>38</sup> a

problem that still baffles the Christians. What spoils our triad here is Amon, who has to be given a place because this is a Theban recension of the story and Amon is all-in-all at Thebes; but as Jean-Claude Goyon shows, the document is really Memphite, as the prominence of Atum and Ptah makes clear: indeed, in the Memphite theology “Atum is Ptah the ancient,” the same creator who bestows life in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony.<sup>39</sup> The multiplicity of creators may be attributed to the common courtesy of recognizing the offices of age-old and high-ranking deities of the great shrines of Egypt, but in doing so a pattern of three is consistently followed: “Thou enterest thy palace like Atum . . . enters his horizon, thou sittest at the head of thy hall like Horus on his throne. Thou hast appeared on thy sedan chair of the Sed Festival like Re at the beginning of the year” (fig. 60).<sup>40</sup> Goyon

finds the clearest expression of the system right in our *Breathings* text: "My throne is Heliopolis, my seat is Memphis, my dwelling is Hermopolis," paying due homage to Atum-Re, Ptah, and Thoth respectively.<sup>41</sup> "Three are all gods," says a famous hymn to Amon, "Amon, Re, and Ptah. ... Their cities on earth are ... Thebes, Heliopolis, and Memphis."<sup>42</sup> Not surprisingly, this comes from a Theban hymn to Amon, who in our *Breathings* text appears as something of an intruder in the old, classic northern trinity of Atum, Re, and Ptah. Yet from very early times, the drama of creation and resurrection was presented along the royal progress route in Egypt, principally "at the three great capitals of the land: Heliopolis, Memphis, Thebes," with the king himself playing leading roles.<sup>43</sup> At Heliopolis, the chief primal god and creator was Atum; at Memphis, it was Ptah; and at

Thebes, Amon (Min in the earliest times), while Re was, from the Fourth Dynasty on, the supreme god common to all of them. With the same royal troupe acting the same play everywhere, it is easy to see how the four great gods, if they ever were separate, would have to learn to live with each other.



Figure 60. Two hawk-headed deities carry the pharaoh in a unique sedan chair made of the hieroglyph representing the *sed*-festival.

Reconstructed drawing from festival hall of Thutmose III, Karnak, ca. 1450 B.C.

Erik Hornung explains such name juggling by Frankfort's statement that "the god" is always "the god with whom you have to reckon in the circumstances,"<sup>44</sup> and he compares the system with the chemist's chains of elements, which can be formed as needed and broken up again into their intact elements, from which new chains can be made.<sup>45</sup> Thus Amon-Re is not a synthesis of Amon and Re but a new entity (*Gestalt*) existing beside the other two: Re is *in* Amon, but each retains his complete identity.<sup>46</sup> Any one of the four gods in our text will illustrate the principle.

Thus men are enjoined to recite or perform (*iri*) and thereby realize "all the words of Tem [Atum]," —for instance, "I am Atum when he was alone, I having come into being in the Nw (celestial regions or waters). I am Re when he appears in glory in the beginning, this one who rules for him. Who,

then, is this? It is Re in the beginning, ... appearing in glory as a king (at his coronation). ... Nw, whose name brought forth the Great Council (*psd.t*) of the gods.” Who is this? Re, whose name created “their members who became his Followers. ... It is Atum in his disk, Re on the eastern horizon,” etc.<sup>47</sup> Here, Re and Atum, as the great creators and initiators, are associated and even identified without any boggling of the mind. “The nature of the Egyptian gods,” writes Hornung, “is a transitional thing (*Schwebezustand*): ... there is no place for the absolutes of our monotheism.”<sup>48</sup>

Egyptian gods can be readily combined in a father-son relationship which proclaims the identity of their nature and office.<sup>49</sup> The total unity-in-plurality is represented by the all-male trinity.<sup>50</sup> The idea of a trio representing different aspects of the same being is clearly suggested by the three main

aspects of the sun in the sky: “I am Kheper in the morning, Re at noon, and Atum in the evening.”<sup>51</sup> “These modalities are joined in the name Khepri-Rē‘-Atum”;<sup>52</sup> but whereas our Breathings text includes two of the names in their solar aspects, taking some liberties with one of them, it forgets Khepri to bring in Amon and Ptah instead. The Sensaos Breathings text takes similar liberties, its opening lines—“The Hathor Sensaos … says: I am Re in his rising; I am Atum in his setting; I am Osiris Head of the Westerners in the night”—assigning a different function to Re and introducing a different member of the triad.<sup>53</sup> In Heinrich Brugsch’s catalogue, Re is the morning instead of the noon sun, while Khepri is not the morning but the night sun;<sup>54</sup> the one thing that does not change, as George Nagel notes, is the identification of Atum with the evening sun—he is always that.<sup>55</sup> Yet as Atum-Re, he

is the *rising* sun, whereas our text mentions Re (who is the noonday and often also the rising sun) for his *htp*, his coming *down* or resting. This takes us back to the Egyptian creation drama mentioned above, which, in Sethe's opinion, "recalls vividly the biblical creation story" since the word *htp* means not only that the creator was "pleased" with his handiwork but "suggests also the resting (*htp*) after the accomplishment of labor."<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, *htp* also means coming down or descent and, in the present text, keeps up the biblical atmosphere, with the creator deigning to visit the earth, especially since he seems to be engaged in a special business with Atum. There is another sense in which the "coming down" at the creation is important—that is, when a god, such as Thoth, is sent down to earth to inspect the condition of things and then return and report to the Most High (*nb-r-dr*).<sup>57</sup>

## Atum Equals Adam?

“Atum in the evening”—why evening, if the occasion is the creation, which the Egyptians, like most other people, naturally associated with the sunrise? Why the emphasis on the coming down of the god instead of the rising sun? Indeed, the Senaao text begins: “I am Re in his rising; I am Atum in his setting.”<sup>58</sup> It is not the solar but the human drama which is being presented. Atum is unique as one who is a creator, yet human, equally at home in heaven and on earth.<sup>59</sup>

Atum and Re stick close together in creation contexts. Re “comes down” to be with Atum, or, as in the passage just cited, when he comes down, he is Atum. “Re comes down to me in his evening,” says a Coffin Text that forcibly calls to mind God’s walking with Adam in the evening, especially when we read what follows, “and

we walk about (*dbn=n*) and stroll around (*phr=n*, orbit) the heaven.”<sup>60</sup> The setting fits, too, in the next spell, when “Re takes the arm of N[N]” (the candidate) and places him in his Garden of Reeds and puts him “in charge of the plants, of which he freely eats.”<sup>61</sup> It is Re who is concerned with what goes on in the garden—“The great god, who breathed (into the) creatures (*irw*, shapes, forms) within his verdant gardens, who explains (*wd‘ mdw*) the secret matters of the vestry of Re.”<sup>62</sup> But the one he deals with is Atum, he who comes down to earth and changes his name in doing so. The classic instance of this is Re himself, who is known by the name of Atum when he descends to earth, as attested by our Book of Breathings. This name changing is clearly indicated in Coffin Text 80: “I am the living one … whom Atum made as (to be) Neper (the corn-raiser) when he sent me down to this earth, … when

my name became Neper (or Osiris) the son of Geb (earth).”<sup>63</sup> When he moves from a heavenly to an earthly role, his name is changed accordingly.



Figure 61. Reconstruction of a rare surviving pyramidion (pyramid capstone) made of polished black granite to endure through eternity. The scene on the left side, facing the rising sun, proclaimed that the pharaoh was beloved by Atum of Heliopolis and Re-Horakhty. Reconstruction of Khendjer pyramidion, ca. 1755 B.C. Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

At On (Heliopolis), Atum is the greatest of gods: “I am Atum who created the Great Ones.”<sup>64</sup> He is also older than the gods: “I am he for whom the heavenly hosts were assembled, upon whom divine authority

(*ȝhw*) was bestowed,” etc. (fig. 61).<sup>65</sup> But for all that, Atum is more of this world than any of the other three; for not only is he god come down to earth, but the earth itself comes out of him.<sup>66</sup> Gustave Jéquier posits that the original Tum-Atum was chthonian and represented the inert matter of the creation, though endowed with the potentiality of giving breath to “all life.”<sup>67</sup> That is why Re becomes Atum when he descends to earth: “Thou risest as Re in his name of *Hpr*; thou mountest the sky as Re; then thou alterest thy course from their view as Re in his name of ‘Atum,’” and “as the First of the Westerners enterest Osiris as Atum enters into Re.”<sup>68</sup> But even at an early time, “the overwhelming majority of occurrences of Atum in the Pyramid Texts indicate his *human* character. . . . Atum as a cosmic deity is in the darkness.”<sup>69</sup> Only at Heliopolis does the “Atum theology” give

him priority as creator: “I am the Living One, the master of years, who lives for eternity, Lord of Eternity; whom Atum created in his splendor … when he was one and became three in Heliopolis.”<sup>70</sup> At Heliopolis, the king would be brought before Atum for his blessing at the coronation;<sup>71</sup> and the ultimate blessing desired by the dead at the end of his long journey was to “eat bread beside the living in the temple of Atum,”<sup>72</sup> just as the king ends his strenuous ritual water journey safe in the arms of Atum.<sup>73</sup> “Thou enterest thy palace like Atum … enter[ing] his horizon.”<sup>74</sup>

Creation is but one act, no matter how often repeated, and the creator is always the same. “It cannot be too often repeated,” Gertrud Thausing insists, “that all divinities may be traced back to the primal powers of creation and conception.”<sup>75</sup> Everything that Pharaoh did was considered an act of

creation, carried out according to an ageless divine plan: Sesostris I and Thutmose I both claim to be “repeating the creation,” “doing what their father Re did” before them.<sup>76</sup> At the creation, Aten is saluted “in his name as father of Rē<sup>‘</sup>, who has returned as Aten.”<sup>77</sup>

It is hard, in some of these associations, to avoid hearing the name of Adam for that of Atum. And indeed, Eugène Lefébure, noting how closely Atum resembles Adam in his attributes and finding no philological obstacles to equating the names, asked, “Why not identify him with the biblical Adam?”<sup>78</sup> Alexandre Moret later pointed out that the first inhabitant of the first place on earth, the “anthropomorphic god, Atoum,” had “a name which is equated (*rapproché*) with *Adam*. ”<sup>79</sup> The name Atum signified, according to Moret, both the creator and “the [collective] sum of all future beings.”<sup>80</sup> Other studies have concluded that Atum

means “all-embracing,” “the sum of everything (*Inbegriff des Alls*),”<sup>81</sup> or the uniting of many in one, combining all preexistent beings in a single archetype who thereby represents all beings thereafter.<sup>82</sup>

This agrees with Joseph Smith’s definition of Adam in the Pearl of Great Price: “And the first man of all men have I called Adam, which is many” (Moses 1:34). What complicates the picture is that Atum is also the creator,<sup>83</sup> specifically the creator of man;<sup>84</sup> he is “the ancient one” par excellence, “the first hypostasis of the demiurge at the time of the creation, … the word of Ptah incarnate.”<sup>85</sup> Yet the breath of life comes from his mouth as well.<sup>86</sup> In the Breathings literature, the heart which alone can give a man possession of eternal life is that of Atum, but only “as a hypostasis of Ptah,” who created man in the first place.<sup>87</sup>



Figure 62. Ptah, with the symbols of the creation, stands upon the Stone of Truth (Maat), holding the scepters of divine power and everlastingness, with the symbol of all that is firmly established and enduring at his back. The lotus and papyrus columns, in various stages of unfolding, represent the steps of creation, as do the solar disks. The two serpents are Edjo and Nekhbet, supplying the female element. The inscription lists various ways of writing Ptah's name. 1823 engraving in Champollion, *Panthéon Égyptien*, [99].

Since this business of launching men into eternity must begin with a repetition of the

creation, a new life,<sup>88</sup> all the greatest creator-gods are understandably present on the scene. As in the story of the foredoomed prince,<sup>89</sup> any deity *not* invited to contribute could cause real trouble! When Re comes down, he is Atum, as we have seen, while Amon and Ptah together form the body of man and place breath in his body. Whose body? That can be complicated too, but the preferred candidate is Atum, by far the most human of the four: “I am Ptah who has opened thy mouth. . . . Thy body is the body of Atum eternally.”<sup>90</sup> “Thou arisest with thy father Atum,” the dead king is told; “thou art raised up with thy father Atum.”<sup>91</sup> Atum as the rising and the setting sun, “Re on the horizon,” “Re coming down, Atum in the evening,” is necessarily the *red* sun as it passes between the upper and the lower worlds. Atum wears the red crown as “the king comes out of Buto, red (*dšr*) as the

flame.”<sup>92</sup> This certainly suggests the well-known meaning of Adam as “red.” In a Coffin Text, the initiate describes himself as vindicator of his father Re at the dawn—in effect, as Re-Atum, but specifically “in my name of Adamu (*ȝdmw*),” where the Semitic form of the name with nominative ending is used.<sup>93</sup>

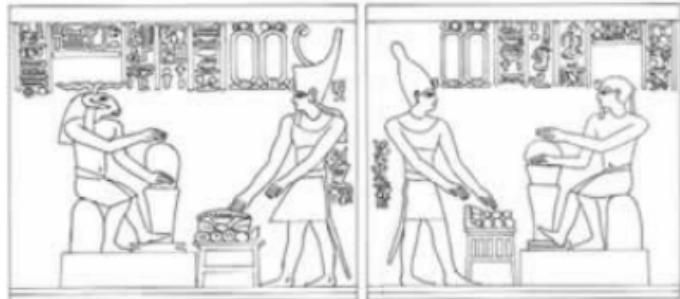


Figure 63. Pharaoh, as king of Lower and Upper Egypt, brings offerings to the two deities who officiate at the creation of man: Khnum and Ptah, both turning potter’s wheels. Flanking the door of the Osiris chapel on roof of the temple of Isis, Philae, ca. A.D. 200. Reconstructed drawing based on Champollion, *Monuments*, 1: pls. LXXXIX and LXXXVII and photographs.



Figure 64. Khnum—wearing a crown associating him with the disk of Re, the sun, as well as the feathers of Maat, the principle of universal order—creates man on the “kicked” potter’s wheel. The ram’s head makes it clear that these things are purely figurative. Temple of Isis, Philae, ca. A.D. 200. Redrawn from Champollion, *Monuments*, 1: pl. LXXVI.

## Ptah the Creator

Ptah is the creator, pure and simple, the great god of Memphis; he always retains that as his one mark and calling (fig. 62; see color plate 6). In the Shabako drama it is Ptah who does the creating, and the one whom he creates is Atum—another reason

for equating the latter with Adam. Ptah of Memphis is the very old creator-god who made all things<sup>94</sup> and “begot Atum and the other gods.”<sup>95</sup> He is hailed in the Shabako text as “The One upon the Great Throne: Ptah-Nun, the father who [begot] Atum: Ptah-Naunet, the [heavenly] mother who bore Atum.”<sup>96</sup> In creating or resurrecting man, Ptah says, “I am Ptah, I have opened thy mouth. . . . I give thee thy two arms, . . . opening (?) thy mouth with the water of renewal. . . . Thy body is the body of Atum eternally.”<sup>97</sup> There are other scenes in which Ptah is assisted by another at the creation of man, the other creator being Khnum: “Khnum hath formed thee with his hands, and Ptah has formed thy body” (fig. 63).<sup>98</sup> Khnum has a good claim on the assignment since he is an artisan god who creates as a potter. In temple reliefs we see “Khnum fashioning the king previous to his birth” on a potter’s wheel

(fig. 64),<sup>99</sup> the actual skill and energy of a demiurge being a desideratum for the creation of man. In our Book of Breathings, where Ptah “forms the limbs” of the candidate, the verb used is *nbi*, an expression taken from the shops of the artisans: it is the creation of the body of man that is being dramatized here, where, as in the Memphite drama, the activity of Ptah “vividly recalls the biblical creation story,” as Sethe put it.<sup>100</sup> The list of Ptah’s epithets ends with “Ptah as Nefertem at the nose of Re each day”<sup>101</sup>—that is, bestowing the breath of life on him, as he and Amon do for the initiate as the First Man.

The name Ptah naturally suggests the Hebrew root \*PTH, “to open,” and his nature even more strongly suggests it, for as creator he is the opener, beginner, begetter, etc.,<sup>102</sup> which even implies that “Ptah himself, ‘the Opener,’ is probably of Semitic

origin. ... He is often referred to as the most ancient of gods. Ptah-Tanen is the god who formed the ‘oerheuvel’ [primal hill] into dry land after it emerged from the waters.”<sup>103</sup> He “has all creative power”; he “is greater than Atum,” and the highest honor that can be paid to the king is to call him Ptah-Ta-Tenen—that is, “Ptah-first-on-earth.”<sup>104</sup> “He is named with the great name, *Tȝ-tnn.*”<sup>105</sup> But when we read of one “who begot Atum and produced the other gods *through* Ptah, ... from him all things come forth,”<sup>106</sup> what are we to think? No trouble, if we accept Hermann Junker’s explanation that “the gods who have their form in Ptah, ... who *are* Ptah,” are all manifestations of Ptah; created and different from Ptah, yet identical with him.<sup>107</sup> All the local Egyptian gods, according to one study, either took their nature from Ptah or shared a common background since all “had on the whole the

same qualities from the beginning independently of each other," those being the qualities of Ptah—"those of creator, world organizer, and god of fate."<sup>108</sup>

## Amon

In our Breathings text, Ptah and Amon work together as a team to create the body of man and place breath in it. As it is Atum who gives breath in Heliopolis (as Nefertem), and Ptah in Memphis, so in Thebes (and the Breathings text is a Theban recension) it is Amon who "blows (*hh*) air into every nose,"<sup>109</sup> at which time the recipient "mankind begins to look and to see," the opening of the eyes being the final step of creation.<sup>110</sup> Amon as the creator is the "great aged one," the ancient of days.<sup>111</sup> He is like Re of shining aspect. "Re himself is united to his body; he is the Great One of Heliopolis [Atum], also called Tenen [Ptah]."<sup>112</sup> "The

basic fact when the Egyptian ideas of light and darkness are concerned is the role of light in the process of creation. ... [C]reation began when the primeval god ... appeared on the primeval hill to create light and order.”<sup>113</sup> Here, Amon *is* Re, Ptah, and Atum. At the creation Amon takes the form of the creator Atum, and so the Thebans get their god into the act on a level not a whit below the others. But who is Amon? Nobody knows. He “remains a god without a history,” not mentioned in any of the archaic texts; through the whole extent of the records he remains only Amon, “the hidden one,” completely absorbed in Re and Atum and yet always the mysterious first god at the hidden center of the universe and the beginning of time<sup>114</sup>—the most hidden, yet the most intimate one.<sup>115</sup>

Amon is not a true name but an epithet, meant to conceal rather than reveal the

ultimate god;<sup>116</sup> anyone who should perchance discover and utter the true name of the god would be struck dead.<sup>117</sup> Yet, as the god of the empire in association with Re after the Eleventh Dynasty, Amon's importance constantly increased: "Amon Re is the Lord of Heliopolis, and Atum the old Lord of Heliopolis, must serve him!"<sup>118</sup> Naturally, Amon is a model of kingship, and in the coronation rites "Amon ... executes a course analogous to that which the king, in imitation of the sun, describes around the shrine of Horus and Seth. ... Therefore, the course of Amon is designated by the same word as that of the sun, of the dead, and of the enthroned king."<sup>119</sup> It is as "the first son and heir of Amon, established as the lieutenant of Maat," that the crown prince "makes the god to rise ... , clothes him and anoints him," etc.<sup>120</sup> Though long represented as a latecomer to the Egyptian

scene, Amon as the prehistoric Min of Koptos had already acquired human form by the Second Dynasty, and his name may even be cognate with that of the first king of Egypt, Menes.<sup>121</sup> It is the same, surprisingly, with Ptah, who at all times has human form at Memphis and is “thought of entirely as an individual and a person,” the pharaoh becoming his personal representative.<sup>122</sup>

Thus all the high gods who participate in this scene are thought of as real persons having strictly human form, for all their divinity. This is why kings and priests can enter into the drama without any sense of incongruity; as in the Salt rites, “the drama takes place between the gods, some being incarnated by the priests, while in the temple the king, functioning as an officiant, is the intermediary *ex officio* (*obligé*) who transmits the divine actions.”<sup>123</sup> Adolf Erman explains the great hymn to Amon thus:

“His (Amon’s) forms (*hprw*, states of being) were the Ogdoad, the ‘Begetter’ [a pun on *hprw*] of the first gods; he who formed Re, that he might complete himself as Atum [pun on *tm* completion], who is a common member with him. He is the Lord of All, who first existed.”<sup>[124](#)</sup>

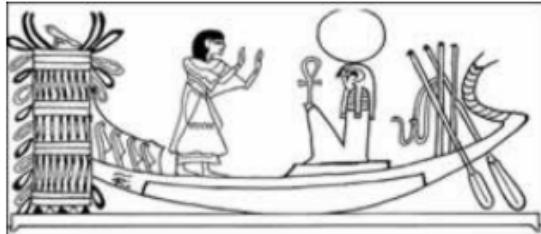


Figure 65. The supplicant walks down the gangplank to join Horakhty, “Horus of the Horizon,” who has already joined his father, Re, symbolized by the disk, as he sits on the Stone of Truth in a ship that moves upon the hieroglyphic sign for “heaven.” From P. Ani, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 10470 © Copyright The British Museum.

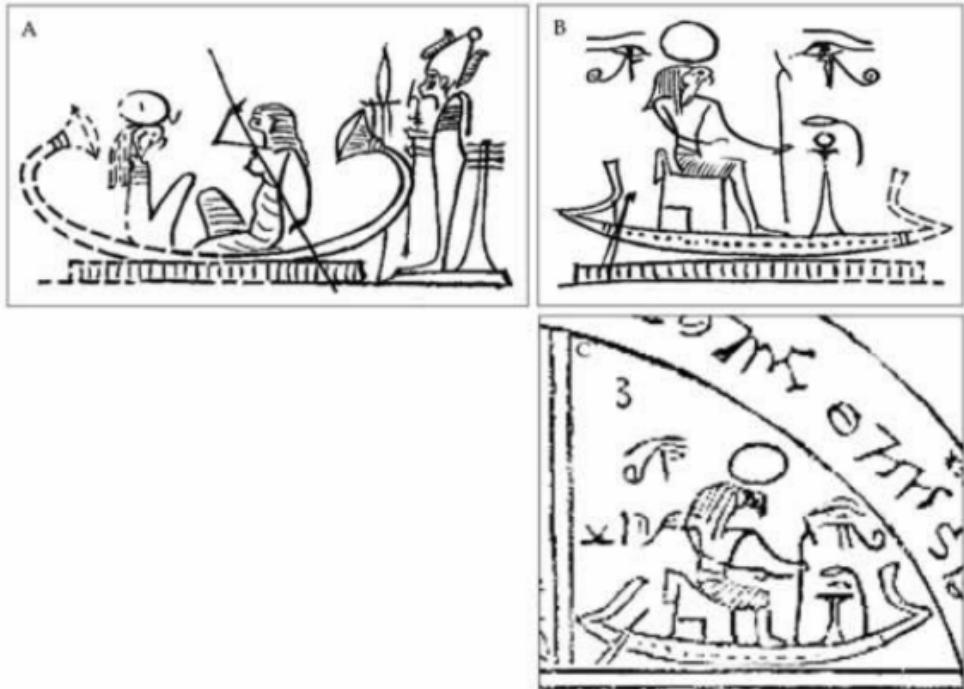


Figure 66. Typical variations on a theme: (A) The candidate, here Tasheritmin, serves Re-Horakhty by poling the boat herself, while Sokar in the guise of Osiris looks on from the east. (B) The figure in this scene, here Re, appears regularly in the upper right-hand quarter of many hypocephali, including the Joseph Smith hypocephalus (C), where it is accompanied by an inscription *not* found in the JSP IV version. In the various hypocephali, the solar disk may be either with or without the serpents. If JSP IV and Facsimile 2 came from the same scriptorium, one should expect almost identical drawings of one and the same object. JSP IV (BD 100, 101) and Facsimile 2, fig. 3. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

With the forming of a physical body and the placing of the breath of life in it (lines 20–21), an eternal existence on a new level is assured. Our text makes much of this: one so equipped is now qualified to join Re on the horizon (line 21), to sit with Osiris in the *nšm.t*-bark (line 22); he is sanctified—nay, deified—victorious (*mʒ ‘-hrw*) “for time and eternity” (line 22). His name will never be blotted out (line 24), his flesh is forever incorruptible and imperishable (line 24), his eternal progression is assured (line 25), he dwells in the presence of the most high gods as an ageless and glorified (shining) being (lines 25–26). He shares solid food with mortals to prove the reality of his resurrection (lines 27–28) and immortal food with the gods (line 29). Let us examine separately the points not so far considered.

**Line 21:** “Thou enterest (or that thou mayest enter) the horizon in company with Re”

Compare above, line 2: “that he might enter (join) the horizon along with his father, Re.” Both are purpose clauses; since the objective is not yet achieved at this point; the rehabilitation of the body must precede it.

## The Nšm.t-Bark

**Lines 21–22:** “(and) they receive (*or* that they may receive) thy *ba* into the *nšm.t*-bark along with Osiris” (the Berlin Manuscript has a participle, “thy *ba* having been received”) <sup>125</sup>

It is in the solar ship that the initiate joins his father on the horizon (fig. 65). One steps into the sun-ship just as it reaches that place where the sky touches the earth at the horizon, as the water meets the land at the sacred wharf of the pyramid or temple (see p. 155, fig. 41). It is a ship that carries one in a state of effortless suspension through the void between the worlds.

Thus we read in Pyramid Text 471 §920–23: “The servants of Horus purify NN, they bathe him, they dry him off, they tell him the formulas for the right road. … NN mounts up to heaven, … the gods give him a rousing welcome as he reaches heaven in the ship of Re,” the ship in this case being the *nšm.t*-bark.<sup>126</sup> At his funeral the king “rises from the Watery Abyss, the Nun; he travels in the barge of Re in the sky, he is identified with the gods and leads a cosmic life in heaven.”<sup>127</sup> The Skrine Papyrus duplicates the entire situation in this section of the Book of Breathings: it opens with a supplication that the dead “embark in the *nšmt*-boat” to worship Osiris and to “behold Rē‘ when he ascends, Atum when he sets” (fig. 66; see color plate 6),<sup>128</sup> to “go down in front of the pool of Mē‘et, … unite with the stars of Nut,” and to “join him [Re] who is in the evening boat”;<sup>129</sup> also to “drink water in

front of the *nšmt*-boat”<sup>130</sup> to “proceed upon the course ... of your lake. ... May I breathe the wind that issues from you.”<sup>131</sup> “Grant ... that I may be his attendant in the great *nšmt*-boat on the day of the W3g-festival; ... that I rest upon the necropolis nigh unto the two goddesses of Righteousness, and that there be a portion of mine in the Field of Earu (i.e., and have a place in the Field of Reeds).”<sup>132</sup> In Papyrus Louvre N. 3292, the companion piece to Philippe-Jacques de Horrack’s translation of the text, the candidate, after being purified with natron and incense, anointed and clothed by the Two Sisters, is led by Re himself “into his bark. ... He prays to him at noon in his name of Re; he supplicates him in the evening in his name of Atum.”<sup>133</sup> This shows how the Egyptians play around with these images without ever losing sight of their basic concepts.

# Forms of Ritual Solar Ships and Their Use

The sun-ship goes by various names; it is identified in the Skrine Papyrus with the Sokar-bark of the *wag*-festival, which in turn is identified with the *hnw*-bark and the *mnh.t*-bark. The primitive hieroglyph for the Sokar-bark, with an oryx head at its prow (see p. 419, fig. 134), is also the determinative for the ritual garment, so that the ship and the garment are the same.<sup>134</sup> In the same spirit, the various parts of a ritual bark are identified with bodily members of the god of the dead<sup>135</sup>—a “vessel” in the broadest sense—while its bow represents the respiratory passage by which the ship “goes with a favorable wind,” or (by another translation) “with effective breathing.”<sup>136</sup>

The rite called “Opening the Doors of the *nšm.t*-bark” represented, or *was*, “the ferrying of the mummified Osiris to his

tomb,”<sup>137</sup> for the water journey takes one to the world below as well as that above. In the coffin chamber of Unas was a model ship, and the moving of the coffin through the various tomb passages is described in nautical terms.<sup>138</sup> Unas has his ferry fare all ready, and from the ferry landing (represented by the middle chamber) he makes the final crossing to heaven by ship.<sup>139</sup> The passage through the waters, whether above or below, is dangerous, and the *nšm.t*-bark is attacked by the powers of darkness<sup>140</sup> but is stoutly defended by the god’s followers in a combat that was daily dramatized in the temple as the overthrowing of Seth.<sup>141</sup> Pictures of the solar-bark go back to the earliest times in Egypt,<sup>142</sup> but they are always more than a mere symbol.

In a famous autobiographical inscription, the official Ikhernofret recalls an important part he played in rites using a real *nšm.t*-

bark: “I caused the divine ship to go. ... I avenged Wennofre [Osiris] in the day of the great combat, and threw his enemies into the water. ... The ship landed at Abydos, bearing (Osiris, Head of the Westerners) ... while all rejoiced in the beauty of the *nšm.t*-ship.”<sup>143</sup> And in the equally famous inscription of Neferhotep, “the king went ... to the *nšm.t*-bark of the Lady of Eternity in order to make his journey. ... His majesty went to the divine ship, the seat (throne) of this god. The king himself appeared on the lake in order to join with [the word is *snsn*] this god.”<sup>144</sup> In a ritual combat, “the enemy was driven away from the *nšm.t*-bark,” after which “the god again rested” (line 18). The attack on the ship is best known in Egypt from texts known as the overthrow of Apophis, the great serpent.<sup>145</sup> From the Ramesseum drama<sup>146</sup> and the exploits of Horus the Behdetite,<sup>147</sup> it is apparent that

early pharaohs had to overcome real opposition on the water both before and after the historical pacification of the land. In funeral rites, the coffin represents the sun-ship;<sup>148</sup> and in chapter 99 of the Book of the Dead, the passenger may not enter the ship until he has named all twenty parts of it, which represent the “positive powers” that will protect him against the negative powers of Apophis, or the dragon.<sup>149</sup> Accordingly, the boat is nothing less than the “saviour from death” and as such is carried in procession by the four sons of Horus, who thus “support his life.”<sup>150</sup> Unas’s flight to heaven is represented by his being lifted up by the gods of the four quarters (the sons of Horus) “on their floats.”<sup>151</sup>

I. E. S. Edwards suggests that the real boats excavated beside the pyramids were meant to make the pilgrimage to Abydos,<sup>152</sup> just as Ikhernofret and Neferhotep both took

real *nšm.t*-boats safely to Abydos. “Horus in his bark is like the king in his ship and like the Sun in the morning-bark,” says an equation from Edfu, “receiving the insignia after the victory over the Bull of the Marshes. The captain rejoices when he takes possession of the throne of his father.”<sup>153</sup> The royal bark was certainly real; and in the yearly cruise to the “desert valley” for a universal picnic with the dead, a golden bark dominated the scene.<sup>154</sup>

The high point in the career of one great official was his ride in the boat of the lady Nekhbet<sup>155</sup> of El-Kab to the celebration of the *sed*-festival of Ramses III in the Delta, in which he rode with Pharaoh’s own vizier, To, who came to fetch the ship for the occasion.<sup>156</sup> In Neferhotep’s inscription, the *nšm.t*-bark belongs to the Lady of Eternity (lines 15–16). The oldest of the ritual barks is the *mʒty*-bark, in which Pharaoh rode

with the god Sokar as early as the First Dynasty when, in “the accession-year of the king, ... the god Sokar of the Memphite region ... went forth in a barque” for agricultural rites with the king<sup>157</sup> in “a periodic ‘feast of the Maaty Barque.’”<sup>158</sup> Thus the Two Maats take one through the waters of contest, as they do through the waters of washing.<sup>159</sup> In the Pyramid Texts, the dead king is borne “like Sokar by Horus or his four sons ... in the Henu-barque,”<sup>160</sup> this being the same ship “associated with the burial of the embalmed Sokar-Osiris” in nocturnal rites<sup>161</sup> as well as that celebrating “Sokar’s triumphal peregrination with the dawn ... tacitly equated with Rē’s emergence in the East upon crossing the Lake (and Isle) of Flames.”<sup>162</sup>

From all this it appears that the ship is significant with reference to times and seasons. The Sokar-ship “journeyed to Luxor

on New Year's day ... to mark the renewing of the life of the universe,"<sup>163</sup> and the nocturnal "Navigation of Osiris" ceremonies of the Sokar-ship took place at the winter solstice, accompanied by "Opening the Doors of the Neshmet-barque."<sup>164</sup> The Greeks were impressed by the great cyclical year-festivals that dominated the life of Egypt, especially by the magnificent vessels and divine flotillas that sailed the Nile on those occasions.<sup>165</sup> Clement of Alexandria, an Egyptian, says that the ship symbol signifies "that the sun, taking its way through the sweet and moist air, begets time," and hence is a symbol of time.<sup>166</sup>

In the Amduat, the divine ship must pass through dark regions of the underworld that are, for some reason, stated to be sometimes 309 and sometimes 120 cubits long; can this have anything to do with the ideal Egyptian lifespan of 120 years, or the 309 (or 390)

years that measure the era of darkness of the Jews?<sup>167</sup> The coincidence of numbers can hardly be accidental. The possible identity of various Egyptian ritual boats is still not fully determined.<sup>168</sup>



Figure 67. The sky-vessel is called the “ship of 1000 cubits,” suggesting the designation of the above celestial Sokar-ship as “also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand.” Book of Abraham, Facsimile 2, fig. 4. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

The founding and building of the Egyptian temple and the establishing of its rites is always done, according to E. A. E. Reymond’s study, by beings who sail from

other worlds; and when their work is done, “the Shebtiw seem to have sailed away” again.<sup>169</sup> Some such space travel (often indicated in the Coptic gnostic writings) is indicated in Coffin Text 162: “He takes the ship of 1000 cubits from end to end, and he sails in it to the stairway of fire”<sup>170</sup>—all of which most cogently brings to mind Joseph Smith’s interpretation of the ship in Facsimile 2, fig. 4, of the Book of Abraham: “a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand; answering to the measuring of ... time” (fig. 67). Very common are references to the dead king’s being hauled by cables to heaven or rowed thither by crews of the Unwearied or the Imperishable Ones (meaning unsetting stars). The sky-ship can make the trip both ways: “I go down among the weak ones (*h3sw*, uninitiated). ... I have seized on to the cable of the *Hnt-mn-it=f*; I row in my seat in the divine ship. I have

gone down upon my throne in the divine ship. I control, none being near my throne in the divine ship; I am in control, not being without a boat, my throne being in the divine ship at Heliopolis.”<sup>171</sup>

## **Deification of the Ba, Meaning of Ntr**

**Line 22:** “They deify (sanctify, exalt) thy *ba* in the House of Geb”

The four houses that are the main part of the prehistoric cult-complex of Papyrus Salt 825 stand for Shu, Tefnut, Geb, and Nut —“that is to say, the four oldest gods, proceeding forth from the demiurge, who are here wind, fire, earth, and sky, the four elements of which life is comprised.”<sup>172</sup> The four houses—with Osiris squarely in the middle of them, represented by the *ankh*-symbol—make up the House of Life, which

seems to go back to an old tent or reed hut of purification. Geb is mentioned here because, perhaps, of the four washrooms mentioned above, only his goes back to prehistoric times, Geb being the floor of the House of Life.<sup>173</sup>

The word denoting the sanctification or deification of the *ba* is *ntry(w)*, referring to a special state quite different from the Christian idea of divinity;<sup>174</sup> *ntr* does not designate “a god,” according to James Breasted, but, rather, the blessed dead, especially the king.<sup>175</sup> For the Egyptian, Hornung concludes, “*ntr* means any god one chooses” for a particular situation,<sup>176</sup> individual gods being nothing more than hypostases, or forms in which the One, properly called *ntr*, may be manifest:<sup>177</sup> when the *ba* is *ntry*, it is with that One. A 1969 study concludes that *ntry.t* may mean “deification” or “may reflect the restoration

of divine powers or status.”<sup>178</sup> Of particular interest is Siegfried Morenz’s study of the meaning of *ntry* since his principal evidence is taken directly from this very Book of Breathings—Papyrus Louvre N. 3284. He maintains that one is not justified in moderating the force of *ntry*, or “deify,” to something more like “sanctify” or “hallow” because the root meaning of the word is simply *ntr*, “god,” and the causative *s·ntr* was translated by the Greeks as *apotheosis*. Then he brings in his exhibit A: lines 21–22 of our papyrus, in which we see “the dead placed in the society of the gods, while his *ba* is received into the *nšm.t*-bark, with the added specification: ‘They make thy *ba* divine in the House of Geb,’” “they” in this case being “certainly divine beings who minister in the House of Geb.”<sup>179</sup> There can be no doubt, Morenz insists, that the Osirianized dead receives the full status of

godhood—indeed, that “to be divine (*Göttlich-Sein*) is the characteristic quality of the *ba* of the deceased.”<sup>180</sup> Hence washing, anointing, censing, clothing, and nourishing are all rituals of deification, whether in the temple or the funerary services.<sup>181</sup> The resurrection process is, in short, a deification process.

## The Formula “For Time and Eternity”

***Line 22:*** “thou art (of the) justified for time and eternity”

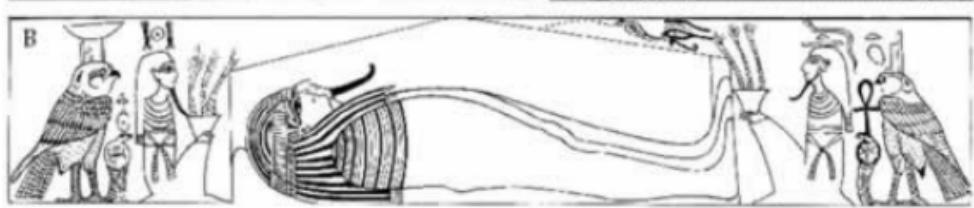


Figure 68. Time and eternity were represented by various divine figures. (A) The inscription from Tutankhamun's golden shrine says: "I know the names of the two great gods: Time and Eternity." Here they are holding the pillars of heaven, while in a private tomb (B), two male gods sit holding lamps with twisted linen wicks. (C) Within the white headband of the goddess, the artist has drawn the word *nh* repeatedly, an elegant pun showing that she is encircled about with eternity. (A) Tutankhamun, ca. 1330 B.C. Courtesy of Cairo Museum. (B) Tomb of Neferabet (Theban Tomb 5), ca. 1200 B.C. (C) Tomb of Seti I, ca. 1290 B.C.

As Eberhard Otto notes, one instinctively

translates *r nhḥ d.t* or *nhḥ hn ‘dt* as “time and eternity (*Zeit und Ewigkeit*),” which is the common rendering (fig. 68).<sup>182</sup> Otto avers that, while *nhḥ* conveys the idea of “unending recurrence of the same, the concept of becoming, something like our ‘development,’” *d.t* denotes “ineradicable endurance,” a state of being established to last forever.<sup>183</sup> Thomas Allen’s translation of the Book of the Dead supports this, rendering *nhḥ* as “endless occurrence” or “endless recurrence” and *d.t* as “changelessness.”<sup>184</sup> Louis Žabkar suggests that *nhḥ* is something “completed,” while *d.t* is something “taken possession of”,<sup>185</sup> while Abd el-Mohsen Bakir presents “the idea that *nhḥ* connotes the concept of infinity associated with the time *before* the world … came into being, whereas *d.t* refers to the other infinity, … the time when the temporal world comes to an end” (fig. 69).<sup>186</sup> Étienne Drioton has the

same idea.<sup>187</sup> László Kákosy almost reverses the order: “*nḥḥ* is eternity” for him, while “the hieroglyph *d.t* corresponds … to the static, already past aspect of eternity.”<sup>188</sup> Alan Gardiner has much the same idea—that *d.t* is “eternity in the past” and *nḥḥ* “eternity in the future.”<sup>189</sup> A clear distinction is made in Book of the Dead chapter 17: “Others … say that the things which have been made are Eternity (*nḥḥ*), and the things which shall be made are Everlastingness (*d.t*).”<sup>190</sup>

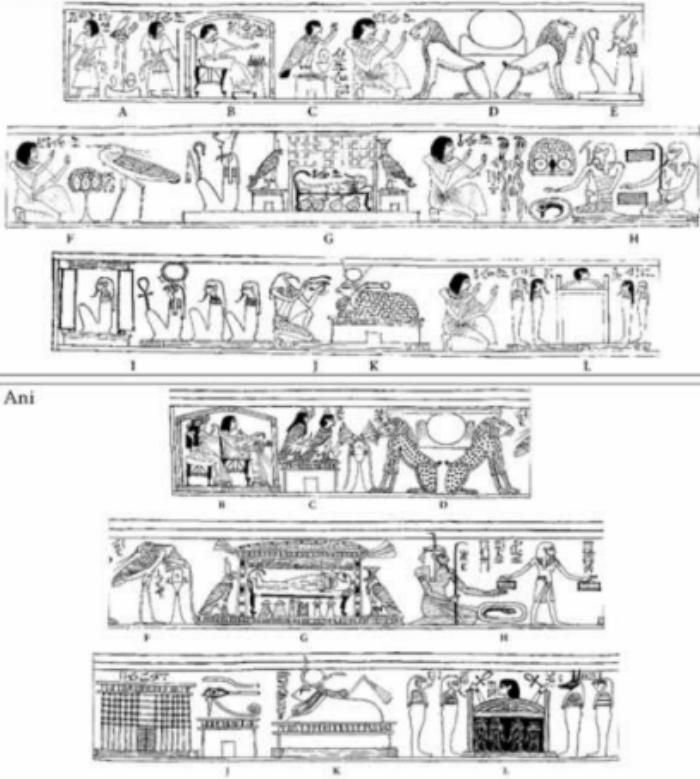


Figure 69. The normal sequence of events between the funeral and the resurrection, as found in many illustrated Book of the Dead manuscripts, such as these two: (A) The dead passes the western horizon, turning his back on the preceding funeral scene of mourning at the tomb and leaving his food offerings behind. (B) He and his wife pass a pleasant time playing games in a green bower or booth (*a refrigerium*), (C) biding his time in the spirit world. (D) The quiet passing of time is movingly illustrated by the two tame lions, sometimes wearing fetching little caps and labeled “Yesterday” and “Tomorrow,”

while the sun rises and sets on the horizon between them and (E) Osiris supervises in the position of a patient herdsman or watchman. (F) The time having passed, the dead confronts the *benu*-bird, symbolizing the miracle of periodic revival in nature—it is the arrival of the phoenix. (G) The body having been carefully preserved and guarded during the interval, (H) the inauguration of organic life is prepared, a tadpolelike *wedjat*-eye taking form in a placenta while two men, designated as the Nile and the sea, mingle the necessary waters and minerals (one of the two ponds is labeled *hsmn*, “brine”). (I) Finally, the candidate is ready to emerge, like and with Horus, on the horizon, endowed with the life (‘*nh*) symbol. (J) The *wedjat*-eye proclaims the perfection, or completion, of the process. (K) The universal mother must be present for such a rebirth. (L) The four canopic figures have come together with all the elements and parts necessary for the body; the dead at last breaks out of the stone sarcophagus covered by the green and flowery grave mound, triumphantly bearing symbols of life in each hand. P. Hunefer, ca. 1300 B.C., BM 9901, and P. Ani, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 10470 © Copyright The British Museum.

The arguments about which of the terms refers specifically to the future are largely

academic since eternity is something that goes on to an endless future, no matter when it began or how long it has been running—as we gather from Otto (following Heinrich Schäfer), who points out that both terms refer to the future but maintains that *nḥḥ* is measured in years, whereas *d.t.*, as “everlastingness itself,” is not so confined.<sup>191</sup> This suggests Thausing’s idea that *nḥḥ* stands for life and *d.t.* for death, the one being measurable in years, the other static and permanent.<sup>192</sup> For Hornung, *nḥḥ* and *d.t.* are one more expression of that all-pervading Egyptian dualism between being and nonbeing, *nḥḥ* being the former and *d.t.* the latter.<sup>193</sup> “Because of patterned time and place,” he explains, the created is limited to “episodes between Nothing and Nothings,” with *nḥḥ* and *d.t.* being “the time which is granted to existence.”<sup>194</sup> Thausing, on the other hand, finds the basic meaning of *nḥḥ* to

be “extension,” relating it to the archaic god *Hh*, a representative of empty, airy space who sometimes doubles for Shu;<sup>195</sup> extended to time, the idea is expressed by the well-known kneeling, feather-crowned figure with upraised arms, *hh*, the symbol for “million,” or very many indeed.<sup>196</sup> Sethe saw in *nhh* the idea of *nhy*, something everlastingly sought (*die “Gewünschte”*) but never attained, for eternity is never finished.<sup>197</sup> Thausing calls *nhh* “seeking without finding” and so related the name of the primitive *Hh* with the idea of “Endlessness, Boundlessness.”<sup>198</sup> Otto notes that Ptah the creator is closely identified with *Hhy* as “Lord of Years”—the ancient of days: “The *nhh*-eternity thus designates the unceasing recurrence of the same, the endlessness of time.”<sup>199</sup> He agrees with Thausing that *nhh* is divisible into years, while *d.t* cannot be so divided. Žabkar, however, cites an instance in which *d.t* is

also divided into years<sup>200</sup> and objects to Allen's rendering of *nhḥ* as "endless recurrence" and *d.t* as "changelessness" on the grounds that it "convey[s] an un-Egyptian notion of time and eternity."<sup>201</sup>

The dualism of *nhḥ* and *d.t* suggests matching them with other pairs—for example, having them designate the right and left eye or Upper and Lower Egypt respectively, in which context they can denote "the everlasting continuity of time and the legitimate rule."<sup>202</sup> They identify the rule of the king with the "absolute permanence" of Osiris himself, who alone survived the cosmic cataclysm of Book of the Dead chapter 175, and thus signify "stability without end."<sup>203</sup> When Tefnut gives the king the *wedjat*-eye as *n nhḥ* to see the sun by, and the *d.t* to see the moon, we are to understand the "everlastingness of the heavenly lights guaranteeing the order of the

Creation ... and the sharing of all creatures in the Light,"<sup>204</sup> making *nḥḥ* the endless day and *d.t* the endless night.<sup>205</sup> Thausing further posits that *nḥḥ* refers to an eternity of time and *d.t* to an eternity of space,<sup>206</sup> noting that in the Pyramid Texts, *d.t* appears in situations dealing with solid, enduring reality as such, with physical indestructibility,<sup>207</sup> while *nḥḥ* is the eternity of this world only, the fashion of which passeth away, and hence refers to the eternity of death.<sup>208</sup> But Žabkar protests that *nḥḥ* and *d.t* are used most of the time synonymously,<sup>209</sup> which is not surprising since any two words associated together in a formula repeated countless times would naturally come to share a common meaning; on the other hand, the fact that not one but two different words were used originally implies that a distinction of meaning was

intended.<sup>210</sup>

There is a general agreement that time as *nḥḥ* has an end, being bound to the conditions and cycles of this world,<sup>211</sup> whereas eternity as *d.t* is something solid and final, written with the earth symbol, which denotes the ultimate in unshakable solidity.<sup>212</sup> But everyone seems to feel the rightness of both making a distinction and of closely associating the two ideas to make sure that the ordinances shall be effective both “in time,” by whichever means we choose to measure it, and “throughout all eternity,” which is not to be measured at all. This is the expression that closes all major ordinances, and here it is used to show that we have reached the end of a separate document to go with a clearly marked and independent body of rites. The next page of the de Horrack manuscript deals with the next episode.

# Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 23– 26

- 23 (2/1). [Recite as follows:] Osiris, God's Father, Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon, *Wsîr-Wr* [JSP: **Hor**],
24. **Justified**, Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified. [JSP: **born to Tay**[khebyt.]] Abiding is **thy name, firm** (*or enduring*) **thy flesh (corpse), hale** is
25. thy mummy. There is no holding thee back in heaven or earth. Made to shine is thy countenance in the presence of Re; **living is thy ba in the presence of**
26. **Amon.** (*Ever*) **youthful is thy body (corpse) in the presence of Osiris.** Thou **breathest henceforth for time and eternity.**

**Commentary: The Enduring of the Name**

**Line 24:** “Abiding (Enduring) is thy name  
(i.e., Thy name will never perish)”

De Horrack renders this as *ton individualité est permanente.*<sup>213</sup> For to the Egyptian “the name is a person’s essence. If his name perishes, he himself does not exist any more.”<sup>214</sup> So in Pyramid Text 422 §764: “Thy name lives on earth; thy name remains on earth. Thou dost not perish, thou art not destroyed forever and ever!”<sup>215</sup> For many years the Book of Breathings was designated by scholars with the title “May My Name Flourish,” that being the most conspicuous phrase in the texts of class 1. It would seem that the preservation of the name, no matter how or where, assures survival of the individual, though the main concern in the texts is to have it remembered on earth since “by remembering one’s name one enables that person to live hereafter.”<sup>216</sup> The name

seems positively earthbound in Pyramid Text 601 §1660–61: “May this pyramid be as solid as the name of Atum, … solid as the name of Shu … at Heliopolis; solid (*dd*) is NN (the deceased) and solid is his pyramid for eternity.”<sup>217</sup> If only as the means of establishing identity, the name is an inseparable part of one’s individuality in the ancient world.<sup>218</sup> For the Egyptians, the survival of the name meant not only that one lived in memory, but actually that his body could survive.<sup>219</sup> To possess knowledge of another’s name is to hold some power over him, even if it be the high god himself;<sup>220</sup> there is nothing mysterious about this, for to be in the files of a person or agency is a cause of real concern to any modern man.

Every name is an epithet designating some peculiar attribute or function of an individual. That is why it is possible for persons, even in our society, to have more

than one name, each name calling attention to a different aspect of the individual: for to have many forms and functions is to have many names.<sup>221</sup> Some names apply only in special situations and may be dropped when a particular operation is no longer going on. Thus in the present text the candidate is addressed by the special name of Stone of Truth only while he is standing on the washing pedestal.

When Re says to the gods, “I have many names and many forms; ... (in me) Atum and the youthful Horus are addressed,” he signifies that he may be conjured either as the ancient of days or the newly born, depending on the name employed and the situation in which his presence is desired.<sup>222</sup> When, in the same story, Isis asks Re to tell her his true name so that she can cure him, he gives her instead a list of epithets which are indeed his names, but names which he shares

with others: “I am Khepri in the morning, Re at noon, and Atum in the evening.” “I am he who possesses many names.”<sup>223</sup> But that is not good enough. “I still don’t know your name!” cries Isis,<sup>224</sup> meaning that name he shares with no one else, “a name which even the gods do not know.” But there is even a special name to cover a divinity in his capacity of concealing his real name! It is “Amon, he whose name is hidden,” to pronounce whose real name brings instant death.

The name of Amon is “high and mighty and powerful,” to the utter destruction of him who dares pronounce it,<sup>225</sup> and absolutely secret. When Khonsu appears as one “whose name is not known and whose nature and form are not known,” we are expected automatically to identify him with Amon and address him as the Hidden One.<sup>226</sup> To have “grasped the names of the 42 demons … in

the Hall of the Two Maats” is to comprehend their natures,<sup>227</sup> while to conceal one’s own name is to conceal one’s nature.<sup>228</sup>

The economy of the name is far more than a primitive superstition. It is the principle on which modern society is organized, which alone makes it possible for individuals to deal with each other as such. Thus if one’s name is not known to the government, the latter has no control over one—one simply does not exist. Numbering does not change the situation save as it eliminates duplication, which a plurality of names is supposed to do anyway. As the *Gospel of Philip* observes, everything in the world must have a name if there is to be any communication and hence any understanding, so that it is by falsifying the names of things that Satan is able to enslave the world.<sup>229</sup> In the operation of the gospel plan, names play a peculiar function. As every man is “the

man Adam," so every man may become a Savior (Jesus), an Anointed One (Messiah, Christ)—those are the names of individuals, but *also* of types. Just as Caesar was one particular man whose name is borne, however, by many others—but only such others as qualify for a certain office and calling—so an individual coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, whether it is Elisha or John the Baptist, is said to *be* Elijah, "if ye will receive it" (Matthew 11:14); there is a special key to the business (Matthew 17:12).

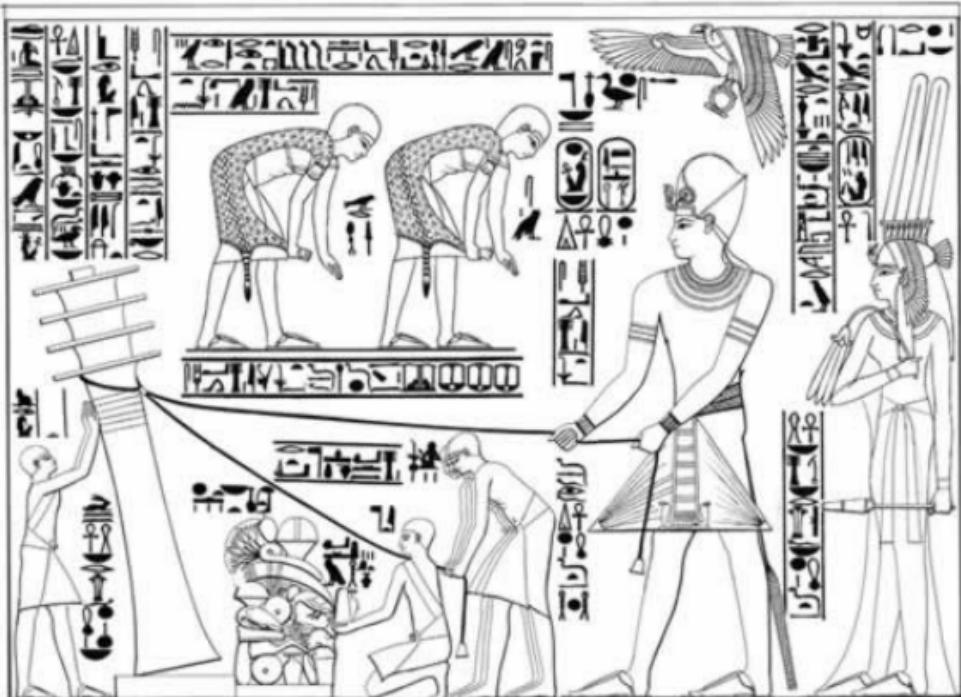


Figure 70. In an elegant bas-relief, the king raises the *djed*-pillar, inaugurating the new world and the new age. The lady with him is his queen, identified with a birth-and-vegetation goddess. Reconstructed from drawings and photographs of the tomb of Kheruef (Theban Tomb 192), ca. 1350 B.C.

## Immortality of the Flesh

**Lines 24–25:** “firm (or enduring, solid, *dd*)  
(is) thy flesh (corpse, physical remains),  
hale (*rwd*) is thy mummy”

What is emphasized here is that whatever is physical about the subject is going to be indestructible and immortal. *Rwd* means “firm, strong, enduring, … effective, … prosperous, … successful” :<sup>230</sup> the thing not only lasts forever but in so doing retains all its vigor; *rwd* is identified “by confusion with [the verb] for ‘grow’” also.<sup>231</sup> The ideas of enduring and flourishing are also expressed together in the word *dd*, which signifies not only what is lasting but what is tough and solid as well. Both words designate the body in its purely physical aspects—it is the *flesh* that lasts and blooms forever. One might also maintain that the clause *dd h3.t=k* ritually suggests the “raising up” of the body since the predicate is indicated by two *djed*-pillars, and the raising up of the *djed*-pillars was, for the Egyptian, the classical symbol of the resurrection (fig. 70).<sup>232</sup> The two *djed*-

pillars also represent the shrine of Busiris, where the ritual death and raising of the god took place.

The word used here for “mummy,” ‘*h.w*, means, literally, both “that which is wrapped up” and “that which is ennobled,” the latter being written, as here, with a seal-ring ideogram signifying that what is wrapped up is sealed, set apart, and thus ennobled or distinguished.<sup>233</sup> These lines seem to illustrate the point, made by Hornung, that the Egyptians were rather afraid of eschatology,<sup>234</sup> dreading the fatal step that might sever the tie between themselves and reality; the name, the corpse, and the mummy are present realities which one wants to preserve indefinitely. “The Egyptians called the dwellings of the living ‘lodgings’ because one only stays in them for a short time, but they call the graves of the dead eternal dwellings because they spend

endless eternity in Hades.”<sup>235</sup> Those are two realities that all must recognize, but our Book of Breathings does not stop there, as the following lines will show.

## Eternal Progression

**Lines 25–26:** “There is no holding (*or* turning) thee back in heaven or earth. Made to shine is thy countenance in the presence of Re; living is thy *ba* in the presence of Amon. (Ever) youthful is thy body (corpse) in the presence of Osiris. Thou breathest (*or* thy breathings are) henceforth for time and eternity.”

If *dd* and *rwd* indicate more than states of passive survival, the vigor and strength they denote are carried over right into heaven, to which their possessor proceeds with nothing able to stop (*hsf*) him. *Hsf* means to “drive away, ward off, oppose” and regularly denotes the challenge and opposition that the

initiate meets at the gates, doors, caverns, waterways, and other obstacles where he is tested.

The last people in the world that popular imagination would associate with the idea of progress are the Egyptians, yet Hornung has pointed out that those people had a positive passion for progress! “Every king,” writes Hornung, “wants his plans to surpass and cast in the shadow everything that already is”;<sup>236</sup> the Egyptian temple, he notes, was never finished because it was always being enlarged and improved.<sup>237</sup> While each dynasty claimed to be repeating the creation, “doing what their father, Re, did” in the beginning,<sup>238</sup> each was determined to surpass all that had gone before and so approximate that divine plan more perfectly than had yet been done on earth. As might be expected, it is the Coffin Texts that drop the most frequent hints of an eternal progression:

“I am Tomorrow, Lord of Yesterday”;<sup>239</sup> “I am better today than I was yesterday”;<sup>240</sup> “I have passed by the gods of Nut and advanced my place to that of the preexistent ones. The ancients never got as far as I did on my first flight!”<sup>241</sup> The sealing of one’s family to him in the next world “is truly a thing for infinite time (*hh n sp*), by which a man continues his great progress (*iw mn n=s hpr wr.t.*).”<sup>242</sup>

## Light and Breath as Glory

**Line 25:** “Made to shine is thy countenance in the presence of Re”

The sure sign of divinity for the Egyptians, as it is for other people, is radiance —*Glanz*.<sup>243</sup> When the candidate is resurrected in the rites of Papyrus Salt 825, he is filled with the light (*s3hw*) by ministering deities who “occupy themselves

with his new physical body (*r ws3*) more than with the body he had before.”<sup>244</sup> One seems to hear familiar echoes, orthodox and gnostic, in Coffin Text 75: “I was not born of the flesh but of the spirit (*lit.* breathed forth from the nose). He made me in the midst of his perfection (*or* beauty, etc., *nfr*), causing those to rejoice who shared the secret, when he spread out heaven in his (*or* its) beauty, raising up all the heavens for the gods that are in them sitting in council (at the gates),<sup>245</sup> that they might behold his glory. I am the great god who breathes forth the creatures (forms) in his green fields (gardens, meadows).”<sup>246</sup> In an early Christian account, the Lord, coming to the apostles after the resurrection, “breathed upon [them] and … gave them a beginning only of the gifts of the Spirit. … And by means of the breathing he taught them in very mysterious fashion that he is himself the creator of Adam, … shining in

the spiritual image and the beauty that flashes from it [his own spirit], and sharing in the divine likeness.”<sup>247</sup> The same combination of images is strikingly clear in each case.



Figure 71. Illustrations of the “trinity” principle are extremely common in Egyptian religious documents.

JSP IV (BD 104). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

## Triads in the Book of Breathings

It begins now to appear that our author favors groups of three (fig. 71; see color plate 6). He has mentioned the glory of the sun, moon, and stars; the washing of the front, back, and inward parts; cleansing in the Halls of the Maaty, Geb, and Shu; initiation by Amon, Ptah, and Re (the

initiated being Atum); the survival of the name, the corpse, and the mummy on this earth and of the countenance, the *ba*, and the body in the next as they shine, live, and become young again respectively in the presence of Re, Amon, and Osiris respectively. In the fifth hour of the Amduat, just before the person begins his ascent to heaven, he is enabled to do so by bringing together his flesh (*iwf*), his members (*h 'w*), and his body (*d.t*): though they are all the same thing, they represent three steps in achieving its integrity. The result of this is eternal life, in which body and spirit meet in the concept of *snsn*, the meeting and fusing of the physical and spiritual, the divine effusion of light, spirit, air, mind—of life in the highest sense, '*nh* being the sum total of air, breath of life, light, and health.<sup>248</sup>

**Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 26–**

26. ... Thy *ba* makes for thee  
27 (2/5). invocation offerings of bread, beer,  
flesh, and fowl, of libation water and  
**incense as the requirements of each day.**  
Thy flesh is upon  
28. **thy bones, made like thy very form(s)**  
**upon the earth: Thou drinkest with thy**  
throat, thou eatest with thy mouth,  
29. thou receivest (**offering**) **bread, along**  
**with** the *bas* of the gods. **Anubis guards**  
**thee; he is (lit. makes) thy security.**

## **Commentary: The Ritual Meal**

De Horrack notes that this is a special section standing by itself and employing “different phrases for resurrection and future life.”<sup>249</sup> It deals with the ritual or sacramental meal which, as in the early Christian church, regularly follows baptism or purification rites.

# Invocation Offerings

**Lines 26–27:** “Thy *ba* makes for thee invocation offerings”

The correct interpretation of “invocation offerings (*pr hrw*)” has been much discussed. “The difficult expression,” wrote Gardiner, “obviously had *pr hrw* ‘the voice goes forth’ as its starting-point.” In the Eighteenth Dynasty it is hard to tell whether the offering comes forth “at-the-voice” of the offerer—that is, by the power of his word—or whether it is the dead person who comes forth “at the call of the offerer” to partake of the meal.<sup>250</sup> Aylward Blackman prefers the second alternative, “a coming forth *unto* the voice” of both living and dead to share in the feast.<sup>251</sup> The *Wörterbuch* identifies the people summoned with the dead only: “*pr-hrw*, the offering to the dead (at which the dead came forth from the grave at the call

[*hrw*] to feed.”<sup>252</sup> Thausing notes that the remembering of a dead person’s name is necessary for the *pry.t hr hrw* rite, the *ka* being the one called forth.<sup>253</sup> That the food may be called forth is implied in the Amduat: “They [the ten gods] live by what he [Osiris] lives on, they breathe by the words of this god, and by their own prayers,”<sup>254</sup> where the utterance of words supplies necessary sustenance. Blackman notes that there is an especially close association of the miracle of food with creation, citing an instance in which the table-god is an emanation of Shu: “He hath become *Hu* who sendeth forth thine utterance.”<sup>255</sup> Another possible interpretation of lines 26 and 27 is “Thy *Ba* pronounces a blessing” over a ritual offering-meal.<sup>256</sup>

Throughout the ancient world, purification and clothing rites are regularly followed by

a ritual meal. Originally a dominant theme in the rites of purification and Opening of the Mouth, the taking of nourishment, according to Hermann Kees, was progressively reduced until it became a mere gesture or a few chanted words.<sup>257</sup> In Coffin Text 179, the gift of the garment goes with the meal as at royal feasts everywhere.<sup>258</sup> The meal usually takes place at the completion of some strenuous ordinance representing a journey or contest, especially after crossing the waters, when one naturally needs rest and refreshment.<sup>259</sup> The first thing one does upon arriving at the goal is to rest and recoup one's strength, as Adam does upon finding himself in a new world, or as any pilgrim or traveler does, or as the early Christian did in the *anapausis* or *refrigerium* after negotiating the passage from this world to the next. Almost invariably the Egyptian ritual feasts take place on the bank of a

stream or lake which has just been crossed. The meal is a natural part of the (re)birth or resurrection drama: as soon as the newborn babe is washed, tidied up, and properly swaddled (mummy-fashion),<sup>260</sup> it receives nourishment—the honey that induces it to take the nipple and the milk that follows.<sup>261</sup> Blackman observes that “the Solar-Pharaonic toilet [is] followed by a meal, ... the royal toilet and the meal [being] the basis of all the other main Egyptian religious rites.”<sup>262</sup> A devout Egyptian reports that he faithfully did his monthly stint in the temple, “putting on the white sandals, ... reciting the secret things, entering the holy of holies, and eating of the bread of the House of God” (fig. 72; see color plate 6).<sup>263</sup> The passage is strongly reminiscent of the shewbread of the temple at Jerusalem, in which Alfred Adam sees a clear anticipation of the Christian sacrament.<sup>264</sup>



Figure 72. The upraised *ka*-arms embracing the food offerings show that this is a spiritual or sacramental meal. The two vessels are for water and oil, or natron and incense, the meal being part of the purification.  
JSP IV (BD 105). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

The stock assumption that the food, both real and pictured, found in Egyptian tombs could only have been meant by the simple-minded people to feed the dead in the next world betrays the working of the modern rather than the Egyptian mind since, as Frankfort points out, such “supplies do not prove that the Egyptians considered life after death a mere continuation of life upon earth. ... It is not even correct to assume that ... supplying funerary provisions carried the

materialistic implication which it inevitably suggests to us.”<sup>265</sup> Commenting on Book of the Dead chapter 30, E. A. Wallis Budge writes: “It will be noted that Ani does not ask for sepulchral offerings . . . ; all he asks is that Osiris will consider him worthy to be introduced into the company of truthful Spirit-souls who live always in the presence of Osiris.”<sup>266</sup> If anything, the food seems to be a transitional affair, like everything else in this document—a viaticum to serve only for a brief period. Hans Lange points out that while no one was in a better position to provide for future food offerings for himself than the pharaoh, “it is nonetheless more than doubtful that the services for the dead were regularly carried out for the kings.”<sup>267</sup>

## Fruits of the Field

One has the impression that once the ordinances were taken care of, the dead was

henceforth on his own in a wholly other sphere not in any way dependent on this world. Even if the dead was “nourished to stimulate his physical powers,” it was for the same reason that he was washed and clothed—to get him through a crisis of passage, not to keep constantly feeding him, as when he was on earth.<sup>268</sup>

With ample provision of heavenly food, the problem of alimentation has been solved once the dead reaches the lush gardens of rest: “They say to me: What then dost thou live on? I live on white barley of the height of the eastern part of heaven. . . . I have come forth as bread and water.”<sup>269</sup> As Otto notes, the food offerings were not brought for the purpose of feeding another but, rather, to call attention to the god “as bestower and source of these gifts” and to the donor, the king, “as one who assists the growth of vegetation.” The basic principle is *do-ut-des*, in which

the giver expects to receive what he has given, but in greater abundance.<sup>270</sup> One “makes (*iri*)” food offerings in cemeteries. Ritually, the verb *iri* is a *locus technicus*, according to Zandee, meaning at the same time to plant and cultivate a garden and to make offerings or provide for such by a grant.<sup>271</sup> In either case, the food offerings in the tombs were but a first installment of what would be supplied elsewhere hereafter. A distinction between various levels of nourishment is certainly made in the Coffin Texts: “I live from the seven things coming forth upon the offering-table of the spirits of Heliopolis: four of its things are for heaven before Re, three of its things are for earth before Geb.”<sup>272</sup> “From what do I live? they ask me. I live from seven things; four of them are for heaven in the presence of Orion, and three of them are for earth in the presence of *m ‘nd.t*-bark, coming forth to the offering-

table place of the spirits of Heliopolis. ... I eat choice food upon the reeds, in the presence of *Hknw* and *Snw*.”<sup>273</sup> The dead specifies that he eats only what is eaten in heaven.<sup>274</sup> “What does Osiris live on? ... It is from the green *sm*-plant that he lives.”<sup>275</sup> “I do not eat what Geb (the earth) has brought forth (*or displayed, wts*).”<sup>276</sup>

In the Breathings texts, the inhalations of food odors<sup>277</sup> are definitely a part of the meal: In Papyrus Louvre N. 3279, the dead is depicted sitting before a table with a huge lotus, holding a breathing sign in her hand like a fan (see p. 78, fig. 17).<sup>278</sup> The purpose of the meal is to supply food, water, “and especially the breath of life, by fumigation with perfumed substances,” all three being necessary to life.<sup>279</sup> “The Horizon-dwellers say to me, ‘Eat beneath the tree of incense in the place of Refreshing (rejuvenating; *nfr:w*)

One of the eleven Joseph Smith Papyri (no. II) contains a lively plowing scene with the caption “Cultivating (*sk3*)” and three characters indicating that the heaven is being opened (fig. 73; see color plate 4).<sup>281</sup> It is not an earthly farm here depicted, for the sowers are not clad in the familiar scanty manner of Egyptian field workers but wear long, white, linen temple robes, and they do not carry bags of seed. Moreover, they sow among the trees, while just beyond them (here drawn just above them, according to the Egyptian convention of perspective) one is seen traveling by boat—it is the ritual garden by the river. The situation is described in Coffin Text 189: “I reap with my sickle (plow with my plow), I make a loaf of dough from the offering-food of Ssr of the Duat, white barley, to make an evening meal of wheat; my food-offering, it is of

seven things, coming forth at the great table-place of the spirits of Heliopolis: Four things for heaven, ... three things for earth; ... I have pulled the ship to the land. This is my spread at Heliopolis.”<sup>282</sup> The dead operates a veritable farm there among the sycamores<sup>283</sup>—not an earthly farm, but one where heaven and earth meet and join.<sup>284</sup>

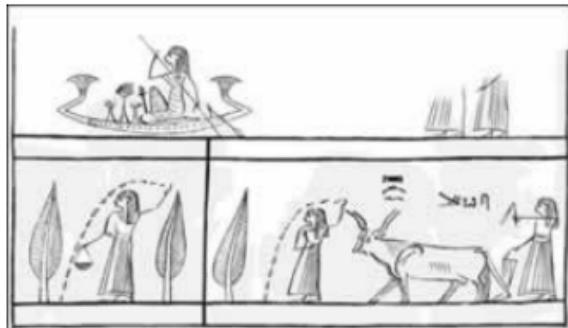


Figure 73. JSP II shows the dead sowing in green fields among the trees and by the waters, over which she also sails. That this is no ordinary farm is seen in the ritual robes of the Lady and the inscription above the oxen: “The heaven to its entire extent (*p.t (r) ȝw=f*),” an idiom apparently telling us that this represents heaven or paradise. Reconstructed drawing of JSP II (BD 110). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

In going through the Forty-Day literature of the early Christian church, one is often reminded that one purpose of the Lord's insistence on having a meal with his disciples when he would meet with them *after* the resurrection was to show that he had really been resurrected (Luke 24:39–43; John 21:9–14). As Ignatius explains, such meals were to keep the brethren in mind not so much of his crucifixion as of his resurrection.<sup>285</sup> Such is certainly the sense of the lines that follow. A Christian eucharistic table from Egypt bears the inscription *hygianon phage kyriakou* (eat health from the Lord), showing that the salutary effects of the meal are physical as well as spiritual; the curative powers of the eucharistic food are the subject of many legends.<sup>286</sup>

This mystery is designated by Ignatius of Antioch by the identical expression —*pharmakon athanasias*, “medicine of

immortality”<sup>287</sup>—which Diodorus used to characterize the Osiris mysteries.<sup>288</sup> Since a sacramental meal is one attended by those both in the world and out of it (and by the Messiah himself, according to the *Rule of the Congregation*),<sup>289</sup> the many Egyptian steles depicting participation of the living and the dead together in family feasts at a tomb may be viewed as sacramental scenes.

## **Life-giving Food, the Heavenly Meal**

***Lines 27–28:*** “Thy flesh is upon thy bones, made like thy very form(s) upon the earth: Thou drinkest with thy throat, thou eatest with thy mouth”

The section as a whole expresses the idea that the dead, by partaking of the meal, confirms the reality of his resurrection (creation), which he demonstrates by eating

with his mouth and drinking with his throat.

If there was a real washing and anointing with water and oil, there is no less a real feeding: Louis Speleers lists the proper order of the rites as “washing . . . , drying off, massage, brushing, ‘shaving,’ ‘primping’ (*soignage*), perfuming (*fumigation*), [and] nourishment.”<sup>290</sup> The meal is an indispensable part of the temple rites and has the same purpose of launching the candidate properly into a new life (Winfried Barta demonstrates this from the Pyramid Texts).<sup>291</sup> The insistence on the physical act of eating is to make clear that the subject is more than a spirit, that whatever spiritualized forms of *hpr:w* he may have gone through, in the end he is going to be restored “in the exact form that he had during his earthly existence.” Some of the scribes seem to balk or boggle at this, exactly as the Christian clergy always have;<sup>292</sup> thus the Kerasher Breathings text

avoids mentioning flesh altogether, while Papyrus Louvre N. 3291 supplants the important “as thou wert on earth” by the “spiritualized” phrase “as thou mountest up to earth.”

**Line 29:** “Thou receivest (offering) bread (*snw*-bread), along with the *bas* of the gods”

*Snw* is “offerings” of sacrificial bread;<sup>293</sup> with another determinative, it can also be “wine of Pelusium,”<sup>294</sup> while the hieratic characters in different order give *sns*-bread.<sup>295</sup> In the last case, the dead receives food “from the altar of the great god,” and in our version he shares it “with the *bas* of the gods.” By what right? Why not? The food of the ritual meal is holy and, as such, meant for immortals as well as mortals.<sup>296</sup> Kees reports that in the original Egyptian agrarian kingdom, all officials were fed, literally, “from the table of the king.”<sup>297</sup> The

sacramental meal, shared by mortals and immortals, is necessarily the common food of gods and men, even as men's food comes from the king's table.<sup>298</sup> It is *smw*, a vegetable diet, which, with bread and beer, is the staple food of the immortals.<sup>299</sup> "As to every spirit for whom this is done, ... he eats and drinks in the presence of Osiris every day, and he is made to enter with the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt every day";<sup>300</sup> to share food with gods is no more presumptuous than to share it with kings. In the Jerusalem temple the priest, after taking the "ritual bath," would eat "the 'bread of the Presence.'"<sup>301</sup> The sacral meal of the sons of Zadok "in the heavenly temple" was for them "an anticipation of the perfected ritual of the heavenly temple."<sup>302</sup> A common formula in the Coffin Texts declares that the dead abhors eating any unclean thing but partakes of seven or nine or three things on

three levels: “There are four things in heaven under Re, three things on earth under Geb, and two things in the temple”;<sup>303</sup> “I live from seven things. Four of them for heaven before Orion, three of them for earth before the *m ‘nd.t*-bark; and they come forth on the table of the spirits in the temple at Heliopolis.”<sup>304</sup>



Figure 74. The sun shines on the *ished*-tree, hailed by the dead man and his wife. P. Neferwebenef (P. Louvre N. 3092), ca. 1360 B.C. After Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, pl. LXXV.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 38–41, 57–58

38. Thou makest the **rustlings** (**whisperings**,

**breezes, scatterings, splittings) of the**  
[JSP adds: most] **noble ished-tree in**  
**Heliopolis when thou awakenest**

39. **every day and seest (or upon**  
**beholding) the ray(s) of the sun.** Amon  
comes to thee bearing the breath(s) **of life;**  
**he causes thee**
40. **to begin (or make) breathing in thy**  
**coffin and come up to earth every day.**  
[JSP continues: There is given to thee  
**the book ... ]. The Book of Breathings by**  
Thoth is as **thy protection(s);**
41. **thou breathest by it every day [JSP**  
**adds: like Re] when thine eye beholds**  
**the rays of Aton [fig. 74].**
57. ... **Re shines upon thy cavern (house,**  
**hill [JSP: high place]) [fig. 75], Osiris**  
**(or O Osiris!), that thou mayest (or**  
**mayest thou) breathe and live**
- 58 (3/15). by his rays.

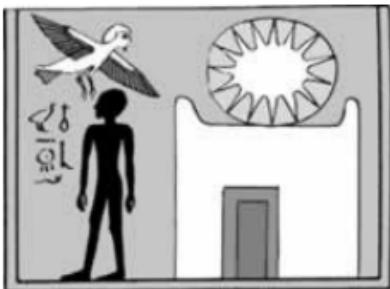


Figure 75. The dead goes forth when the sun shines on his home, represented as house, tomb, and horizon. Here he stirs forth as a shade, his *ba* accompanying him. P. Neferwebenef (P. Louvre N. 3092, BD 92), ca. 1360 B.C.

## Commentary: The Awakening

We have seen that the Opening of the Mouth rite was a resurrection, a rebirth, a restoration, a healing—a new creation.<sup>305</sup> It began in the “workshop,” where the preparation of a statue of the deceased represented the creation of his body, corresponding to the preparation of the mummy in the House of Gold. In each case, the body is first formed and then life is put into it by the Opening of the Mouth ordinance. The rite was discussed above in

connection with washing and anointing, that being its nature, but it can introduce any main phase of an initiation; and in our Book of Breathings the formula is given in lines 36–37 and line 57, in contexts in which the theme is the awakening of the initiate into a new world (lines 38–41). The idea of an awakening is the most obvious of all imagery for both the resurrection and the creation of man.

## The Rising Sun Awakens All to Life

Before considering the all-important *ished-tree*, let us look at the circumstances of the awakening. It is natural to describe the resurrection of the dead as an awakening from sleep: “Thou sleepest that thou mayest awake; thou diest that thou mayest live!”<sup>306</sup> “The Great One awakes. . . . Osiris has risen to his feet.”<sup>307</sup> One awakes into a new life and a new world. Initiation as passage is

beautifully expressed in the Judeo-Christian *Epistle of Barnabas* 6.11, 16: “He made us new by the remission of sins; he made us another type, that we should have the souls of children, as though he were creating us afresh. . . . We are they whom he brought into the good land.”<sup>308</sup> The Egyptian endowment begins with the awakening of the candidate, who, having just passed through the purifying “waters of Re,” emerges now as flesh upon the earth; <sup>309</sup> he has now come to “the secret land (*tȝ stȝ*),” and the actors in the rites at this point all change their costumes to match the shifting of the scene to “a mythical place.”<sup>310</sup> In coming down to earth, the subject changes his name and his identity: “I live in the members of my father Atum. I am . . . he whom Atum created with (*or as*) Neper when he sent me down to this earth . . . when my name became Osiris, son of Geb (the earth).”<sup>311</sup> In the *Stundenwache*, the

awakening of the dead is dramatized as repeating the original creation of man by Geb, who, after “organizing” all his members and organs “opens thine eyes for thee and stretches thy wrapped limbs,”<sup>312</sup> having done the same at the creation of the first man to make him great and mighty and strong and give him dominion over all things.<sup>313</sup> At the completion of his purifications, Pharaoh is pronounced pure, even as Horus the newborn babe, washed by the four pure goddesses,<sup>314</sup> he is pure as Horus-Min (the first man) when he ate the fruit in the garden and his eyes were opened.<sup>315</sup> He is weak, like a newborn babe: “The god awakens in peace, in weakness.”<sup>316</sup>

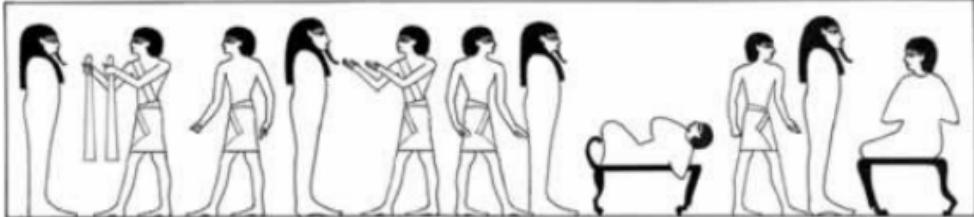


Figure 76. The dead (his mummy, or his statue standing as proxy) is clothed, greeted and instructed, and conducted into the presence of the sleeping *sem*-priest, playing a role, who then arises. Reconstructed drawing from the tomb of Menna (Theban Tomb 69), ca. 1380 B.C.

## The Sleep of Sem and the Awakening of Adam

One of the most discussed episodes of the Egyptian initiation ceremonies is the so-called Sleep of *Sem*, which “has puzzled all inquirers.”<sup>317</sup> As the scene opens, we see the *sem*-priest sitting—huddled in the embryonic position and covered with a skin wrapper representing the womb<sup>318</sup>—on a special kind of bed or low settee, as if he were asleep, beside a statue which is to be symbolically animated (fig. 76). This is the first episode

in the Opening of the Mouth,<sup>319</sup> and the statue is necessary in the funerary version because the real subject is dead, though his wrapped mummy sometimes serves in place of the statue. As Otto explains it, there is one other person in the room, the *imy-is* or “officiant of the chamber,” who stands behind the sleeping person and calls out four times, “My father!”<sup>320</sup> At the same time, two other figures quietly move onto the scene; they are *hry-hb.t* with the script, and the *imy-hn.t* in charge of this particular room or episode,<sup>321</sup> who are to take specific roles (Otto calls them *Gegenredner*) in the play that follows.<sup>322</sup> In our Breathing text, they are probably Ptah and Amon, standing on each side of the seated and sleeping figure to form his body and put the breath of life into it (lines 20–21). The sleeping man speaks: “He has broken me! (*sd.n=fwy*)” and sleeps on. Then either he or the *imy-is* says, “He has

thrust me forth!" and then cries "My father!" four times, after which the officiant cries out, "Awake, thou sleeping one!" "The sleeper awakes and notices the three *i**my.w-hn.t* (*lit.* "those in the room") who have entered while he was sleeping," or else the *i**my-is* is now joined by the two new arrivals.<sup>323</sup> As Otto sees it, the *sem* pretended to sleep and then, upon his awakening, announced that he had seen the father in his sleep.<sup>324</sup> The various words used for "sleep" suggest to Otto that they are meant "as stage directions, indicating the instructions to the participants."<sup>325</sup>



Figure 77. The inscription announces that this is “the sleep of *sem* performed in the Golden Room (creation room, workshop)” and that there is also an awakening. Reconstructed and adapted from drawings and photographs of the tomb of Seti I, ca. 1290 B.C.

As Helck interprets it, it is two men, the *i-my-is* (“head of the workshop”) and *hry-hb.t* (“reader for the ceremonies”), who awaken the sleeper. He says, “I lay there and was awakened; I slept and someone touched me. I have seen my father in every form,” whereupon the two ask him, “Is not thy father with thee?”<sup>326</sup> As S. Mayassis tells it, upon

awakening, the *sem* immediately hunches up on the bed and says to the four priests (the *magasinier* and three officiants), “I have seen my father in all his forms” (fig. 77).<sup>327</sup>

Sleep, like water, is one of those images in which reality and symbol meet and fuse. It is both the rest of the body and the freeing of the spirit. The sleeping of the *sem* represents, according to Helck, the spirit’s sojourn in a distant world, in which the candidate visits his dead father in order to receive his “personality.”<sup>328</sup> Mircea Eliade sees in the initiation a ritual death, or *regressus ad uterum*, making it possible for the subject, through the ordinances, to enter the earthly phase of his existence as a true man.<sup>329</sup> Karl Kerényi notes that for the Greeks, a man’s true creation was completed in the ordinances, before which he was *atēlēs*—unfinished, uninitiated.<sup>330</sup> Mayassis posits that when the *sem* says, “I have seen

my father in all his transformations,” he is ready to be reborn at a higher level.<sup>331</sup> The ritual sleep may also be the “visit to Hades” required by initiation.<sup>332</sup>

What all interpretations agree on is the sojourning of the man’s spirit in another world with his father before being thrust forth to awaken in this world. He is, however, aware of the situation only while he is still asleep, for in the mysteries everywhere, the sleep is also a forgetting. As Alexander Altmann points out, “The place where the dream of Jacob occurred is the place where Adam was created,” according to Jewish tradition, “namely, the place of the future Temple”; there we behold how, “in his earthly existence, Jacob, who stands for Man, is sunk into sleep, which means he has become forgetful of his image and counterpart upon the Divine Throne.”<sup>333</sup> Joseph Smith makes a like connection

between Jacob's dream and the temple.<sup>334</sup> Altmann relates this to the gnostic idea that sleep represents spiritual death, the "forgetfulness of man's divine origin."<sup>335</sup> What we see in Jacob at Bethel, the place of the temple, is really "Adam who has forgotten his image on the Divine Chariot ... asleep down below."<sup>336</sup> A very early Christian writing tells how Adam, having settled things with the rebellious Lucifer, proceeded to come down to earth with a heavenly escort but, upon arriving, fell into a deep sleep.<sup>337</sup> One seems to get some such picture from Coffin Text 149: "I came forth from the council of the President of the Westerners. I slept, being separated from him, being watched over by those who belonged with him in the realm of the gods (*hr.t-ntr*)."<sup>338</sup> The cry of the sleeping *sem*, "He has broken me! He hath thrust me forth!" recalls both the expulsion of Lucifer and the

sending down of Adam, as set forth in the *Discourse on Abbatōn*.<sup>339</sup>

The close association between coronation and creation is seen in the pyramid rite in which the king is commanded to shake off sleep, arise, and receive his power in Heliopolis—meaning, Joachim Spiegel points out, to perform the ordinances of coronation.<sup>340</sup> Of particular interest is the dramatic text from the cenotaph of Seti I, being an adaption—or an imitation—of much older writings, according to Adriaan de Buck, who stresses both the great importance and the baffling nature of the text. After the first few lines, de Buck finds the document “utterly unintelligible”—“a large part of it consists of little more than incoherent words and disjointed phrases.”<sup>341</sup> This is a good illustration of de Buck’s own dictum that the real difficulty in understanding an Egyptian text lies in our ignorance of “the plot and

story of the spell as a whole.”<sup>342</sup> For, once we have an inkling of the *sem* situation, the totally incomprehensible dramatic text of Seti I begins to make good sense.

Though it must be borne in mind that “the text is written in an unfamiliar and partly enigmatic orthography,” having been transmitted from generation to generation of scribes in a process which contributed to the steady deterioration of the manuscripts and knowledge of their contents,<sup>343</sup> still, the number and the sequence of the peculiar episodes leave little doubt that we are dealing with the “sleep of *sem*.” First, we see Horus confined and helpless, represented by the *sem*-priest “sitting down” on the earth.<sup>344</sup> Then he gains strength and arises, rejoicing; joins his wife and mother (marriage and birth are fused in the ancient year-rites); has his eyes opened; goes through a purification and birth ceremony;<sup>345</sup>

becomes as a child;<sup>346</sup> is told to put forth his hand and gather or partake of something or other;<sup>347</sup> and then propagates the race, leading to a repetition of his own rebirth.<sup>348</sup> The whole chain of events begins with the *sem*-priest sitting completely alone and withdrawn, apparently distressed “because Geb [the earth] has confined him.”<sup>349</sup>

## The Instructors Arrive

In the sequence of ordinances,<sup>350</sup> the *sem*-priest performs most of the rites, taking the role of the sleeper<sup>351</sup> and the beloved son.<sup>352</sup> What follows the awakening? Three *imyw-hntyw* stand before the seated *sem*-figure to reassure and instruct him.<sup>353</sup> Just as in an early episode of the Breathings text two deities (Amon and Ptah) formed man and put breath into his nostrils, so now two messengers come from above to instruct his mind,<sup>354</sup> specifically to instruct him in the

carrying out of certain ordinances: after the sleeper wakes, a messenger is sent forth from *imy-ht-hr* (also called *imy-ht-wr*; both terms indicating the very highest of all in authority) to fetch Horus (the king) “that he might carry out the necessary ordinances that follow.”<sup>355</sup> In the very ancient Ramesseum drama, it is the divine teacher Thoth himself, the instructor in all the mysteries, who appears to teach Horus beside the *m3*-tree,<sup>356</sup> even as he instructs the high priest Hor in the temple in the Setna cycle.<sup>357</sup> In the Jewish tradition, when Jacob falls asleep, as Adam did, he is visited by angels who come down to teach him the ordinances.<sup>358</sup> The Coptic *Apocalypse of Adam* has Adam say: “But I slept in the thought of my heart, and I saw three men before me whose form I did not know. ... They said to me: ‘Adam, arise, and learn about this world and about thy posterity!’”<sup>359</sup>

The sending of instructors is in keeping with the promise of the three *i.my.w-hn.t* to the *sem*: when he reports, “I have seen my father in his physical body (*qd*),” they reply, “Thy father will not leave thee alone,” and the peculiar language they use suggests to Otto that they are promising the sending of a “heavenly messenger (*wn, Götterbote*)”<sup>360</sup> to the initiate. After this promise, we next see “my father in his created body praying to God.” Whatever father this may refer to, the word for “praying” is written with the unusual ideogram of a praying mantis, suggesting a particular gesture of supplication.<sup>361</sup> In the Book of Day, as Re himself has come down to the Field of Rushes and walks with the subject, presently two “mysterious figures arrive” to assist;<sup>362</sup> they are none other than Ptah and Thoth. The interesting thing here, as in our Breathings text, is that the candidate does not go to

heaven to meet the gods, but they come down to earth for his benefit.

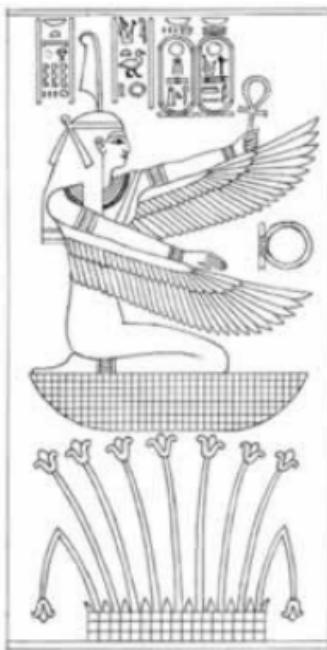


Figure 78. Maat, designated as “Daughter of Re and Queen of Heaven,” is seated on the *nb*-symbol of dominion in a flourishing lotus pond or papyrus thicket, bestowing both life and breath. Reconstructed from drawings and photographs of entrance to the tomb of Ramses III, ca. 1180 B.C.

## Enter the Lady

But the awakening is not complete without the presence of a lady. When the sleeping

*sem* opens his eyes, he sees not only the two or three messengers who have awakened him but beholds a much pleasanter sight: a fair woman is standing nearby, and the messengers say to her, “Isis, go to Horus, that he may seek for his father!” This means, according to Otto, that the man must join company with the woman “that he might carry out the necessary ordinances that follow,” even as Isis led Horus to the presence of Osiris, whom he was seeking.

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In our *Breathings* text, at the moment the initiate starts breathing and first sees the rays of the sun, he is hailed as Maat, written not with the usual abstract symbol of truth but with the picture of the Lady herself (lines 40–41); she is the Lady with whom he has to do more than any other. But who is Maat? We have already noted some of her symbolic aspects; but aside from them, she is Eve—as mother, but especially as wife and

companion. Her name, according to Frankfort, illustrates “the impossibility of translating Egyptian thoughts into modern language,”<sup>364</sup> and Professor Rudolf Anthes states: “The idea of Maat cannot be rendered by any word in any other language. . . . In the following [study] a translation has been avoided.”<sup>365</sup> But nobody can leave Maat alone, because she is an altogether agreeable figure. Of all the Egyptian deities, only she has nothing disturbing or in any way sinister about her; she is altogether good, desirable, and delightful. She is very close to the king,<sup>366</sup> the earliest pharaohs calling themselves “Lords or possessors of Maat.”<sup>367</sup> Some maintain that she is a pure abstraction of the human mind, a personification, an idea, an ideal divinity—nay, “the very essence of all divinity”;<sup>368</sup> but in spite or perhaps because of this, she is always very feminine. And though, like

every important female deity in Egypt, she is sometimes identical with the great Mother herself—as when she appears as the mother of Re, from whose side she never parts<sup>369</sup>—“the goddess Maat was most often called the *daughter of Re*” (fig. 78)<sup>370</sup> and corresponds to Horus, the son, as Hathor corresponds to Re, the father.<sup>371</sup> She is the king’s royalty itself,<sup>372</sup> and at the coronation the new king becomes entirely fused with her as “Lord of Maat. . . . ‘Thy right eye is Maat, thy left eye is Maat, thy flesh and members are Maat. . . . The garment clothing thy members is Maat, what thou eatest is Maat, what thou drinkest is Maat. . . . Thou existeth because Maat existeth.’”<sup>373</sup> This is said of Horus, but Re depends no less on Maat, without whom he cannot function as creator,<sup>374</sup> since Maat was “something established by the primal god and then periodically guaranteed by the king when he

ritually overcomes the chaos of the universe to establish the world order.”<sup>375</sup>



Figure 79. Many texts insist on the complete identity of male dignitaries, particularly the crown prince, with Maat. In the Book of Abraham, Facsimile 3, fig. 4, she takes his place as the “Prince of Pharaoh.”

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## Maat as Wife and Mother

Nothing is complete without Maat, and where she is present all is well. Naturally, she is the wife of Thoth as the “great judge who fixes the laws and pleases the great lady of the gods (Hathor of Denderah) by his sentences.”<sup>376</sup> When we are shown scenes of the king offering Maat to Hathor,<sup>377</sup> we see

her as the younger of the Two Ladies. If Hathor is the perennial Mother, Maat is the perennial consort and wife: “Maat embraces thy neck as an amulet; she rests upon thy breast.”<sup>378</sup>

Maat displays a capacity absolutely unique among the deities of Egypt for fusing, joining, wedding herself with another in joyful and salutary combination; of course, the union must always be proper and legal since Maat, by very definition, is legality itself (fig. 79). Nay, Maat is “the embodiment of every possible social relationship,” male or female,<sup>379</sup> and is immune to the slightest hint of scandal since she is honor, uprightness, and legality personified, representing truth, justice, and order in the corporate life—three ethical values which are “a reflection of the cosmic order.”<sup>380</sup> She represents things as they should be, the “perfect status quo,” which,

unfortunately, does *not* prevail in this world.<sup>381</sup> She is Wisdom (*hōkhmāh, sophia*), who plays a dominant role as the most vivid personification in early Jewish and Christian literature.<sup>382</sup> She is the female component of everything, without which nothing can exist and without which nothing is complete: “kings and judges were nothing more than her representatives on earth,”<sup>383</sup> for “Maat … is … the female principle, analogous to the male ruler of the universe; … for the contemplative consciousness it is all one and indivisible.”<sup>384</sup> Hence if Akhenaton brought the cult of Maat to a new high in Egypt, he also wanted everyone to know that he shared all equally with his darling wife.<sup>385</sup>

If, then, the subject of our Book of Breathings seems to have a love affair with Maat, we may be assured that everything is in proper order. In the waking of the sleeping

*sem*, the role of the woman remains puzzling because “the texts give neither the rites nor the ceremonies in their completeness,” Mayassis finds; in some versions it is the Lady herself who awakens the sleeper.<sup>386</sup> In the Coptic *Hypostasis of the Archons*, the “spiritual woman” comes to the sleeping Adam and says, “Arise, Adam! and when he sees her he says: ‘It is thou who hast given me life! Thou shalt be called the Mother of the Living!’ She is indeed my mother, even the physician”<sup>387</sup>—that is, she both gives life and restores it. In the Babylonian rites, it is “the queen of the dark room, … Mother of the Temple,” Innini, who enters “the chamber of Ea” and awakens the sleeper, crying: “Arise, thou sleeper! The gates of heaven are open!”<sup>388</sup>

The woman can be designated by any of the names of the great mother-goddess; as Isis, she is *myriōnymos*, “the Lady of

Countless Names.”<sup>389</sup> But in the present context, she is usually Nut: “Thou art a king, because thou art not to be distinguished from Osiris, Re of Heaven,” says the priest to the candidate in the text of the Anchnesneferibre Stela. “Thou art the great son of Nut, born to Re, ... nourished with her milk.”<sup>390</sup> But we have seen that the beginning of all things, as far as this earth is concerned, was Maat, “the foundation of all order and existence.”<sup>391</sup> So it is not surprising that when the Egyptians thought in literal historical terms, they recalled that it was the lady Maat who, in the beginning, came down as a real woman and associated (*snsn*) freely with mankind in the garden, at that time when there was no enmity between any creatures.<sup>392</sup> The primordial reign of Maat “includes absolute peace reigning on earth ... resulting ... from the state of innocence” before the fall.<sup>393</sup> The woman is the beginning of all things because

she alone possesses the secret powers of creation, *hk3*; <sup>394</sup> every man passes through this mortal sphere “following after the Mother of All.”<sup>395</sup> Thausing speculates that the male element (Re, Thoth) fulfills the law of time in its motions, while the female, as his wife, though remaining in the background (she is Seshat, “the Secret One”), provides the space (the housing, cosmos) which makes possible the fulfilling of the law.<sup>396</sup> It can hardly be an accident, as Jan Bergman points out, that the names of Isis and Osiris alone are written with the same symbol—a throne or seat;<sup>397</sup> without both of them, there could be no establishment and no government. According to her name, Isis, the mother, is “the Oldest, the Greatest, the Beginning, the Primordial, Primeval, Preexistent One,”<sup>398</sup> “the First,” the “One and Only.”<sup>399</sup> Compared with her high offices of “primal mother and foundation of all existence,” the

primal fatherhood, Bergman thinks, is a very poor and feeble thing indeed.<sup>400</sup> Yet there must be a balance; the two must unite in one. The gnostics taught that when Sophia-Maat got the idea that she could bring forth and rule the world without the partnership of the male, her plans met with disaster and she repented bitterly before she got permission from the father to rejoin her heavenly mate.<sup>401</sup>

It is understandable that the waking man got the impression that the woman came first and was thus the beginning of all things,<sup>402</sup> for when he awoke into his new existence, he had forgotten the old: all he was sure of was that the woman was there *before* him—what could he assume, then, except that this, the highest of all creatures known to him, was the mother of all living? In the funeral texts, the woman does not sleep but watches. It is interesting that the Egyptians, though

following a matriarchal succession (king is a feminine word in Egyptian, as Sethe noted long ago),<sup>403</sup> have no title of queen; the royal mother in the great rites at Memphis took the parts of the queen of heaven and the divine earthly queen,<sup>404</sup> but her highest title was Wife of the God and Mother of the God.<sup>405</sup> Neith, as the first queen of Egypt, “contains in herself the powers of male and female undivided”; she is “*arsenothēlys*, ... ‘Father of the Fathers, and Mother of the Mothers.’”<sup>406</sup> On the other hand, Khnum the creator is Neith “insofar as *his* figure represents the *feminine* principle.”<sup>407</sup> The creator as “Ptah on the great throne” is, according to the Memphite theology, both “Ptah-Nun, the father who begot Atum” and “Ptah-Naunet, the mother who bore Atum.”<sup>408</sup> When Atum, “reposing in the place of his delight and exploring it,” says, “I have come forth to claim my family,” he

declares all to be in order since “Neith (Nut) came to see me … as Master of Heliopolis and God of Abydos,” and they settled genealogical problems between them.<sup>409</sup>

Wilhelm Czermak has compared the Opening of the Mouth episode to the awakening of Adam in the Bible; the man becomes “the man Adam” in the fullest sense only when he opens his eyes in a new world and, having forgotten what went before, “sees” and “knows” as his intellect awakens; but the most important thing he sees and knows is his wife, after which God makes him aware of the rest of the creation, which he proceeds to investigate and name.<sup>410</sup> John Bailey sees a like situation in the Gilgamesh epic and the Old Testament concepts, where “the woman is both the initiator of the man and at the same time she is initiated, along with him, into the knowledge of good and evil.”<sup>411</sup> The great festival of the valley ends

with a prayer to the first parents that all may receive the same enlightenment that they received: “Amon [and] Mut, … [Father and Mother!] Give understanding, strength of heart, and peace … to the *ka* of [NN] forever!”<sup>412</sup>

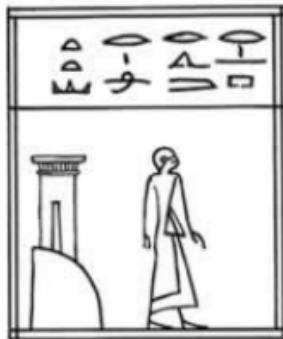


Figure 80. The Underworld, here designated as Rostau, is both the house or shrine and the mountaintop of the dead. BD 119, ca. 100 B.C. Redrawn, courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

“The basic fact when Egyptian ideas of light and darkness are concerned is the role of light in the process of creation.”<sup>413</sup> The awakening of the reborn initiate “to the light” is a stock theme of religious and

philosophical literature.<sup>414</sup> In our Book of Breathings the subject receives particular attention. From lines 38–41 and 57–58, it is apparent that the sleeper is awakened when the rays of the sun fall upon his face as he lies sleeping in the depths of the earth. These passages are especially important for setting the scene, real or imaginary, in which the rites take place.

## **Awakening by the Rays of the Sun**

***Lines 38–39, 41, 57–58:*** “thou awakenest every day and seest (*or* upon beholding) the ray(s) of the sun, ... thou breathest by it every day when thine eye beholds the rays of Aton, ... Re shines upon thy cavern (house, hill), Osiris (*or* O Osiris!), that thou mayest breathe and live by his rays (*or* when Re shines upon thy cavern, thou breathest and livest by his rays)”

The idea is the same—that it is the rays of

the sun that bring life into the dark grave and underworld. The sign for “cavern” gives a number of choices: *wbn R<sup>‘</sup> hr qr.t=k* (when Re shines upon thy cavern) or *hr qr=k* (upon thy high place), or, in the Joseph Smith manuscript, *hr tp hw.t=k* (upon the roof of thy house). The determinatives for hill, mansion, and cavern are almost exactly alike in hieratic (fig. 80; cf. p. 345, fig. 108),<sup>415</sup> and they are equally relevant to the present situation, in which the sun penetrates to a particular spot on or in the earth in order to initiate the miraculous return of life.

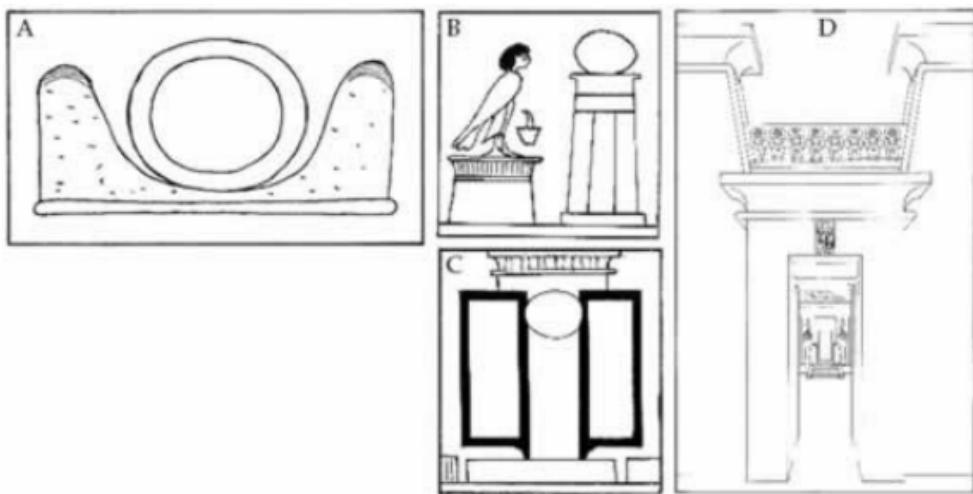


Figure 81. Various ways of showing how the sun must rise between mountains (A), as well as temple pylons (B and C), indicating the significance of orientation in tomb and temple. Eight baboons greet the rising sun between the wings of the pylon (D).

(A) Egyptian hieroglyph, *ȝh.t*, meaning “horizon”; (B)

P. Wesay, Khary, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 9949

© Copyright The British Museum; (C) TCD MS 1661/2 by permission of Board of Trinity College Dublin; (D) reconstruction of second pylon, funerary temple of Ramses III, Medinet Habu, ca. 1180 B.C.

## The Temple as an Observatory

It has often been noted that the great Egyptian ritual complexes, especially those at Heliopolis, belong to the tradition of the megalithic centers. The Pyramid Texts definitely associate standing stones with the observation of heavenly bodies and their motions: “O Rē‘-Atum, this King comes to you, an imperishable spirit, lord of the affairs(?) (*hrw.t*) of the place of the four pillars. . . . May you traverse the sky, being united in the darkness; may you rise in the

horizon, in the place where it is well with you.”<sup>416</sup> The four pillars are, as Raymond Faulkner notes, the four cardinal points;<sup>417</sup> the spell is repeated four times, perhaps once in each direction, since the king must be throned facing four directions at his coronation.<sup>418</sup> The marking of celestial motions by apertures is clearly indicated in Pyramid Text 503 §§1078–81: “The sky is opened, the earth is opened, the apertures of the celestial windows are opened, the movements of the Abyss are revealed (*lit.* opened) [fig. 81],<sup>419</sup> the movements of the sunlight are released. . . . I seat myself upon (the throne) ‘she who preserves justice.’ I am back to back with those gods in the north of the sky, the imperishable stars. . . . When Montju is high, I will be high with him; when Montju runs, I will run with him.”<sup>420</sup> The apertures which reveal the motions of heavenly bodies suggest a sort of

observatory. Association of Maat with “the movements of the sunlight” is now confirmed by Wolhart Westendorf’s study of the huge, ancient *maat*-stones that directed the beams of the sun’s light into the interior of the temple.<sup>421</sup> The throne of Maat, who guarantees the orderly motion of all things,<sup>422</sup> suggests the augural throne, here facing south for the proper observation of the heavens—in this case, of a specific heavenly body, Montju being, Sethe and Faulkner suggest, the name of a star. This recalls the Roman augur observing the heavens from his augural seat in the center of a *templum*, marked out on the ground and probably designated by stones.<sup>423</sup> The opening of palace or temple (*pr-wr*, “great house”) to the sky for purposes of observation is indicated in Pyramid Text 456 §§852–56: “Hail to you, Great One. . . . The roof (?) of the *Pr-wr* is torn off (?) for you, the *Pr-nzr*

serves you, the apertures of the sky-windows are opened for you, the movements of the sunshine are released for you. ... Hail to you, Soul who are in your blood ('an allusion to the reddened sun and sky at dawn'),<sup>424</sup> ... who takes his place at the zenith of the sky (vs. Sethe: 'at the point where earth and sky meet').<sup>425</sup> ... You traverse the sky in your striding. ... The King knows ... these spells of Harakhti, ... and the King's hand will be held in the sky among the Followers of Re."<sup>426</sup> Faulkner suggests that perhaps "the roof is torn off to admit the sunshine."<sup>427</sup> The whole passage is a reminder that the most august title of Pharaoh was that of Great Seer, or Greatest of Seers (*wr m3.w*), the name being written with the peculiar ideogram of two stones or eyes and referring to his office of observer of the heavens in the great temple complex of Heliopolis.

The place where the heavens are observed is the place where they are closest to the earth, where heaven and earth touch; the stone pillars of the shrine are the pillars and ladders of heaven<sup>428</sup> (compare “the three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder” as the three degrees of glory).<sup>429</sup> The sun temples of the Fifth Dynasty, Thausing points out, “were not buildings but ways marked by mighty stones.”<sup>430</sup> Karl Schuchhardt concluded that the Egyptian temple was the final development of the *Menhirgedanken* that produced the cult-places of giant standing stones found all over the ancient world.<sup>431</sup> Ernesto Schiaparelli found at Heliopolis the remains, now vanished, of an enormous stone circle six hundred meters in diameter and forty meters thick, of unknown nature, which he attributed to King Zoser,<sup>432</sup> and Lina Eckenstein long ago suggested a relationship between the Orion-Sirius cult of

Egypt and the megalithic monuments of the western Mediterranean area.<sup>433</sup> More recently, William Dinsmoor has compared Giza with Stonehenge,<sup>434</sup> with special attention to its orientation and solar affinities—an exercise which has never lacked its devotees.<sup>435</sup> Association with Stonehenge is no mere fantasy, however. A. H. Sayce, the severest critic of Joseph Smith things Egyptian, reported in the first volume of the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* the finding of “well-known Egyptian beads of Egyptian faience and coated with Egyptian blue glaze” in the barrows of Salisbury Plain near Stonehenge: he dated the beads “in the 14th century before our era” by comparison with the Egyptian article. Carbon-14 dating has recently turned the tables in a surprising manner by showing some of the megalithic remains of northwestern Europe to be *older* than their counterpart in Egypt—by some

two thousand years!<sup>436</sup> The binding link of pyramid and temple, heaven and earth, has ever been the mysterious cornerstone, keystone, foundation stone,<sup>437</sup> which applies also to the capstone of a pyramid.<sup>438</sup> The building texts of Egyptian temples claim an incredibly long line of descent from the “senior ones,” who were among the founders and builders of the mythical temples of the primeval age.<sup>439</sup> The megalithic tradition leaves its stamp everywhere: Jewish tradition tells how Adam, being cast out of Eden, longed for a glimpse of his heavenly home; God sent down a precious stone of paradise, which marked the place where the temple would stand, saying “O, Adam, I have sent down to you a temple for you to circumambulate as the angels course around my throne; pray at it as you used to pray in my presence at my throne.” So Adam continued his heavenly peregrinations on

earth.<sup>440</sup> Eusebius reports as an eyewitness in the fourth century that there is in the center of Jerusalem a stone circle (*peribolos lithinos*) enclosing an altar with an eternal light on it, tended by ascetic priests who never drink wine.<sup>441</sup>

To acquire and display the knowledge of the spheres meant anticipating their every move. The Egyptian temple was no mere shelter or dwelling place, but a structure built with the greatest precision in which every dimension was meticulously measured.<sup>442</sup> For its proper operation depended on the continuation of life on earth from generation to generation.<sup>443</sup> To possess secrets of the powers of the heavens without a knowledge of the sources of that power was impossible: the power was available, as the knowledge was available, only at certain set times and places: everything required the most exact observation. “The

pillars of heaven are uncovered for you, that you may behold the secrets that are in them.”<sup>444</sup> As the Greeks often remind us, the wise priests of Egypt were philosophers and, above all, astronomers.<sup>445</sup> Also, they were the most ancient of all scholars<sup>446</sup> since the Egyptian temples are the earliest centers of the serious study of things.<sup>447</sup> All of this is in agreement with the Book of Abraham. To be meaningful, the motions of the heavenly bodies must be measured and those measurements recorded: the imperishable stars of the Dipper are nothing less than the “makers of the annals (*gn.wt*) of *Hpr-Re*, which reveal the secrets of the places.”<sup>448</sup>

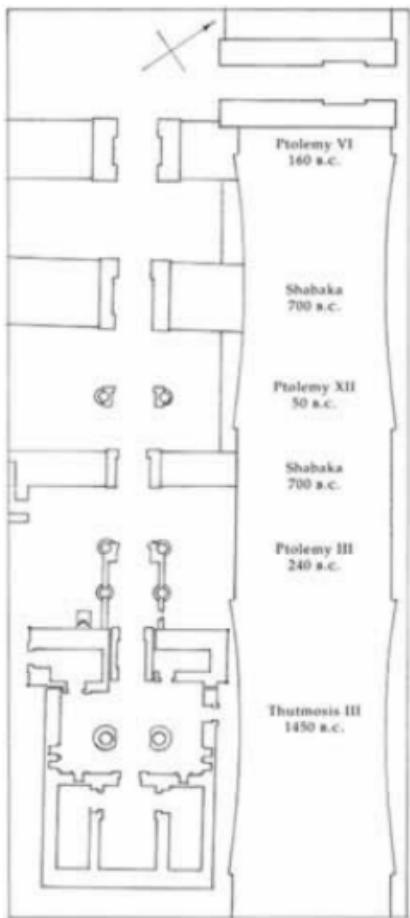


Figure 82. This is an example of how the Egyptians cherish, preserve, and expand the temple. Four pharaohs have added chambers to the original temple of Thutmosis III at Karnak—but along a central axis, preserving not the idea of home or dwelling-place of deity, but of passage and initiation. Temple of Ptah, Karnak.

But how can those motions be exactly

measured? That is one purpose of the elaborate arrangement of the early temple complex, the temple itself being a scale model of the universe (fig. 82).<sup>449</sup> The primitive arrangement consisted of at least four houses surrounding a ritual reed booth in the center, with a sterile floor of sand, an encircling fence of stones with four gates to the cardinal points, the whole open to the sky, for “only the sun was authorized to behold what went on in the court.” The whole thing was called the House of Life.<sup>450</sup> The sun cult early produced ritual complexes of staggering magnificence.<sup>451</sup> The movement of the sun and moon can be marked by the motion of shadows cast by tall upright stones<sup>452</sup> or by their disks touching such stones as viewed from a certain fixed spot, or by appearing in an aperture between two stones, or by the beam of light falling through such an aperture or window onto a marked

surface, or by the illuminating of marked surfaces set at various angles; in the case of the sun a real image of the disk could be cast by a “pinhole” without lenses on such a surface, with sunspots and (during eclipses) corona perfectly visible. Such an image could not escape any conscientious observer of the sun’s motions, which are most easily measured not by its dazzling disk but by the light patterns it casts since the real image appears projected on the ground even when the sun shines through the leaves of a tree and puts on a real show in darkened buildings. The most impressive phenomenon in nature being eclipses, the main interest of the observers in the Egyptian temples, as at Stonehenge, may have been the watching and predicting of eclipses.<sup>453</sup> That exact prediction was all-important to vindicate not only the knowledge of the priesthood, but also the order of the universe and man’s

proper adjustment to it—a reality shown in the intense excitement with which the Egyptian populace awaited the long-foretold phoenix year of A.D. 139, when Sirius, the sun, and the Nile would rise together for the first time in 1,460 years.<sup>454</sup> The Egyptians were careful students of the solar disk in all its aspects, which change constantly during the day,<sup>455</sup> and the candidate for initiation had to check the heavens and watch for the signs, “that thy name be called at the sixth-day festival; . . . that thou behold Rē‘ when he ascends, Atum when he sets.”<sup>456</sup>

The Egyptians measured the motions of the heavens, and especially of the sun, with reference to certain established markers on the earth. Their sun-clocks used both shadows and beams of sunlight.<sup>457</sup> Even the traveling Egyptian had his portable sun-watch.<sup>458</sup> The best-known alignment is the *ȝh.t* symbol of the sun rising exactly between

two mountains. The entrance to every temple was a stately pylon, arranged like the two mountains so that the sun would rise exactly between them at the turn of the year or the equinoxes.<sup>459</sup> Over the main gate was the symbol of the winged disk rising on its wings, the gate itself forming the same design as the primitive trilithon of the megalithic temple.<sup>460</sup> Indeed, tradition identified the pillars of the temple with the standing stones, or “Ghosts,” left by the ancestors as “The Place-in-which-the-things-of-the-Earth-were-filled-with-power.”<sup>461</sup> As is obvious to all, the sides of the Egyptian pylons are not vertical but always sloping; this, says Pierre Gilbert, is because they “converge toward a point very high in the sky” above the temple, a point toward which they draw our attention,<sup>462</sup> everything being designed to mark the involvement of our own lives in the course of the sun.

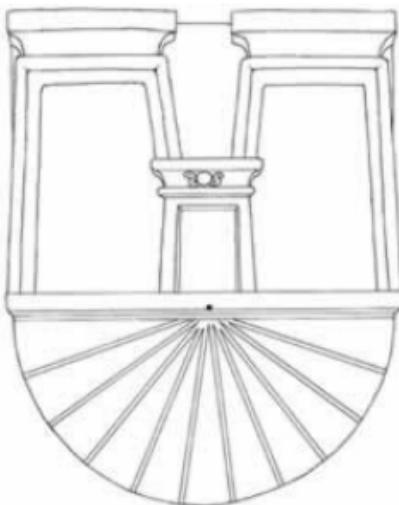


Figure 83. This small, inlaid wooden sundial reinforces the idea of the sun rising between pylons as shown by the sun-disk over the doorway. Actual size 3 1/16", Meroe, Nubia, ca. A.D. 20. By permission of Oxford University Press.

It is common throughout the ancient world to speak of the sun as rising and setting at certain gates, and the sundial from Meroe, shaped like a megalithic trilithon, shows us how old those gates could be (fig. 83).<sup>463</sup> "I know the gate in the midst of heaven by which Re comes forth in the East," says the candidate in Coffin Text 159.<sup>464</sup> Such gates are often mentioned in the Apocrypha, with

their Egyptian taste for “cosmism.” Thus the sun and the moon have a fixed series of gates for their risings and settings: “the Lord made these gates and thus provided in the sun the device for measuring the hours of the year,”<sup>465</sup> while the moon has its own series of twelve gates. Enoch reports that he “has measured the circle of the sun, and numbered its rays and its entrances and exits and all of its movements,” and done the same for the moon.<sup>466</sup> In Egyptian temples, sun-windows served the same purpose as the gates; windows, being smaller, could allow for more exact measurements. Horus presides over certain creative ceremonies when he looks through a hole at something very white on the other side,<sup>467</sup> and “the wounding of the eye of Tebi [solar eclipse?] is calculated by the counting of holes.”<sup>468</sup> We can conclude “without any doubt,” according to François Daumas, that “the sun … that comes

forth out of the celestial ocean, as indicated in the Poem of the Windows, by illuminating with its nine rays the temple of Denderah," announces "the periodic return of the order of light, triumphant over the darkness of chaos."<sup>469</sup>

A variation on the theme is the royal window of appearance, at which Pharaoh would appear to the people as the sun, shining between the two great front pylons (fig. 84).<sup>470</sup> In the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, the various heavenly bodies have their windows through which they make their appearance.<sup>471</sup> In these arrangements, the north-south procession of the sun, indicated by the lengthening and shortening of shadows cast by a sun-stone at noon, was coordinated with the diurnal east-west motion: Re is the morning sun and also the spring sun; Horakhty, the noon sun and also the summer sun; Atum, the evening sun and also the

autumn sun; Khepri, the night sun and also the winter sun.<sup>472</sup> Khepri's name stands for transition, the passing from one phase of existence to another,<sup>473</sup> so that Khepri may be the miracle of the rising or setting disk at the moment when half of it is in this world and half of it in the other.<sup>474</sup> Other heavenly bodies were also carefully observed, if only to assist in solar studies: "Geb, Nut, Nun, and Naunet all sail around at the same time," predicting the time when the solar disk will appear.<sup>475</sup> "He placed the sun in the midst of the stars, to run the seven circles of the sky, and placed 182 [half-a-year] thrones for the small day and 182 thrones for the great."<sup>476</sup> Enoch explains the reason for all this: knowledge of these things gives the best possible guide to you in the future to all the works of the Lord.<sup>477</sup>



Figure 84. The Pharaoh Akhenaton distributes gifts from the window of appearances. Tomb of Ay, Tel el-Amarna, ca. 1340 B.C. Heavily reconstructed from Davies, *Rock Cut Tombs of El Amarna*, pl. XXIX.

To be effective, such knowledge must be highly accurate, as Enoch himself makes clear: “I saw six gates, … each having 61 1/4 stades: I measured them with care, and so I knew their size; by them the sun rises and sets”; <sup>478</sup> the patriarch reports that he “has *measured* the circle of the sun, and *numbered* its rays.”<sup>479</sup> In the Coffin Texts, “The enclosing of the horizon is the

numbering (*hsb.t*) of the columns.”<sup>480</sup> Careful observation by day and night is indicated, “that I behold Rē‘ when he riseth and Atum when he setteth, that I unite with the stars of Nut, … that I may see those who are in the firmament.”<sup>481</sup> All-important is the marking of the solstice: “I set up the turning point (*wdb*) according to the reckoning of the pillars.”<sup>482</sup> “I know the two acacias of turquoise between which Re emerges, as they move with relationship (*hr*; lit. upon, according to) the ray of Shu, toward each eastern gate where Re will appear” (fig. 85).<sup>483</sup> There is no reason to doubt Diodorus’s report that the Egyptians became aware of the celestial order through observation of the sun, moon, and stars.<sup>484</sup>



Figure 85. The large sun rises between two acacia trees. The deceased and his *ba* are warmed by the god Re, as depicted by the unique wavy lines, while he worships Osiris and Isis within the shrine. P. Djespanefer, ca. 1050 B.C. Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

Though no two Mormon temples look exactly alike, the concept of orientation has always been understood: “If the strict order of the Priesthood were carried out,” the Prophet Joseph declared, “the first stone would be laid at the south-east corner, by the First Presidency of the Church. The south-west corner should be laid next . . . and the fourth, or north-east corner last.”<sup>485</sup>

Accordingly, “we commence by laying the stone on the south-east corner,” said Brigham Young as he set the cornerstone of the Salt Lake Temple, “because *there* is the most *light*.”<sup>486</sup> And at the founding of the Manti Temple, “precisely at 12m [noon]. President Brigham Young, at whose side stood Presidents John W. Young and Daniel H. Wells, broke ground at the south-east corner, and, kneeling on that particular spot, he offered the dedicatory prayer.”<sup>487</sup>

Precisely at noon on the southeast corner relates time, space, and sun in the cosmic economy of the temple.

## The Temple as a Powerhouse

The purpose of the great stone complexes was to “capture” the sun’s light as a source of power and knowledge.<sup>488</sup> The concept is strikingly illustrated in the *maat*-stones of the temples. In cyclopean structures designed

as scale models of the universe, the huge “pillars of heaven” were capped by *maat*-stones, which directed the light of heavenly bodies inward and downward into the depths.<sup>489</sup> The *maat*-stones were massive slabs shaped like the *maat*-emblem (like a chisel seen from the side), and so placed as to form narrow apertures through which the sunlight would pass along the walls of the otherwise dark interior, in brilliant contrast of light and darkness,<sup>490</sup> illuminating marked-off areas at set times, which suggests to Westendorf the passage of the sun-god through the underworld of the Amduat.<sup>491</sup> The arrangement also suggests to the same scholar that the original office of Maat “was to guarantee the functioning of the solar cycle” by controlling the beams and shadows of the temple as “Maat, the directress of the sun’s rays.”<sup>492</sup> The same arrangement could be used, of course, for observation of lunar

rays and the direct observation of other celestial bodies, as Peter Tompkins has demonstrated at great length in his impressive book, unfortunately entitled *Secrets of the Great Pyramid*.<sup>493</sup>

The priests who presided at the primitive Egyptian “House of Life” complex were privy to the knowledge of “‘the Power of Re,’ ... containing the thought which conceived and organized the universe, with the Sun as the prime mover.”<sup>494</sup> Commenting on the surprisingly accurate functioning of Stonehenge as a giant computer, Gerald Hawkins concludes, “Power and glory would surround the priest who could predict and thus seem to control those monstrous events”—namely, eclipses and other signs in the heavens.<sup>495</sup> Knowledge is the secret of controlling power, but it is not the source of power—that is the sun itself. Philippe Derchain quotes Alexandre Piankoff’s

dictum that Egyptian religion was “not a mystique but a physique, ... strangely reminiscent of the ideas of Heracleitus,”<sup>496</sup> explaining further that it is not the modern kind of religion “but rather a cosmology, an actual physical reality (*une physique véritable*), from which no one escapes or can escape, any more than we can escape the laws of thermodynamics.”<sup>497</sup> Derchain goes so far as to suggest that “one may almost compare the Egyptian temple to a central powerhouse where various types of energy are converted into an electric current, or like that control room where, by a very slight application of effort, ... the production and distribution of energy as needed is assured through the proper conductors.”<sup>498</sup> Frankfort used the same expression: “The temple, in Egypt, was a place of power.”<sup>499</sup> At least in later times, according to an inscription on the great stela of Merneptah, kings claimed to

wield the sun's vitalizing power.<sup>500</sup> As the scene of the creation drama, the oldest temple of the Egyptians was called "Place-in-which-the-things-of-the-Earth-were-filled-with-power."<sup>501</sup> The fact that any cloud or overcast darkening the sun, far from being welcome in sun-blasted Egypt, was viewed as a disaster, requiring the repetition of special hourly rites "until the shadow turns round,"<sup>502</sup> shows an astonishing feeling of dependence on the sun.



Figure 86. The sun in heaven sends its rays down upon the body on the lion couch in the tomb, thus preserving it from decay, as the inscription announces. BD 154, ca. 100 B.C. Redrawn; courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

The means by which the Egyptians thought solar power was directed and controlled betray their literal-mindedness in the matter. The use of obelisks as lightning rods is a very concrete example of directing awesome power from above to a particular spot on earth.<sup>503</sup> The doctrine that Isis became pregnant by a bolt of lightning<sup>504</sup> is quite in keeping with the idea of rebirth by a beam of light in the present text (fig. 86). The medium through which that life-giving power is conducted is, of course, Shu, the transmitting power of both light and air.<sup>505</sup>

The House of Life—the original temple complex, as Derchain describes it—was, as Gardiner pointed out, a place humming with power, so that any unauthorized person on the premises would be in mortal peril of destruction.<sup>506</sup> The constant recurrence of two symbols in the decoration of the temples—the ‘*nh*, symbol of life, and the *wʒs*,

symbol of divine power—suggests this.<sup>507</sup>  
At the House of Life, all the phenomena of  
the natural world were recorded and related  
to human life,<sup>508</sup> for there were cultivated  
and fostered those human thought processes  
which not only gave man dominion over  
nature but stood guard as the assurance that  
the universe, in all its vast complexity,  
would continue to operate.<sup>509</sup>

## **Light Penetrating the Darkness**

The most impressive daily phenomenon  
beheld by the observer of the heavenly  
bodies is the sudden appearance of *light in  
darkness*. Our Breathings text speaks of the  
person awakening when he beholds the rays  
of the sun, coming to life at the very moment  
“when the sun rises and shines (*wbn*)” on the  
place where he is. It is the dramatic first ray  
of sunlight penetrating the darkness that  
brings the new day and the new age; and that

first ray necessarily strikes the *highest* point in the landscape, which is also the most conspicuous to the dweller on the land. “O Atum, when you came into being, you rose up as a high hill, you shone as the Benben stone in the temple of the Phoenix in Heliopolis.”<sup>510</sup>

The Hopis believe that their mesas are special because the sun strikes them when the rest of the desert lies in deep shadow. Rekhmara the Egyptian felt the same way about his own mountain: “I know that Karnak (the temple) is the mountain of light upon earth, the venerable hill of the first beginning, the perfect eye of the Lord of all things, his favorite place, which wears his beauty and encloses his suite.”<sup>511</sup> The first Egyptian temple is “the Mound of the Radiant One, … the *dd*-pillar of the Earth, the High Hill, … Behdet, … First of the Mounds.”<sup>512</sup> The terrain of Egypt is

particularly favorable for brilliant displays of the light-in-darkness phenomenon. The dead prays to “see the solar disk when he shines upon the mountains.”<sup>513</sup> The first act of Pharaoh at the New Year is to mount up to the highest point of the temple to be the first to see the sunrise: “This god mounts up the east stairway with his great diadem to see his disk.”<sup>514</sup> For from prehistoric times the temple was thought of as a mountain: “In Heliopolis, the Benben-stone as an obelisk on a base had become the local equivalent of the primeval mound, and was the place of manifestation of Rē‘ when he arose in the morning, it being illumined by his rays.”<sup>515</sup> Many have identified the pyramid also with the primal hill, which “figures as the birthplace and the place of first appearance of the primal god, and the place where the oldest god sat enthroned.”<sup>516</sup> In particular, the golden capstone of the pyramid, the sun-

kissed top of the mountain, through which the power of the sun and the pharaoh was suffused upon all down below, was “the only point of contact with the gods.”<sup>517</sup>

Accordingly, the coronation is basically “the appearance of the god of light upon the primal hill,” recalling “the initiation of the rule of the sun-god in the beginning of all things.”<sup>518</sup> “Hail, Atum! Hail, Khepri! Thou art exalted as a hill (*or* on the hill), thou hast arisen as the *benben*-stone (*or* on the *benben*-stone) in the Benben House in Heliopolis.”<sup>519</sup>

The thrill of the first beam of sunlight on the high place is, of course, the promise it brings to all those sitting on the dark plains below. It is when the sun comes “shining on his mountains, … by whose eyes the earth is illuminated,” that “the dead (in the underworld) leap (for joy), the sleepers awake,” for they know what is coming.<sup>520</sup> “A

profound symbolism has been incorporated in the architecture of the pyramids,” writes Bleeker; “the mound of the creation” is also “a sign of triumph over death” since it “embodied the hope that the pharaoh might participate in the resurrection of the sun-god.”<sup>521</sup> At the *sed*-festival, according to the same scholar, the crown prince climbs the primeval hill at dawn, “thus causing the day to break” in “a sort of New Year’s Day,” representing “the re-establishment of order and prosperity.”<sup>522</sup> Shu, who as ether or light transmits the rays of life through space, climbed the Hill of *Wnn* (Being), where the creator-god, Re or Amon, was born; this, Gustave Lefebvre suggested, symbolized his emergence from chaos and darkness, at the same time separating Nut from Geb to provide space between heaven and earth.<sup>523</sup> The new temple at Edfu was described at the time of its dedication as “the place of the

elevation of the Lord of the Universe, the horizon of the God of the Horizon, ... the earthly stairway," standing at "the exact spot ... designated by the ancestors in the beginning."<sup>524</sup> In the Greek mysteries of Eleusis, the initiate "climbed to the level of the Telesterion, where a skylight was oriented toward the east (*opaion*) to face the rising sun at the twenty-second of Boedromion [the Equinox]" (fig. 87).<sup>525</sup>

We have noted that the *benben*-stone, the prehistoric sun-stone of Heliopolis, represented the primal hill. In the Pyramid Texts we read, "Atum-Kheprer, thou wast elevated on the height, brilliant as the stone of the phoenix in the House of the Phoenix (the *benben*-bird) in Heliopolis," the Egyptian for Heliopolis being *Iwn*, the On of the Bible, meaning an upright stone, the hieroglyphic designation of Heliopolis itself.<sup>526</sup> Alexandre Moret saw in the obelisk

a petrified sunbeam, just as he saw in the triangular sides of a pyramid the spreading and descending rays of the sun.<sup>527</sup> Likewise, James Breasted held that the “pyramid was the chief symbol of the sun-god,” going back to the prehistoric *benben*-stone of Heliopolis,<sup>528</sup> and that the king of Egypt was actually buried within the pyramid<sup>529</sup> because pyramid, pyramidion, and obelisk are all means of transmitting life-giving light and power from heaven to earth. Others have seen in the sides of the pyramid an inclined plane or, originally, a stairway formed by the rays of the Atum-Khepri, by which the king mounted up to the sky.<sup>530</sup> At Medinet Habu at the winter solstice, a sacred love song celebrates the union of Sokar-Osiris with the solar disk, just as the sun strikes the top of the obelisk.<sup>531</sup> In a suggestive passage, a Coffin Text reports: “I set up the columns to mark the solstice at the temple of Atum. I

placed the male serpent (*n 'w*) atop the column of Shu, in the place in which Atum placed the female serpent ('*nw.ty*), when Sia was coming forth, praised as this N[N] in the disk of Aten"<sup>532</sup>—a reminder of the brazen serpent atop the pole in Israel, as well as the life-restoring caduceus, though what it means remains to be discovered.

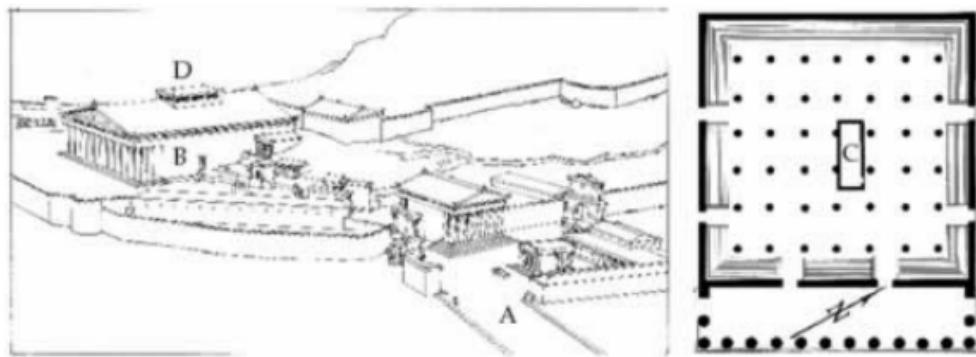


Figure 87. The mysteries of Demeter and her daughter were celebrated at Eleusis for more than a thousand years. After ritual purification, the candidates traveled along the Sacred Way (A) from Athens, entered the sanctuary complex through magnificent gates, passed a sacred cave, and arrived at the Telesterion or Place of the Initiates (B). This huge windowless hall could hold more than three thousand men and women. Though often enlarged

and embellished over the centuries, the original Mycenaean temple to Demeter was preserved in the Anaktoron (C), where the sacred objects were kept.

After a night of fasting and searching, the people were shown these things by the hierophant during the *epopteia* or the “seeing.” The *opaion* (D) was a shuttered skylight that could be opened at the critical moment to flood the interior with light, creating an unforgettable experience. What was said and done during the ceremonies has remained a secret, though it is said that the initiates returned home nobler in spirit and with a firm hope in a glorious life after death, ca. A.D. 170. Drawing based on reconstruction model.

That miraculous ray of light that strikes the highest point at the same moment penetrates to the lowest. It is “the light that shineth in the darkness”—a basic concept of the mysteries. “Hail to you, Thoth, who was chosen as lord in early morning. I am in possession of Maat. (Darkness) is (my) abomination. I (see) the light. I open the darkness.”<sup>533</sup> Things were so arranged that at a set moment of the year the sun’s rays would

reach a certain object in the dark interior of the temple and thereby set things miraculously in motion. The Egyptian funeral texts take us to deep and dark places; the temple, which contains the highest of heights, must also embrace the lowest of the depths: “Geb is the floor or groundwork and Nut is the ceiling. It is the great god who sits hidden in the interior of it.”<sup>534</sup> It is most hidden; no one knows it, no one sees it. Only the representative (*idnw*) of the sun looks upon its secrets.<sup>535</sup> In every version of the rites, there is a point at which we are taken into the lowest depths and deepest darkness: “O ye gods of the *duat*, first cavern of the west! ... I have arrived at your cave (*hp.t*), having passed the *št3.w* of the *duat*, my disk entering into the secret places of ... those who sit in darkness.”<sup>536</sup>

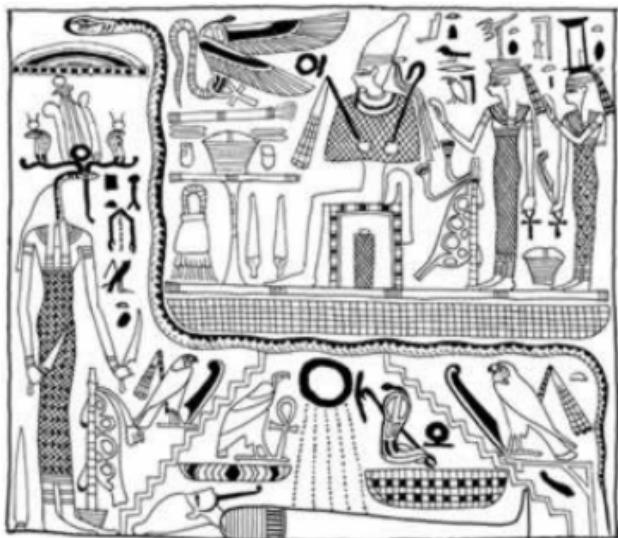


Figure 88. The sun shines upon the dead in the depths of a grave or pyramid, bringing light into darkness. Above him, the enthroned, resurrected Osiris rides a serpent. Redrawn from mummy case of Nes Khonsu. Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

It has often been noted (and digging seems to confirm it) that the oldest cult places were caves—in mountains, naturally.<sup>537</sup> The mountain which is touched by the first light is also the subterranean world within which the king lies sleeping, the womb of earth and place of incubation from which he and any other initiate will be reborn (fig. 88).<sup>538</sup> At

this point our Breathing text has the initiate being awakened when the sun's rays touch him either in the cavern, in the shrine, *or* on the mountain.

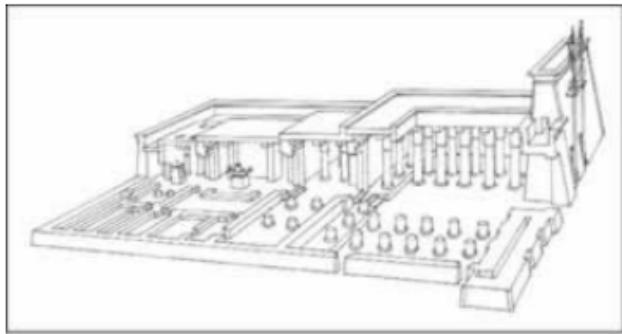


Figure 89. The basic structure of Egyptian temples emphasized procession along a single straight axis.

Though scholars were once puzzled that menhirs, obelisks, pyramids, and other solar and celestial stones were usually found at burial places,<sup>539</sup> and though some see in the *benben*-stone of Heliopolis a sun-stone (while others favor an earthly symbol of procreation),<sup>540</sup> it is not necessary to attribute this apparent contradiction to two separate stages of Egyptian religion (as

Bergman does)<sup>541</sup> since the two realms belong together as naturally as two sides of a coin.<sup>542</sup> Indeed, Leonard Lesko notes that whether we have to do with the “Osirinization of original solar texts” or the reverse, or a possible switching back and forth, the result was the same since “no matter which religion people believed in they would eventually share in the same afterlife.”<sup>543</sup> “Therefore,” he concludes, “it does not matter which tradition or guide of the afterlife is followed or which goal is sought.”<sup>544</sup> Certainly, nothing is more natural than to put these life-giving stones at the disposal of those who need them most—the dead. The rising sun first touches the peak of the primordial hill, pyramid, palace roof, etc., yet at the same time strikes its rays into the depths where the king lies sleeping. The “divine phoenix” goes to the top of the *benben*-stone to be resurrected at

Heliopolis, yet at Philae he repairs to the lowest of the depths for the same purpose.<sup>545</sup> Deep in the caves of Biga, “Isis ... guards her brother in the high mountain,” while “the great *Iwny* [the sun-stone of Heliopolis] on the top of the high mountain is identical with the glorious seat upon the Abaton,” the Abaton being the deep subterranean cave in which Osiris slept.<sup>546</sup> In the Pyramid Texts, “the good day of going to the mountain” is also the day when “he who hastened with his soul goes to his cave.”<sup>547</sup> To identify the peak of a mountain with the lowest depths of the earth may seem paradoxical, yet this is what we find in the pyramids, where the king sleeps deep within the womb of the earth-mountain which rises to heaven, the “depository of creative energy” that is both supernal and chthonian.<sup>548</sup> The embrace of the dead by the lady Nut is the embrace of the starry heavens and the dark womb of

earth at the same time, both represented by the pyramid,<sup>549</sup> for with all its exalted and heavenly nature “the Pyramid, like later royal tombs, was considered to be the Netherworld where the rebirth of the dead king took place.”<sup>550</sup> The same paradox makes Abydos the center of both the Osiris funeral cult and the heavenly Orion-Sirius cult.<sup>551</sup>

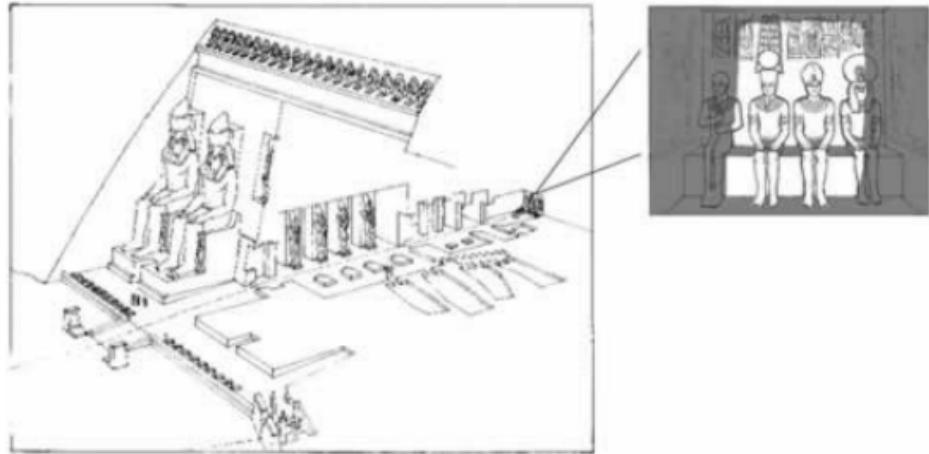


Figure 90. The most famous example of light into darkness is the huge rock-cut temple at Abu Simbel. On the anniversary of Ramses II's *sed*-festival, the sunlight penetrated 150 feet into the mountain and illuminated three statues carved in the innermost

chamber: Amon-Re, Ramses II, and Re-Horakhty, while Ptah (not a solar god) remained in the shadows, ca. 1250 B.C.

The main idea behind the arrangement of the Egyptian temple worship, according to Maxence de Rochemonteix, is *penetration* (fig. 89),<sup>552</sup> especially of light into darkness: “Thou sendest, O Re, thy glorious light into Amenti.”<sup>553</sup> While the miraculous first light strikes the mountaintop, its vital power also reaches the dead sleeping beneath the mountain (see p. 269, fig. 88); the initiate yearns to “see the solar disk when he shines upon the mountains, when his light illuminates thy cavern” (fig. 90).<sup>554</sup> With the bringing of light, “heaven and earth unite in rejoicing”; the temple is filled with light, and the creative process is initiated there.<sup>555</sup> Upper and lower, light and dark, Shu and Tefnut, the sun and the moon meet at the sacred *benben*-stone.<sup>556</sup> The Sumerian temple offers the

dramatic coincidence of height and depth,<sup>557</sup> as does the Byzantine imagery of Bishop Symeon of Thessalonica, describing the holy of holies as “heaven itself and yet the earthly paradise, … and at the same it is the sepulchre in the deepest underworld.”<sup>558</sup> The temple is the place where one mounts from the depths to the heights, where “the hill or the stairway were the symbols of the victory of deity over death and chaos.”<sup>559</sup> From the temple, writes Hippolytus, “one looks from below upwards” to the light that comes from above to that which is below.<sup>560</sup> The letting of light into the inmost recesses was dramatized daily in the Egyptian temple: “After being purified, the priest who plays the role of the king must … go to the crypt, enter it, open the doors of the chambers where he must enter, and then carry out the daily rites before the small naos.” Passing through a “mysterious corridor” in which “a

sacrificial rite takes place,” the officiants reach a stairway, where “his *ba* is united to his statue (*bs*),” which is washed, anointed, and carried up, “unveiled … and exposed to the vivifying rays of the star which contains his divine *ba*.” When the sun strikes the image, “all the earth dances.”<sup>561</sup>

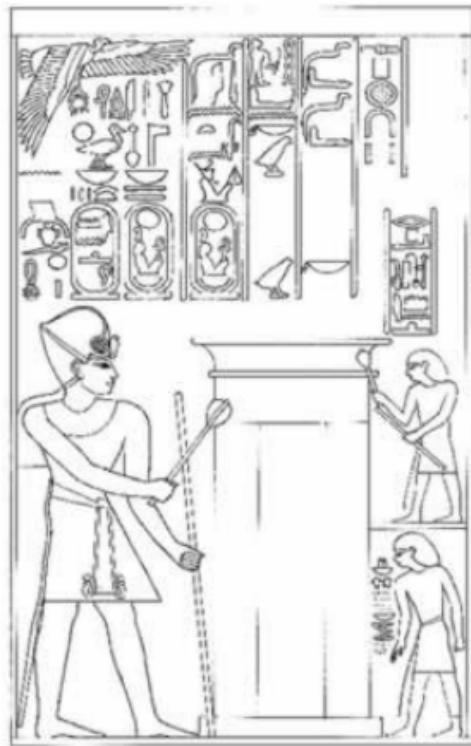


Figure 91. This ten-inch white limestone mace head shows the pharaoh digging a temple foundation near a

waterway, ca. 3200 B.C. Drawing made from a photograph of the mace head in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. To the right, Amenhotep III strikes the doorpost of one of sixteen city gates with his white-headed mace; the privilege is also extended to his vizier. This scene is a small portion of a carved relief dedication ceremony. Reconstructed from drawings and photographs of the temple at Soleb, Nubia, ca. 1360 B.C.

In a more direct version, the priest or king goes to the inner shrine or *naos* and knocks three (or three times four) times with a white mace (fig. 91); then he enters and illuminates the shrine with a holy light.<sup>562</sup> A New Year's text tells how the sun "is far off in his distant heaven; but his rays are upon his (statue) mysteriously. Khepri comes forth early from the *duat* at dawn; his full glory bursts upon the world at the House of the Apparition. ... He puts his light upon his throne (*or seat, place*) when he comes forth out of Nun."<sup>563</sup> The heart of the Egyptian temple, according

to Frankfort, was “a small dark room . . . at the end of a long road,” but that room was also the place of light topping “the primeval hill, . . . a center of immeasurable potency.”<sup>564</sup> The main idea was mounting up from lower chambers by a ceremonial stairway to final “union with the solar disk.”<sup>565</sup> The climax of the Greek mysteries was the sudden shifting from dark to brilliant light in a blinding *epopsia*.<sup>566</sup> Something of this nature is indicated in the ritual use of mirrors—the most effective device for bringing sunlight into caves. Heinrich Schäfer has pointed out that for the Egyptians, ritual mirrors are designed to represent the solar disk.<sup>567</sup>

In the lion-couch drama that we have considered elsewhere,<sup>568</sup> as set forth in the complex at Opet, the king lies in the womb of Opet in a dark chamber when the light awakens him;<sup>569</sup> the event is dramatized in

Coffin Text 312 and Book of the Dead 78, and the king is rescued from death and the underworld by “a spirit of light,” which Amon sends from heights above in the form of the Horus-hawk.<sup>570</sup>

The lamentations for the king on the lion-couch bier end the moment the sunlight touches the top of the sun-stone, making “union with the solar disc.”<sup>571</sup> Just so, in the second hour of the *Stundenwache*, “when Re’s rays touch the body of the god,” the process of revival is begun.<sup>572</sup> De Horrack renders our Breathing text, “The sun rises on thy dwelling” instead of “cavern,” *wnn*, or “mansion”;<sup>573</sup> this is unobjectionable since in fact **iwnn** is another term for the *benben*-stone of Heliopolis.

The light illuminating the dead is especially directed to the face and eyes: “After the sun . . . has illumined thy skin, its rays unite themselves with thine eyes,” upon

which “the god awakens in peace, in weakness.”<sup>574</sup> As usual, the *Odes of Solomon* talk in the same vein as the Book of Breathings: “His rays have lifted me up; and His light ... is upon my face. I have acquired eyes, ... ears, ... knowledge, ... legs.”<sup>575</sup> The late temples, Derchain finds, “are special edifices where the statue was exposed (*offerte*) yearly to the rays of the sun, on which life depended”<sup>576</sup>—not only the individual but the communal life depends on the ritual visitations of the sun’s rays to “them that sit in darkness.”

One Hor of Thebes thus describes his own initiation: “The gates of the horizon of the creator of the double heaven were opened to him; initiated into the mysteries, he saw Horus casting forth his rays. He went forth rejoicing, jubilating to the high heavens.”<sup>577</sup> When “Re shines forth out of the tomb of the god,” Horus becomes “the apple of the eye of every god, … going forth out of the head of Atum,”<sup>578</sup> the opening of the eye being the completion of awakening, in which also “the ‘eyes of the understanding’ are opened by the light of day. … This same light overcomes the power of darkness and chaos from which all things come.”<sup>579</sup> In a festival song the king, receiving the empire of the Aton-disk, is invited, “Come to thy house, Osiris; … thine eyes are opened, … the storms are driven off, the light breaks through, when thy two eyes light up the Two Lands.”<sup>580</sup> In both Egypt and Greece, portrait busts of the dead

—originally funeral busts—show the person in the process of emerging from the ground, “symbolizing the mounting up of the dead plant toward the light.”<sup>581</sup> The appointments of Papyrus Salt 825 called for a central shrine in which reposed “a small mummy of Osiris, symbol of life”; only the sun was authorized to look into that place, and “at the moment the sun’s glance fell on the court ... to unite itself with Osiris, ... Osiris and the sun became united [see p. 110, fig. 26B]. ... In some places the rays of the sun revived the mummy,” the all-important “House of Life being a chapel of union of the god with the sun.”<sup>582</sup>

The symbolism of the penetration of the light into the darkness is as much at home in the Christian world as anywhere: “The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up”

(Matthew 4:16). This is the theme of the *descensus*, Christ's descent into hell, which was dramatized in the Middle Ages as the "harrowing of hell" and of recent years has been attracting the attention of increasing numbers of scholars. The Egyptian Horus, as lord of life, visits Rostau to inspect it, going up and down and comforting the inhabitants with his presence.<sup>583</sup> In the Book of the Two Ways, the deceased himself goes down in the bark of Re to "[lighten] the darkness" —nay, to "dazzle" it.<sup>584</sup> The theme of the Amduat is the god of light passing through the underworld, bringing life and hope to those who dwell there. In the eighth hour, at the command of the sun-god, the gates of hell spring open so that the light can break through into the darkness. The images of the gods become visible, and the voices of the dead souls beginning to join with their bodies that are stirring to life answer him

from the cavernous depths with a humming, buzzing, confused, incoherent chorus of animal-like noises.<sup>585</sup>

Though “the idea that the sun ‘awakens’ the dead on his entry into the other world is not often formally expressed” in the Egyptian texts,<sup>586</sup> it is clearly indicated in our *snsn* writing, as in a Denderah inscription in which the sun causes one to “see with her eyes, hear with her ears, and to walk forward” as, “penetrating mystically by the apertures of the temple to the statue hidden in the darkness of the sanctuary at the heart of the sealed naos, the sun unites itself with the divine image and the cosmic return of the light.”<sup>587</sup> When the sun comes “shining on the mountains, … the earth is illuminated,” and “the dead leap (for joy), the sleepers awake, the dead start looking for something to eat.”<sup>588</sup> The individual claims the visitor’s attention: “Thou shinest upon my body, thou

illuminest my sarcophagus, ... thou openest to me the prisons of Agert, thou openest to me the gates of the *duat*, I go out and enter (when I please)."<sup>589</sup> Thus the visitor addresses the guardian serpent at the gates: "I have arrived at your hole while traversing the mysteries of the *duat* in order to bring the light of my disk into the mysterious place to enlighten those who sit in darkness."<sup>590</sup> It will be recalled that in the harrowing-of-hell drama, the Lord is challenged at the gates of hell by Death and Hell, but he smashes the gates and preaches to the inhabitants of the underworld, converts them, has the apostles baptize them, and leads them up out of the lower world to realms above in a triumphal procession, with Adam at the head.<sup>591</sup> This is also the concept of the *parousia*, when the king visits his subjects while going from place to place on his royal progress, letting his countenance shine (*wbn ȝhw*) among them

and bestowing the blessing of heaven upon them until it is time to go; wherever he comes, there is jubilation and official holiday at his approach and sorrow and patient waiting after his departure. Even so, the sun's *parousia* in the underworld brings only too brief joy: "He comes! He comes! (they say) in the mounds, the inhabitants of the *duat*, they worship him; ... they acclaim him in the place of silence, even of the dead. ... The dead leap (for joy); the sleepers awake. ... We share in his beauties ... (when he comes) shining on his mountains."<sup>592</sup> The visiting god brings light and hope to them who sit in darkness, and with his passing the gates clang shut and those left behind in the dark sorrowfully resign themselves to awaiting his return.<sup>593</sup> Like the Lord among the disobedient spirits, the god teaches those whom he visits: "Osiris crosses the water to them, ... then he teaches them, the

Enlightened Ones, in that place. ... He assigns them their positions.”<sup>594</sup> “The great god comes in his ship and stays awhile in this place, imparting instructions to Osiris and to those who are with him.”<sup>595</sup> “He teaches them, and they live when he calls out to them. He gives them water and the breath of his utterance.”<sup>596</sup> At the New Year “they give him the gifts of the year with their hands. This great god then instructs them; they hail him and they live by the words and voice of this great god. Their throats breathe air when he addresses them. He instructs them in their duties, and he gives them green plants that are in their fields.”<sup>597</sup>

It will be noticed that with light and enlightenment, he also gives them the breath of life. In our *Breathings* text, “Thou awakenest daily beholding the rays of the sun, when Amon comes to thee bearing the breath(s) of life” (lines 38–39). At the *wag-*

festival one prays, “May the solar disk shine upon my breast, may its rays illuminate my cavern. . . . May I breathe the wind that issues from you, the north wind that issues (from) Nut.”<sup>598</sup> “When you illumine the earth in its darkness, you assuage the sorrow of Osiris; they who are below breathe the breath [of life], they cry out to you in acclamation.”<sup>599</sup> “O ye gods of the *duat*. . . . Your throats breathe when you hear the words of Osiris.”<sup>600</sup> The ultimate curse of the damned is that “they may not *snsn* the air, nor ever have progeny, nor see the rays of Aton,” the three worst things that can befall one, while the chosen of Osiris are so blessed that “the rays of Itn (the sun’s disk) fall upon their corpses every day.”<sup>601</sup>

Re himself is awakened to new life when Nefertem holds a lotus to his nose to start him breathing just at sunrise.<sup>602</sup> The rites of the House of Life are primarily to overcome

“suffocation.”<sup>603</sup> Light and air, conveyed by Shu, are the life-giving principles that fertilize the womb, the *ba* of the god passing through the respiratory organs to the heart bearing the seed of life.<sup>604</sup> Light comes as “the messenger of heaven and earth,” “bringing breath (*snsn*) to the nose” of the dead.<sup>605</sup> As the sun crosses the horizon, going up or down, the officiant in the temple cries out, “Heaven is reunited to the earth!” four times, and the women call, “The joy of heaven is upon the earth!” also four times; to which the officiant replies, “The god comes; pay homage!” four times, after which they chant together: “Our Lord is in his house; he has nothing more to fear!”<sup>606</sup>

## The Sun-God in the Underworld

In the hymn of Akhenaton, “where the rays of the sun-god … penetrate, the locked doors spring open and the darkness is driven

out.”<sup>607</sup> The opening of the house is the climax of the New Year’s procession: “I have opened the two doors of heaven; I have opened the (2) gates of earth. I travel in thy heaven. . . . I am the winds within you.”<sup>608</sup> They are joyful in anticipation of delivery: “Light is on the faces of those who are the members of Osiris. Ye shall not hold captive my soul. Ye shall not keep in durance my shadow. The way is open to my soul and to my shadow. It seeth the great god in the shrine on the day of counting souls.”<sup>609</sup> An Enoch apocryphon tells us that the Sun in his car passes through the seven hours of darkness, then, just as he rises at the eighth hour he is crowned by four hundred angels as all creatures sing a welcoming hymn: “He who brings the light has come!”<sup>610</sup> The highest state to which an initiate could attain was that of *epopteia*, face-to-face confrontation with the light,<sup>611</sup> recalling that

when Moses confronted God he became himself “Moses with the Shining Face.”<sup>612</sup>

No legend is more widespread in the Christian world than that of the Seven Sleepers, who slept in a cave within a mountain until awakened by a ray of light.<sup>613</sup> The one great concern of the dead and the main purpose of the funerary rites, according to Paul Barguet, was to be “constantly under the life-giving rays of the sun, … the goal of complete identity with Re. … Everything is reducible to the solarization of the dead.”<sup>614</sup> The *Epistle to Reginos*, or *Treatise on the Resurrection*, carries on the tradition in the Christian but still Egyptian sphere: “We have suffered with him, been raised with him, and mounted to heaven with him. But if we are manifest in the world having put on Christ, we are the rays of Christ, embraced by him until we lie down.”<sup>615</sup> Aside from all mystery, the return of the sun is a very real

experience; there is a Jewish tradition that Adam, at the time of the fall, despaired in darkness, thinking all was lost, but then was amazed to see that the sun rose up again in his new world on the following morning, and from that “he rejoiced that this is the law of the world, that day follows night and man is given another chance to make good.” [616](#)

## Notes

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24. Brunner, “Zum Verständnis der archaisierenden Tendenzen,” 159.
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573. *Wb* 1:55.
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575. *Odes of Solomon* 15:1–2.
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581. Charles Boreux, “À propos de quelques bustes  
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582. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt* 825, 1:53–55.
583. CT 60, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:255.
584. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 96.
585. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:151.
586. Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,”  
44.
587. Daumas, “Sur trois représentations de Nout à  
Dendara,” 396.
588. P. Louvre N. 3292 M/8–13, in Nagel, “Papyrus  
funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 68–69; cf. 44.
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funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 91.
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595. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:67.
596. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:71.
597. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:51.
598. P. Skrine, in Blackman, “Funerary Papyrus of ‘Enkhefenkhons,’” 126.
599. Serge Sauneron, “L’hymne au soleil levant des Papyrus de Berlin 3050, 3056 et 3048,” *BIFAO* 53 (1953): 69, 88.
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601. P. Bremner-Rhind, colophon 8, 10, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 33.
602. Nibley, “New Look,” *IE*, September 1969, 90–93.
603. P. Salt 825 9/4–8, in Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 2:12\*.
604. Müller, “Zeugung durch das Herz,” 273–74.
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606. Moret, *Mystères égyptiens*, 28.

607. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 195; English trans., 200.
608. P. Salt 825 14/1–2, in Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 2:14\*; see also 1:142, 178 n. 147.
609. Budge, *Book of the Dead: Papyrus of Ani*, 2:475; 3: pl. 18.
610. *Secrets of Enoch*, Annex, Ms. R, 6.
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## Commentary, Part 4

# The Garden Story

### Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 27, 37–38

- 27 (2/5). invocation offerings of bread, beer, flesh, and fowl, of libation water and **incense as the requirements of each day.**
- 37 (2/15)....**Thy ba is deified in the duat,** being about to (*r*; so as to) make whatever transformation (*hprw*) it desires.
38. Thou makest the **rustlings (whisperings, breezes, scatterings, splittings) of the** [JSP adds: most] **noble ished-tree in Heliopolis**



Figure 92. The lady Nut gives the candidate food and water of life from the tree, an event depicted with great frequency and variety in the Egyptian funerary manuscripts. Redrawn from Stela 159, ca. 1250 B.C.  
Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

## Commentary: The Garden of Abundance

It would seem that the standard procedure in the mysteries is to enter a new life or a new world through a garden, where one rests for a while and takes nourishment<sup>1</sup> after the

exertions and perils of the passage (fig. 92). The initiate is received at the gates of the underworld, “beside a lake surrounded by trees.”<sup>2</sup> Washed and cleansed, “he [or she] comes forth ... crossing these two heavens. ... I eat where you eat; I drink where you drink.”<sup>3</sup> “My garden is in the Field of Rest; my increase (*or* nakedness; *h3w.t*) is in the Field of Rushes.”<sup>4</sup> The recipient, wearing a garment of leaves, sits in the shade as his heart expands from the consumption of food offerings.<sup>5</sup> He puts forth his hands and eats and gorges on the wind of life!<sup>6</sup> In the Papyrus of Ani, that hero asks Nut to give him the fruit of the sycamore that he may live forever; having partaken of the fruit, Ani and his wife in the next scene are seen drinking the water of life that flows beneath the tree while they hold symbols of breath or wind in their hands.<sup>7</sup> The text explains the scene: “Hail, thou Sycamore tree of the goddess

Nut!” says the candidate. “Give me of the [water and of the] air which is in thee.”<sup>8</sup> Along with the heat that the sun provides, air and water are the prime requisites of life. As the ultimate boon to the initiate in the underworld comes the command of Osiris Khentamentit: “Let him be given by the hand of Nut the water which flows from the sycamore!”<sup>9</sup> Bernard Chapira has called attention to an old Jewish tradition that “the tree of life is planted near a source of the water of life.”<sup>10</sup> In the cenotaph of Seti I, Henri Frankfort suggests, “the trees, which symbolised natural life eternally renewed,” were watered by a canal, “which, both as Primeval Water and as inundation waters, ... represented the waters from which all natural life had sprung.”<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the other appointments and aspects of the great prehistoric cult center, it was “most especially the ‘temple of Re in

the great garden.”<sup>12</sup> In the Amduat the visiting sun-god inauguates gardening projects whenever he arrives at a new station on his progress, assigning plots of ground to the local inhabitants to cultivate for their sustenance.<sup>13</sup> In the ninth hour of the Amduat we see nine gods with wavy, life-conveying *d'm*-staves and life ('nh) symbols in their hands, causing all the trees and plants to grow in their place; the nine all have garden names—Bud, Stem, Field, etc.—while “Horus who is over the garden (pond) of the gods” stands guard.<sup>14</sup> The agricultural names are mixed with seasonal names: “He Who Divides the Seasons,” “He Who Belongs to the Seasons,” “He of the Year,” “He of the Sheaf,” “He of the Light,” “Great Light-bringer,” “Radiating One,” “He Whose Arm Shineth,” “Nepre the corn-god.”<sup>15</sup> These gods tell the sun-god: “May your seasons endure, your years be regular

(*dd*), may the proper forms (*hprw*) suit your hours. ... May spelt for bread and barley be your due! ... You circumambulate (?) the images in order to revive the fields. You are the farmers (*shty.w*) of Wernes, whose *bas* live through me!"<sup>16</sup>

The role of agriculture in the mysteries is still baffling.<sup>17</sup> But as far as the world of the Coffin Texts is concerned, Eberhard Otto draws the conclusion that it goes back to a premythical concept of vegetative immortality, in which the fertility of the earth was designated by the word *Osiris*, the earth itself by *Geb*, and the grain by *Nepre*; those words later came to designate gods for whom appropriate myths were invented.<sup>18</sup> Certainly the Coffin Texts make much of a ritual Garden of Eden in the prehistoric complex of Heliopolis: "The staff of bread is in Heliopolis, the seven things in the Field of Reeds (*sht-i 3rw*, the garden),"<sup>19</sup>

“supplying food offerings in Heliopolis … in the Field of Rest.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed it is the garden that supplies the necessary abundance: “I live on bread in the Field of Rest. My abundance is in the Field of Reeds; my basket is in my hand of these plants.”<sup>21</sup> “The horizon people say to me: Eat beneath the tree of ‘ntyw (balsam).”<sup>22</sup>

The rescue and feeding of the swimmer (Osiris) serve as a reminder that eating generally follows a crossing of the waters: “Osiris made him sleep with the *phrw* (restorative food) in the *hnhw* (bark, pun on *hnw* ‘family’); NN rides the *hnhw*-ship of *Hpr* (continuing states of being), eating as one who lives on what he eats, even on wind.”<sup>23</sup> It is the flood itself, the inundation, that provides the food.<sup>24</sup> The food offering makes a man flourish (*wʒd*; lit. “be green”) in the beyond: “I am the great food offering of the invocation offering which came forth

as a great food offering in Heliopolis. ... O ye within the Field of Reeds, I have brought this thing as a ship's cargo, ... that it might flourish there.”<sup>25</sup> It is the bringing of the year-offerings to Heliopolis for the familiar scene of the year-king presiding over the feast of abundance beneath his green bower. The Inundation is Hapy, the father of the gods who creates himself,<sup>26</sup> and “the water of the sacred lake is identical with the primaeval water, Nu(n), *and* the water of the inundation.”<sup>27</sup> Hence the feast of abundance, as a gift of the Inundation, is the supreme expression of the divine power to create. In lines 46–47 below, it is specifically Hapy, the Nile in flood, who heaps the tables with all good things (fig. 93).<sup>28</sup>

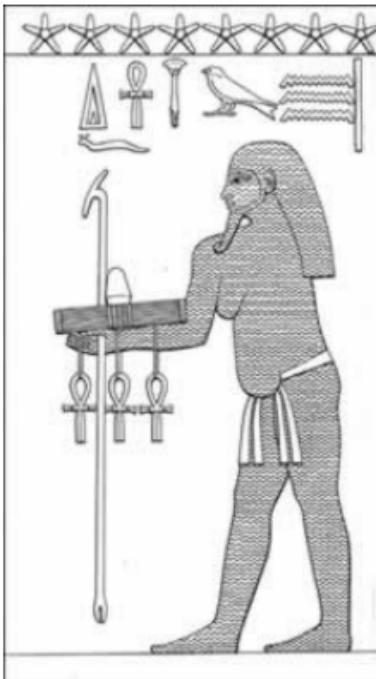


Figure 93. Early depiction of the Nile god Hapy, which shows his body covered with waves, the symbol for water. Redrawn from the mortuary temple of Sahure, ca. 2460 B.C. Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

Throughout the world the archetype of the ritual meal, shared by the living and the dead together, is an earnest of abundance to follow, especially of water.<sup>29</sup> The New Year's offering assures food throughout the year: "Behold, as for a temple-day, it is 1/360 of a year. When ye therefore divide

everything that comes into this temple, consisting of bread, of beer, and of meat for each day, that which makes 1/360 of the bread, of the beer, and of everything, which comes into this temple, is the unit in these temple-days.”<sup>30</sup>

The wisest Egyptian priests, according to Plutarch,<sup>31</sup> identify Osiris with the Nile as the principle of life-giving moisture—and hence with the seed and the grain as a benevolent parent,<sup>32</sup> creator, and king.<sup>33</sup> In the Breathing text Papyrus Louvre N. 3279, the subject makes three requests of Hapy, the Inundation, namely (1) “refreshment of the heart, [or] regeneration,” (2) “power like that of [the lady] Sekhmet,” and (3) “a happy old age . . . after the resurrection”—“a curious wish,” as Jean-Claude Goyon observes.<sup>34</sup> Specifically, the subject receives the bread of Geb, lustrations of the Nile, wine and *sdh*-beer, and especially the

incense of the breath of life, all of which is a way of denoting that the miracle of resurrection occurs every year at the moment of the inundation.<sup>35</sup> What Hapy brings is “the water of rejuvenation,” “the new water,” and in the Pyramid Texts Hapy and Osiris are mistakenly associated with each other by both being identified with that water.<sup>36</sup> In the end it is moisture, heat, and oxygen that revive the dead: the Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 Book of Breathings ends with the words, “the *rays* of Re, the *breezes* of Amon, the *water* of Hapy—all belong to me forever!”<sup>37</sup> Provided with heat, oxygen, and water—the basic prerequisites of life, the new arrival is in business on this earth.

## Lists of Food Offerings

**Line 27:** “offerings of bread, beer, flesh (cattle), and fowl, of libation water and incense as the requirements of each day”

Though lists of offerings from the temple and funeral texts contain the same dozen or so items, they appear in a variety of different combinations. The lists differ even among the various Breathing texts supplied by Philippe-Jacques de Horrack. The Joseph Smith manuscript includes the sign for woven stuff or alabaster.<sup>38</sup> A more complete list is, for example, one from the stela of the daughter of Psameticus II: “cattle, fowls, libations, wine, milk, ointment, alabaster, clothing, body lotion of Re, every good, delectable (*ndm*) and pure thing.”<sup>39</sup> Pyramid Text 208 includes roast, cakes, and drink—a regular meal.<sup>40</sup> In every temple, according to Philippe Derchain, there was a “château des vivres (*hw.t dfʒw*),” which had a cosmic significance,<sup>41</sup> the things offered by the king being returned to the land with increase, thanks to the pharaoh’s capacity to mediate between mankind and the powers of the

universe.<sup>42</sup> Here the ritual meal revives the dead. Osiris, as a god of vegetation as well as god of the dead, combines the sacrificial offering with a nourishing meal. “All plants come from him and grow from his members. ... These plants which grew up with thee are the grain. He made them for the benefit of mankind.”<sup>43</sup> The fractions of the Egyptian corn measure represented the various parts of the eye of Horus, which taken altogether represent the restored or perfect (*wdʒ.t*) eye of Horus, the symbol of the complete restoration of the hero to life and health.<sup>44</sup> The eye was eaten as sacramental bread. Thus in the very ancient Ramesseum drama: “As grain is taken to the barn, bring now to me the eye restored from Seth’s attack. [Stage direction:] The two loaves symbolize the two eyes of Horus. ... [The followers of Horus:] See, we restore unto thy face that eye which late was wine-red with flowing

blood! [Horus:] Never again shall it be taken from me. ... [Stage direction:] The eye of Horus is elevated before the congregation. ... The bread is taken to symbolize the defunct Osiris who has indeed been placed, like the grain ... in the earth.”<sup>45</sup> As the eye of Horus, the sacrificial food is of divine substance; “one may even speak of a transubstantiation” in which the *sns*-cake itself is to be viewed as deified substance, according to Siegfried Morenz.<sup>46</sup> The Egyptian sacrifice was not a naive attempt to supply the recipient with rations to keep him alive: it was not the substance of the food but its power that was shared by both giver and receiver in a “common meal of brotherhood”—a true sacrament.<sup>47</sup>

## The Lady in the Garden

As soon as the “*sem*-sleeper” awakes, as we have seen, the lady Isis is commanded to

“go to Horus, that he may seek his father!” meaning, according to Otto, “that he may perform the essential necessary ordinances that follow.”<sup>48</sup> In a creation text entitled the “Multitude of Creatures,” we hear Re immediately after the creation saying to Shu, “Shu, my son, take unto thee my daughter Nut and take charge of the multitudes [of things] that live in the night heaven; take responsibility for them (*lit.* place them upon thy head), and be their keeper (*lit.* feeder).”<sup>49</sup>

Wilhelm Czermak has compared the Opening of the Mouth episode to the awakening of Adam in the Bible. The man becomes “the man Adam” in the fullest sense only when he opens his eyes in a new world and, having forgotten what went before, “sees” and “knows” as his intellect awakens. But the most important thing he sees and knows is his wife, after which God makes

him aware of the rest of the creation, which he proceeds to investigate and name.<sup>50</sup>

That male and female must share in the ordinances if they are to be effective is indicated by the remarkable circumstance, as Goyon notes in connection with the Book of Breathings, that even when the initiate is a woman, she always expresses herself as if she were a man as she identifies herself with various divinities.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 94. The starry heavens as the embrace of the body of Nut, from which everything comes forth and to which everything returns—represented by the sun in his ship. The space beneath the heavens is spanned by Shu, who wears the feather and supports the solar-ship. He is flanked by goddesses of the east and west. Restored drawing after P. Louvre N. 3293, ca. 890 B.C. Courtesy of Louvre Museum.

In the long Book of Breathings, there is indication of a change of scene at this point, with the specific statement that in passing

from one room to another, one undergoes a change of nature: “You step into the temple of Horus and Seth. ... You sanctify yourself in his palace (passages). You undergo change(s) at the gate of Ptah (the creator); as a ram you enter the house of the rams; you pass through the hall of the birth house of the Mighty. Your heart is happy in the temple of the Lady.”<sup>52</sup> One adapts oneself to a new station, which can be done by a simple change of costume.<sup>53</sup> In Book of the Dead 21, clearly an initiation text, a figure in shining white robes emerges out of the dark with a basket on his head to lead the initiate to the “good (*nfr.t*) ways of heaven.”<sup>54</sup> Whether the initiate meets the Lady just before or just after entering a room representing the garden makes little difference since in either case the meeting comes at the initiation of a new phase of the journey or drama. In Egypt in the Pyramid Age, we find King Unas, in the

process of the ordinances, emerging from the waters to enter “the resting place of green meads (*Gefilden*) on the horizon,” which Joachim Spiegel equates with “the gardens that surround the tomb complex,” the dead assuming the role of garden-god as the coffin moves into “the so-called ‘waiting room.’”<sup>55</sup> His object here is to meet with “the high lady of Heliopolis,” Nut, the Lady of Heaven, here symbolized by the grave itself, receiving the dead into its embrace (fig. 94).<sup>56</sup> First, the king is embraced by the lady Nephthys, whose outspread, waiting arms are represented in a carving on the lid of the coffin.<sup>57</sup> Passing over the Field of Reeds to his highest station, the same king is met by “his sister Sothis, his mother the Dawn.” Their meeting represents a marital union at the heliacal rising of the star Sirius.<sup>58</sup> Finally, he “flies to heaven among the gods,” only to be met by Nut again, whom he hails

with a joyful cry of recognition: “Hail to thee, O garden of my repose!”<sup>59</sup> The journey ends as it began, with a lady in a garden. The Book of Night opens with “the Great Lady,” “Mistress of All the Earth,” “the Lady of Life,” receiving the initiate at the gate of the new world.<sup>60</sup> In the sixteenth hour of the Amduat comes the joyful announcement, “Thy mother Nut joins herself to thee, she dispels thy sorrow, … she embraces thee. … Awake, awake, in peace! … The Beloved One, the Lady of the Fruit, she who brings to thee what thou desirest.”<sup>61</sup> Before the hero puts in his appearance at the great festival of the valley, the Lady gets everything in readiness to receive him; mixing the drinks, “the Mother comes, fair of face,” to meet him, while her guest comes rejoicing and calling out, “Hail Mother, Lady of Heaven, Great Queen of All the Earth!” And so they meet, “Amon and Mut, Father and Mother.”<sup>62</sup>

The thing to remember is that in these rites “all goddesses pass as mythical ‘mothers’” and that “all their names have the same connotation of mother-goddess.”<sup>63</sup>

In the present case, the lady is Nut, “the Great Fruitful One (*nḥb.t wr:t*),”<sup>64</sup> “the Mother of all things.”<sup>65</sup> She is Mut, the mother par excellence, who represents every other goddess.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, in the drama *every* goddess named must be considered “as the mythical ‘mother’” of the candidate and of all else as well since she represents the mother-goddess.<sup>67</sup> At the beginning of a great life cycle, “Nut says to Atum: Kiss (*snsn*) thy daughter Maat; thou hast placed her upon thy nose. ... This is thy daughter Maat with thy son Shu; may his name live.” To this, Shu says: “I came forth from his nose; ... he breathed (*sn*) me out along with my sister Maat.”<sup>68</sup> Here the first pair are Shu and Maat. In the reliefs of the temple of Ramses

II, Isis is Mut, the mother, while the father is Min. Winfried Barta equates the pair—Isis and Min—to Amun and Mut, “as the parents of the king.” Each couple of the Ennead is in turn the primal pair.<sup>69</sup> The equating of Isis with Maat “ultimately reflects the coronation rites enacted in the temple of Ptah at Memphis,” that is, the most ancient creation rites.<sup>70</sup> The tendency of Maat to emerge in first place as the female lead is due to the peculiar ease, already noted,<sup>71</sup> with which she can substitute for any other deity and to the fact that she has a place not only in the coronation rites but in *all* ordinances,<sup>72</sup> where her presence is necessary to vouch for the correctness, legitimacy, and authority of all that is done; she is not only wise and far-seeing, but she is the unfailing sense of rightness and justice.<sup>73</sup> Hence when the pharaoh ritually dramatizes the creation, or rather performs “the repeating of the

creation,” doing what his father Re did in the beginning, “everything he does is creation, therefore his planning must be Maat: everything must be according to Maat.”<sup>74</sup> She is still the Stone of Truth, the green symbol of Maat that hangs at the throat of the king.

## The Lady and the Tree

The Lady is often identified with a tree, and in the vignettes to the Book of the Dead, she appears in different degrees of incorporation with the tree, the concept varying to suit the fancy of the individual tomb owner.<sup>75</sup> As Ludwig Keimer explains it, “the dead in his voyage in the other world was received by a good goddess who gave him food and drink. She usually bears the names of Nut, Hathor, and Isis but is often simply called ‘Lady of the Sycamore,’” the sycamore being a type of fig tree (see color

plate 11). Though she is first depicted as being actually incorporated *in* the tree in the Eighteenth Dynasty,<sup>76</sup> her identification with it goes back to prehistoric times. The life-giving sycamore recalled the biblical tree of life to Eugène Lefébure, who identified it with the *mfk3.t* (turquoise)-tree, the tree of the Lady of the Land of Mafek that grew in the Field of Reeds.<sup>77</sup> The tree that receives the travel-weary Osiris into its arms<sup>78</sup> performs the function of the Lady, who is so often identified with that tree. W. M. Flinders Petrie noted that in Palestine holy trees are still called “Our Lady.”<sup>79</sup> It has often been suggested that the sycamore was the original form of Hathor herself, whose proper function as Lady of the Tree, whatever name she may go by, is to receive the newcomer to a strange land with refreshment after an arduous and dangerous journey.<sup>80</sup> Let us recall that Odysseus hailed

the princess who received and revived him after his most dangerous water journey as a sacred palm tree<sup>81</sup> and that when Abraham made the most dangerous journey of his life, that into Egypt, he was rescued by Sarah, who was in the form of a palm tree.<sup>82</sup> It should also be recalled that the ladies Edjo (*W3dy.t*, the Green One) and Nekhbet received our Breathings candidate as he emerged from the waters of purification. This same Madame Edjo is “the Lady of Ammu, the pleasant trees ... Lady of the turquoise ... and of the Ammu-trees.”<sup>83</sup> When Horus was blinded or slain by Seth under the *šn-wš* '-tree, it was Hathor, the sycamore lady, who healed him.<sup>84</sup> The tree-goddess gives birth or rebirth,<sup>85</sup> the archaic Hathor of the southern sycamore being herself the “birth house of the king.”<sup>86</sup> Let us recall that our Breathings texts were found in “fourteen coffins, on each of which was

placed a bunch of sycamore branches.”<sup>87</sup> So it is with considerable interest that we next consider line 38 of our text, followed by line 37.

## The Noble Ished-Tree and Other Sacred Trees

**Line 38:** “Thou makest the (these) rustlings (whisperings, breezes, scatterings, splittings) of the (this) noble *ished-tree* in Heliopolis”

Here we meet with a variety of interpretations. The most obvious is suggested by the word *šršr*, which, with the wind- or breath-determinative with which it is written here, suggests the whispering sound of the breeze in the leaves (cf. Lat. *susurrare*, Gk. *psithyrisma*). Divination by the sound of wind in the branches of sacred trees is among the oldest and most widespread of customs in the Near East,<sup>88</sup> so

it is not surprising that the translation of this particular passage suggested in the *Wörterbuch* <sup>89</sup> is “sich am Rauschen des *išd*-Baumes erquicken? (to be revived or refreshed by the rustling leaves of the sacred *ished*-tree [?]).” Remembering that the wise lady Maat is in charge of the tree, we are reminded that “it has been maintained by some scholars” that the name of the Sibyl “is not a proper name but implies a sound issuing from a subterranean oracle, conveyed either by the rustling of the wind, as in the case of the oaks of Dodona, or by the splash of water.”<sup>90</sup> Osiris, the arch-initiate, was restored to life “by the effusion of water,” to be sure, but it was water that came from the spring that flowed from the foot of the divine fig tree at Heliopolis.<sup>91</sup> The close association of the water and the tree is vividly shown in the vignettes to chapter 58 of the Book of the Dead.

Klaus Baer renders this passage, “You have scattered the Noble Ished-tree in Heliopolis,”<sup>92</sup> and he quotes Budge, who notes that “when the deceased scatters (the pieces?) of the Ished-tree, he is accompanying Re at dawn.”<sup>93</sup> That is a typical naturalistic interpretation characteristic of Budge’s day, but there is quite compelling evidence to see here reference to the ritual *splitting* of the tree.

Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend have observed that in very early year-rites from all over the world “we hear of much sighing and crying over trees cut down, sawed in two, and the like,”<sup>94</sup> and that peculiar emphasis is placed on “removed posts or pegs, pulled out pins, wrecked axles, and felled trees.”<sup>95</sup> Ritually, the splitting or felling of the tree both terminates life and liberates it, ending the old cycle to begin the new, as is seen in the famous

Egyptian Story of the Two Brothers: When Bata, the young brother, dies, he goes to the valley of the cedars,<sup>96</sup> and his heart is shut up in a cedar tree until he can be born again. First he is sacrificed as a bull, and two *persea (ished)* trees spring from his blood in the temple court. The jealous queen orders the trees cut down with an ax, and during this operation some of the flying chips enter her mouth, whereby she conceives and brings forth the same Bata!<sup>97</sup> In the book of Daniel, the tree that was split was the king himself (Daniel 4:13–15, 22); however, the stump was not destroyed but preserved for a seven-year period (Daniel 4:23), during which time the king was ritually humiliated, eating grass as an ox and growing feathers and claws like a bird (Daniel 4:33; cf. Apis-bull and Horus-hawk), only to resume his throne with all his glory greatly enhanced at the end of the seven-year period (Daniel 4:25, 31–34).

This is the Egyptian seven-year throne period of the king discussed by Gerald Wainwright.<sup>98</sup> The splitting of the tree is plainly the substitute sacrifice, while its preservation against the time when the king shall be restored recalls the important role of the *ished-tree* in the coronation, when the king's first parents, Isis and Min, Amun and Mut, stand “flanked by Seshat and Atum . . . , who write the name of the new king on the leaves of the *ished-tree*”;<sup>99</sup> that is, the king *is* the tree (cf. Daniel 4:22). The custom is mentioned in the Book of Breathings: “I am the one before whom Atum has announced the annals under the noble *ished-tree* of Heliopolis.”<sup>100</sup> When the initiate “witnesses the splitting of the persea tree in the midst of Rostau” in the Book of the Dead version, that, according to Gertrud Thausing, represents the creation—among other things, the “splitting of ‘good’ and ‘evil,’”<sup>101</sup> or the

law of opposites set forth in the Shabako creation text. Plutarch quotes Eudoxus as reporting that the rites of splitting wood, tearing linen, and spilling libations at Busiris, the burial place of Osiris, were in his day hopelessly mixed up.<sup>[102](#)</sup>

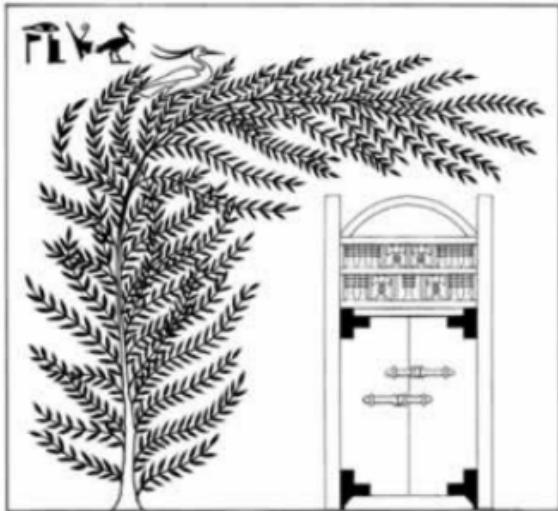


Figure 95. The sacred tree grows over the grave and here harbors the *benu*-bird or phoenix, symbol of resurrection. Tomb of Horsiese (now destroyed), ca. 200 B.C. Redrawn from Wilkinson's 1878 drawing in *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, 3:349, fig. 588.

At least from the beginning of the New

Kingdom, every major city in Egypt had a tomb of Osiris that was sheltered by a tree, which was represented as the cedar of Byblos sheltering the coffin of Osiris in that city (fig. 95).<sup>103</sup> From the long Book of Breathings, we learn that there was a cave beneath the *ished-tree*.<sup>104</sup> According to the well-known legend, Osiris was actually shut up in the cedar tree and had to be liberated from it in order to be resurrected.<sup>105</sup>

Joseph's grave was an *Urhügel* at Shechem, sheltered by a tree, in Egyptian fashion.<sup>106</sup> In the Metternich Stela, Isis is called "the beloved of Re (the Sun) ... who came out of the sycamore."<sup>107</sup> At Denderah at the winter solstice Sokar-festival, the *ba* of Osiris was thought to be in the sycamore tree, the womb of Nut, and a sycamore coffin was made for the god on that day.<sup>108</sup> The theme is found in the long Book of Breathings: "Ye praise the great tree trunk in the womb of his

mother.”<sup>109</sup> The king is enclosed in the tree trunk as in the womb (cf. Daniel 4:15, 23), to be delivered with the splitting of the tree itself. In some rites a willow tree was felled and hollowed out, and seed corn was planted inside it in the shape of Osiris, the god being literally *in* the funeral willow.<sup>110</sup> The Egyptians believed not only that the body of the divine king was dissolved in the *djed*-column, which was the trunk of the tree that bore it to Phoenicia, but that that same *djed*-column was the world pillar itself.<sup>111</sup> Stricker sees the *djed*-pillar as a corn sheaf (i.e., the corn maiden in the Book of Breathings).<sup>112</sup> Actually, whether the tree is cut or split is a mere quibble since the two acts seem to have the same significance, and Plutarch says that the Egyptians themselves were all mixed up regarding the splitting of the wood.<sup>113</sup> As to the biblical equivalent of splitting wood, scholars have declared

Ecclesiastes 10:9–10 to be “the most difficult passage of the Book.”<sup>114</sup>

Scholars have identified the *ished-tree* with various trees,<sup>115</sup> including the cedar of Byblos<sup>116</sup> and the olive tree.<sup>117</sup> In early times Ptah, Horus, Seth, and Thoth all enjoyed the epithet, “he who possesses life beneath his olive-tree.”<sup>118</sup> This certainly recalls Adam’s tree and “oil of mercy,” which restores life, as well as “the leaves of the tree [that] were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2).

Whatever the tree, if the god is to escape from it, there must be a splitting of some kind. The winter solstice rites of Heliopolis “ended with the splitting of an *ished-tree* by a cat who represented Re himself,” thus freeing the dead as the sun at the solstice:<sup>119</sup> “I am the cat who cleft asunder the *ished-tree* . . . in Heliopolis on the night of the fight,”<sup>120</sup> the fight being the classic

showdown at the New Year between the powers of light and of darkness. Osiris, as the first king of Egypt, bore the ritual title *wp išd*, “he who opens the *ished-tree*,”<sup>121</sup> and at his *sed*-festival the pharaoh would preside at a shrine of Osiris called *hri ib p3 išd* “that which is within the *ished-tree*,” the king himself being opener of the *ished*.<sup>122</sup> On this occasion, the king wore a *menat*-collar of greenery, suggesting his own function as a tree. Compare this with the ivy which Osiris wore that became a fixture in the Greek mystery cults.<sup>123</sup> In Papyrus Skrine the initiate is crowned with cypress—another non-Egyptian evergreen.<sup>124</sup> In the rites of Papyrus Salt 825, the subject receives a royal crown made of a branch that must be *cut* from a tree that grows over the tomb of Osiris.<sup>125</sup> The cutting or splitting of the tree is thus an essential element in the rites, marking both the ending and beginning of a

life cycle: the motif occurs in some of the best-known heroic legends, in which the fall of the hero is marked by the felling of a tree, especially a cedar.<sup>126</sup> In the *Genesis Apocryphon* the dream of the felling of a cedar signifies to Abraham his own death *in Egypt*, from which fate he is rescued when the cedar is saved by the interposition of a palm tree, representing either Sarah or the hospitable pharaoh.<sup>127</sup> With characteristic insight, Petrie recognized an old Osiris motif in the Christian logion, “Lift the stone and there you will find me; split the wood and there I am”<sup>128</sup>—a survival, according to him, of “Osiris in the tree and pillar.”<sup>129</sup>

There is a remarkable parallel between the Coptic-Christian tradition that the *ished*-tree (the persea of Hermopolis) bowed down to Jesus and Mary in Egypt,<sup>130</sup> and certain Pyramid Texts that attest: “The palm (*im3*)-tree serves thee, the fig tree (*nbs*)

bows down its head to thee";<sup>131</sup> "the fig tree bows down to thee as thou passest through the sky as Suntw (*Zwn̄tw*)."<sup>132</sup>

The *ished*-tree has most often been identified as the *persea*. In Karnak stood "the holy *persea* tree of Amon," and the stumps of two *persea* trees were found in place by modern excavators, flanking the gate of the great temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri.<sup>133</sup> Especially holy was the "noble *persea* tree (*ished*) in Edfu," under which the body of Osiris lay on the last day of his funeral at "the cave of *ished*-tree in the holy place," it being also "the venerated *persea* tree in the place of Re on the eternal horizon."<sup>134</sup> Like the *wʒd*-green of the papyrus, the green fruit of the *persea* tree was in Egypt the Eden symbol of abundance of the vegetable world.<sup>135</sup>

A list of sacred trees performing the same function as the cedar of Osiris—the vine, the

sycamore, the thorn acacia—shows, according to Kurt Sethe, “that the same role was attributed to the other trees as well.”<sup>136</sup> The *ished*-tree of Heliopolis itself was rivaled by the *n'r.t*-tree of Herakleopolis (Hermopolis?).<sup>137</sup> The tree that grew over the grave of Osiris at Abydos was also designated as the *pqr*-tree, the object of pilgrimage.<sup>138</sup> In the rites detailed in Papyrus Salt 825, the procession was obliged to visit “the ‘rw-trees of Edfu’ before returning to the temple,<sup>139</sup> and Osiris was conducted to “the mound of the *nbh*-trees” while a crown of branches was cut for him.<sup>140</sup> The ubiquitous holy tree “could not itself confer fertility, but it typified that perfection ... which it was hoped to obtain by due performance of the rites.”<sup>141</sup> Santillana and von Dechend suggest that the Babylonian *huluppu*-tree of life and death is none other

than the sacred *persea* or *ished*-tree,<sup>142</sup> though the confusion with the cedar is even more far-reaching.<sup>143</sup>

## The Ritual Garden

The sacred tree does not grow alone, but in the midst of other trees. Every proper temple had its sacred grove as well as its sacred tree.<sup>144</sup> Nay, every Egyptian who could afford it had a garden at his tomb, along with a shady sycamore to afford shelter and nourishment for the *ba*; <sup>145</sup> even the smallest family burial plot had such a garden and pool,<sup>146</sup> and for richer people the number and variety of trees reached impressive proportions.<sup>147</sup> Even in Old Kingdom archaeological excavations, stone basins are found in tombs, representing, according to Hermann Junker, pools, trees, and cooling groves.<sup>148</sup> The sacred trees grow amidst other greenery in the pleasant

Meadows of Rest, where the candidate finds himself reposing after the preliminary phase of his journey.<sup>149</sup> *Rostau*, as Thausing explains it, is the world between, a condition, a paradise, a garden, a meadow, a land of life, a fire island (or realm of light), the horizon (a mountain of light), the beautiful west, the paths of the beyond, etc.<sup>150</sup> One awakes in a heavenly place; the green Field of Reeds is near the green Field of Malachite, and both are in heaven and yet belong to the holy precinct of Heliopolis.<sup>151</sup> “Egyptians speak of a land beyond the grave, the Fields of Iaru [Reeds]. . . . But never do they speak of this as an *earthly* paradise; it is only to be reached by the dead.”<sup>152</sup> Neither is it entirely in heaven. The garden at Heliopolis was a type found everywhere in Egypt; far up the Nile, the garden of the Adyton, as its name shows, was not accessible to ordinary mortals. Like the

paradise of the Bible, it is neither heaven nor earth but lies between them. Lefébure concludes that all these holy gardens, whether Fields of Hotep, of Iaru, of *Nsrsr*, etc., are localities that “représentent simplement une même idée sous ses différentes faces.”<sup>153</sup> One emerges after this life to find oneself in a green and delightful garden of rest as an introduction to the next world.<sup>154</sup> The Egyptians never tired of imitating such a happy transition in their own festivals by crossing the waters to picnic at the tombs of their relatives,<sup>155</sup> making pilgrimages to the garden tomb of Osiris at Abydos,<sup>156</sup> coming “from all the land to the venerated persea trees at the place of Re on the eternal horizon,”<sup>157</sup> or in fancy awakening like the famous shipwrecked sailor from a sort of dream (*rsw.t*) to find oneself in a fanciful Eden, which is neither in the world nor out of it.<sup>158</sup> In a Hebrew

Enoch apocryphon, the Lord, in visiting the earth, rests in the Garden of Eden and, moving in the reverse direction, passes through “the garden to the firmament.”<sup>159</sup> So in Egypt: “You ferry over … to the green fields, to the pure places of Re,” in which “the green field of Re” is actually in heaven.<sup>160</sup> In Egypt, the garden is a place of transition, “the footstool of Ra-Har-akht, the beautiful horizon of the Spirit.”<sup>161</sup>

In the Coffin Texts, we have the picture of Atum, after completing the work of creation, “reposing in his place,” a place of rich and flowery fields where stand “the two turquoise sycamores between which Re emerged.”<sup>162</sup> So, in the temple of Ramses II at Thebes, the hero, after being washed, censed, and clothed, enters the resting place of Osiris in Thebes, lying down in a place that provides fruits and flowers of the earth through the god’s bounty.<sup>163</sup> In the Book of

Day, one emerges from the womb of Nut, passing through the waters of birth and life to join “the lords who are in the Fields of Turquoise beneath the *ished*-tree in the midst of Heliopolis.”<sup>164</sup> Paul Barguet points out that the garden of delights described in Book of the Dead 110 goes back to the earliest temple gardens, representing a special privileged stopping place, “de repos par excellence,” where the dead becomes identified with the god Hotep, who symbolizes at once food offerings (*htp*) and rest and peace (*htp*). This garden, he further observes, lay, like Eden, to the east.<sup>165</sup> When the Book of Wandering through Eternity addresses the traveler, saying, “You rest in the branches of the noble sycamore and receive shade from her leaves,”<sup>166</sup> we think at once of the *šršr* (rustling) of the noble *ished*; Thausing suggests that “perhaps this indicates as well resting [of the candidate] in

the temple grove” —a real temple grove.<sup>167</sup> In the Amduat the god rests after each leg of his journey, and each time the narrator formulaically announces, “The resting by the majesty of this god.”<sup>168</sup> The place where he rests is a lush paradise of trees on the eastern horizon.<sup>169</sup>

Thus there is no objection to having more than one such pleasant Eden; in fact, every transition must be provided with such a setting, not only from here to heaven, but in the reverse direction in the beginning. All the deities “associated with the Earth-God,” E. A. E. Reymond notes, “had their resting-place in the field of reeds,” which was one type of the creator’s domain and the original scene of the creation drama.<sup>170</sup> In actual practice it may not have been uncommon in Egypt “to end one’s life as a hermit or in a religious retreat—exactly as in ancient (Vedic) India,” according to Walter Federn,

recalling the classic “garden” of Epicurus.<sup>171</sup>

As we have seen, our *Breathings* drama opens with the creation of man: “Now thou beholdest Re when he comes down, Atum in the evening” (line 20). This suggests to the highly conditioned Christian mind the picture of God condescending to come down to walk with Adam “in the cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8). How the garden was established here below in preparation for man’s arrival is described in a remarkable writing from the Coffin Texts: “My name lives, ‘Son of the Living God.’ … I live in the members of my father Atum. I am he whom … Atum created with (*or as?*) Nepre when he sent me down to this earth … when my name became Osiris, son of Geb (earth).”<sup>172</sup> The subject is sent down to earth as Nepre, the gardener, and as the legitimate offspring of Atum, but here he becomes a son of earth (Geb) and takes a special name, that of Osiris—the

name which every initiate receives at the beginning of his endowments. The text explains further: “I am the Living One for whose sake the heavens were organized; my father Atum embraced me, he was pleased with me, and returned satisfied to his horizon, where he would meet me again on his way.”<sup>173</sup>

That the proper inhabitant of the primal garden is the first man is clear from an early creation epic in which Re as creator orders that “a Field of Repose be stretched out, and so the Field of Rest came into being. ... I will place therein to inhabit it all manner of living things which are suspended in the heavens and the stars. ... I will place multitudes to worship me, and it was done.”<sup>174</sup> In the Shabako stone, the earth is prepared for man’s habitation in advance, first by the planting of rushes and papyrus at the gates,<sup>175</sup> and then “out of Ptah who

created Atum came forth all manner of nourishment and food” for the creatures who were about to come down and inhabit the earth.<sup>176</sup>

The main themes emphasized in this section of our text—the whispering leaves, the lovely *ished*-tree of life, the first rays of the sun awakening the man, the primal shrine and place of creation at Heliopolis—definitely puts us in the Eden situation. It is the same situation that meets us in the Book of Day and Night with its hymn of joy at the moment of sunrise: “Praised be the lords of the Fields of Turquoise under the *ished*-tree in the midst of Heliopolis.”<sup>177</sup> Here the word *ished* has the determinative not of a tree, but of a green arbor, booth, or bower, suggesting the green bower in which the king, all over the ancient world, sat at the New Year to represent the first man in the garden.<sup>178</sup> This is indicated in Coffin Text 187: “He made

me to sit in the booth at the entrances of the horizon of heaven. I found Khonsu on the way; he came down to Punt"<sup>179</sup> and there organized the subject's family and followers for him.

Early Egyptologists did not hesitate to recognize in the Egyptian funeral garden a true Eden. It is the greenest of green places, a paradise of plants; turquoise and evergreen predominate.<sup>180</sup> The temple groves were meant to convey a sense of overpowering vegetable exuberance.<sup>181</sup> Lefébure noted that all the various pictures of paradise are gardens, the idea of an “Éden végétal” being as natural to the Egyptians as it is to us or to any primitives. The Field of Rest and of Reeds is not only a paradise of plants, but a paradise *for* plants, without whose exuberance and joy no paradise could be complete.<sup>182</sup> And this paradise of plants is also a paradise of animals; at the creation Re

commanded that “a Field of Repose be stretched out, and so the Field of Rest came into being. There I will cause flowers of all kinds to grow; and the Field of Rushes came into being. I will place therein to inhabit it all manner of living things which are suspended in the heavens and the stars. . . . I will place multitudes to worship me, and it was done.”<sup>183</sup>

In the great temple of Karnak, one enters the main building by the *W3dy.t*, the famous Hall of Columns, whose name means “green room” or “paradise.”<sup>184</sup> Even so, in the Anchnesneferibre coffin, the candidate passes to the next world by entering “the palace with many plants.”<sup>185</sup> The reliefs at the Deir el-Bahri complex show that the place was regarded as a kind of Garden of Eden for gods and kings, imitated on a modest scale in private funeral gardens.<sup>186</sup> The priest Petosiris complained in his day

that the general public had forgotten the true nature of the great park at Hermopolis: “I took charge of the park, taking care lest it be invaded (trampled) by the general public; this because it was the place (house) of the birth of all the gods, who took their beginning (being) from this place, and because vile people were trespassing in it, tramping around with impunity, eating the fruit of its trees, pulling up the rushes and taking them home as they pleased.”<sup>187</sup> Yet “this is the place where every creature came into being.”<sup>188</sup> Making an amusement park of the place was not such a bad idea, however, since Eden itself had been a place of relaxation and delight; the folly was in forgetting the sacred significance of the place as the garden where the human race began.

## The Lady Offers Fruit

In the vignettes to chapter 58 in the Book of the Dead, we see the subject and his wife together in a pleasant garden where they drink the waters of a stream or pond at the foot of a date palm:<sup>189</sup> at once one thinks of the waters of life and the tree of life. Indeed, Frankfort suggested that “the trees, which symbolised natural life eternally renewed,” in the cenotaph of Seti I, “were meant to go down with their roots” to a canal dug to represent “the waters from which all natural life had sprung.”<sup>190</sup> In the next scene, however, another kind of tree is shown as we see Ani alone, appearing here for the first time without his wife, as he approaches a sycamore tree from whose branches the lady Nut hands him fruit to eat—and the Lady is the exact image of his wife.<sup>191</sup> In another tomb the wife, who is drinking of the same water as her husband, wears (in this scene only) a wig identical with that of the

goddess who is handing food and water from the top of the tree while two *ba*-birds, having human heads “correspond[ing] exactly to those of the two dead people,” perch on the tree, which is a strange mixture of date and sycamore.<sup>192</sup> The initiate identifies himself with the keeper of the garden, the guardian of the seven edible things in the temple, as he eats “in the booths beneath the branches of the sycamores of Hathor.”<sup>193</sup> The Lady receives him with food: “I have come; the Great Lady has opened to me. I have released my abundance (determinative of a man scattering meal); I have opened the leaves of the *Itf-rr:t* (turquoise lady).”<sup>194</sup> As “the Beloved One, the Lady of the Fruit, who brings to thee that which thou lovest,” she offers the traveler in the Amduat “the nourishment which the trees bear for thee.”<sup>195</sup> “O Lord, come to thy domain (*hsw.t*); … the spirits (or strength,

*bȝw*) in the trees offer to thee to take freely of the fruit that the trees hold forth to thee.”<sup>196</sup> In rites at Denderah the lady Hathor says to the pharaoh, “I give thee the countryside (*sh.t*), which brings forth groves for thee with their lovely gifts, for thy dwelling,” while Horus says to the king, “I give thee all the orchards of this land to make thee happy.”<sup>197</sup> From the water and the earth come forth “all living things, that thou mayest partake thereof and flourish thereby, going forth to live on whatever pleases thee, ... breathing the air.”<sup>198</sup> In the Ramesseum drama the king finds himself resting beneath the “pleasant (*imȝ*)-trees, whose shade is most welcome, and whose fruit is sweet (*bnr*) and delicious to the taste (*ndm*).”<sup>199</sup> The permission given Adam to eat of all the trees is also suggested by the declaration in Book of the Dead 124: “I will eat my food under the foliage of trees with whose lovely

branches (arms) I am familiar.”<sup>200</sup>

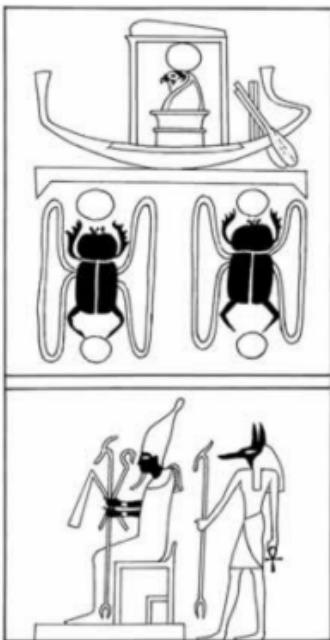


Figure 96. The ship in which Horus fuses with Re represents transition from one state to another, from the state of death (below) to life in heaven (like most Egyptian temple walls and coffins, this scene reads from the bottom upward). Between, the passage is represented by the symbol and hieroglyph *hpr*, meaning “to become” or pass from one state to another. The butterfly wings (astonishingly like those found on Mesoamerican temple reliefs) dramatically illustrate drastic change of form while preserving individual identity. P. Louvre N. 3092 (BD 125). After Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, pl. CXXXIII.

# Transformations

**Line 37:** “Thy *ba* is deified (being sanctified, made divine) in the *duat*, being about to make whatever transformation (*hprw*) it desires”

A *hpr* is a change of form without a change of identity (fig. 96).<sup>201</sup> Such a transformation signifies not a loss, but a heightening, of the ego; whether we think of eternal or mortal life, it is always a process of change: “The [Egyptian] lives in a world of ceaseless ‘transformations’ (*hprw*); everything is always passing away and returning”<sup>202</sup>—change is one of the basic facts of life.<sup>203</sup> Hence the demonstrated ability to change form while preserving one’s conscious identity is a supreme triumph and satisfaction, an affirmation and intensification of the self, as Hermann Kees and Morenz have maintained.<sup>204</sup> “Life itself

... as an onflowing course from station to station, from degree to degree, has its similitude in every Egyptian temple passage.”<sup>205</sup> In passing from station to station, assuming the proper *hprw* as one advances, one shows himself a complete master of the difficult problem of surviving under *all* conditions,<sup>206</sup> taking whatever form is necessary to meet any conceivable challenge, whether that means becoming a divine hawk, a flame, a wing, a storm, Hathor herself, a water-bird, wheat, etc.<sup>207</sup> During these changes, however, nothing could be farther from the Egyptian mind than to become an animal. Long ago Gaston Maspero showed that the *hprw* have nothing whatever to do with reincarnation.<sup>208</sup> It is true that nature does show the way; an early Greek observer says that the Egyptians have a special reverence for animals that are able to change from one type (*genos*) to

another.<sup>209</sup> These changes in nature are incredible but real, the best-known and among the most paradoxical examples being supplied by the frog and the butterfly. In Egypt the favorite symbol of *hpr*, and the hieroglyph whose name is *hpr*, is the scarab, or dung beetle, which suddenly appears in the places of burial, "coming into existence" without any apparent cause or creator,<sup>210</sup> and hence qualifies as a holy entity, "the Living One," "He who came forth (from himself)," like the sun itself.<sup>211</sup> But the transformations of a human being during his lifetime, the "seven ages" of man, are hardly less impressive than some of nature's other tricks: the infant is drastically different from an adolescent, who in turn differs from an old man as one species from another; and yet through it all one and the same ego asserts its identity, so that, as Thausing points out, "assuming whatever form one pleases ... is

no rebirth, but the expression of the complete freedom of the *ba*.<sup>212</sup> Of course, if according to the common formula the forms taken are those which “one pleases,” the *hprw*, as Federn points out, are necessarily voluntary and therefore entirely desirable experiences, designed to express the highest form of self-assertion.<sup>213</sup>

The most difficult *hpr* to understand and explain is naturally the first one, which is why the self-creating beetle scores so high. The *hpr* is an embryonic concept, like the egg in the Petosiris inscription; in the opening passage of our *Breathings* book the owner asks to undergo the *hprw* of Osiris at various levels of sun, moon, and stars “in the womb of Nut” (lines 2–3). In the formula, “I am Khepri in the morning, Re at noon, and Atum in the evening,”<sup>214</sup> Khepri comes first as the sun in his moment (*hpr*) of coming into being.<sup>215</sup> Others follow: “I am Thoth, the

eldest son of Re, whom Atum begot, who arose out of Khepri. ... I have come down to earth with the secrets of the ‘Horizon-one.’”<sup>216</sup> Morenz finds this to be a singularly un-Egyptian passage, and yet the word for “begot” is written with the foxtail talisman, which is also the symbol of transformation or transition,<sup>217</sup> while the horizon is par excellence the symbol or the moment of passage from one place or state to another, i.e., of *hpr*.<sup>218</sup>

*Hpr* is especially associated with rites of *initiation*; according to Raymond Faulkner’s *Concise Dictionary*, *hpr* means “come into being, become, change, grow up, occur, happen, come to pass, take place, be effective, go by, be past, ... continue, exist,”<sup>219</sup> and has, according to the *Wörterbuch*, an *active* sense of “doing something, starting something, creating, begetting.”<sup>220</sup> The expression *iri hprw* that

occurs in our text means “cause to *hpr*,” and in the form *ir.t hprw m* suggests “formation into,” “entering the form of (*Gestaltung in*),” or “formation of,” according to Federn,<sup>221</sup> who detects in *hprw* voluntary and therefore desirable experiences which, in the Book of the Dead, are equivalent to “initiation.”<sup>222</sup>

The expression *hpr sšt.i* in line 4 above corresponds to *hpr m sš*, which means “to be or become something,” and which Federn renders as “‘identification,’ ‘initiation,’ spells, … joining some ‘secret society’ (or religious community) in this world in order to be ready to join the elect in the other world after death,”<sup>223</sup> thus clearly designating this Book of Breathings as an initiation text, and so confirming the use of the word *snsn* as indicating initiation into a sacred community.<sup>224</sup> Thausing interprets *iri hprw* as “the achievement (*Vollziehen*) of transformation,” the “Zwischenstadium,” a

point reached in the process of initiatory rites and the forms corresponding to those stages. *Hprw*, having an active as well as a stative sense, indicates “forms, stages of growth, becoming,”<sup>225</sup> and also the activity involved in passing through them.

There are sixty transformations mentioned in the Coffin Texts and only twelve in the Book of the Dead, the latter being the twelve forms Re takes in the course of his journey.<sup>226</sup> It has been suggested that the *hprw* were originally derived from observation of the visible changes undergone by the solar disk from its rising to its setting,<sup>227</sup> so that whatever form the dead may take, all are symbols of the eternal life of the sun.<sup>228</sup> Yet the nature of the changes described as *hprw* suggests not so much the distant and intangible view of the sun as intimate and organic doings of the growing embryo, which, as everyone knows, passes

through the most astonishing series of transformations. The *hprw* are “an alchemy of being . . . the itinerary of mutations of the soul.”<sup>229</sup> The initiatory transformations referred to in line 4 of our text correspond to those undergone by the corpse in the coffin, where it quickly changes name and nature,<sup>230</sup> the coffin itself being designated as the womb of Nut. Such transformations were made possible only “by literally undergoing all the experiences of Osiris,”<sup>231</sup> those experiences being his *hprw*.

Every birth requires a gestation period, whether it is our birth into this world from a preexistent state or our birth into the next after leaving this one. Since “the morning of rebirth repeats the creation, . . . the night-place is the world before creation, the ‘first time,’”<sup>232</sup> the waters of *nw*, the dark womb of Nut. To this we return to be born again, resuming the prenatal stage of the great god

Khepri, the god who is ready to be born.<sup>233</sup> The paradoxical identity of dark womb and starry heavens—as wide a contrast as can well be imagined—is forced on us by the image of a prenatal existence in a state of celestial glory, a well-known gnostic concept. The way of life “goes from the spirit world into the depths, . . . [only to] mount up again (through the waters) to heaven ([represented by the] constellations).”<sup>234</sup> Hence Nut herself is a sort of “Book of the Order and Motion of the Stars.”<sup>235</sup> Recently Max Guilmot has emphasized the importance of distinguishing two different types of *hprw*: (1) that into some bird or beast, etc., as a magical means of escaping danger, and (2) that into some life form, such as an ear of wheat, which aims at absorption into the universe or a “cosmic communion.”<sup>236</sup>

# **Adam's Dominion: The Initiate as Lord of Plants and Animals**

There are some passages in the Coffin Texts that strikingly call to mind the biblical Adam's taking possession of the garden. Because of their interest to Latter-day Saints, they deserve quotation at some length.

Coffin Text 75: “I came into being (*hpr.n=i*, took my present form) from the members of the great god who was self-existent (who came into being of himself). He created me in his heart (mind); he made me in his glory; he breathed me (my life) from his nose. I am a god whose (four) forms were breathed forth (or who breathes forth forms).”<sup>237</sup> “He created me in his own heart, he made me in his glory, before my mother bore me (?).”<sup>238</sup> “There was made for me plants in the garden of *st.t* (the East); I became the provider of bread for the gods. I

am in the midst of going the rounds, Lord of the green garden<sup>239</sup> in the Dat. O Atum-Re, O Nw! I set forth food offerings, which *Hw* has caused to flourish (be green) for Osiris.”<sup>240</sup>

Coffin Text 80: “I am the Living One, the Lord of Years (ancient of days), who lives for time and eternity, whom Atum made (*ir*, begot) (as) the eldest one in his glory

... when he was one and became three, at the time he separated the earth (Geb) from heaven (Nut), before the bringing forth of the first flesh, before the first mother ... when all were together with me in his presence. He brought me forth (*or* conceived me) from his nose.<sup>241</sup> I came forth from his nostrils; he placed me upon his breast (neck), unwilling that I be separated from him. My name lives as Son of the God of the preexistence. I live in the members of my father Atum. I am the Living One whom ... Atum begot with Nepre (the gardener), when he had me descend to

this earth, even the isle of flame (oxygen), when my name became (was changed to) Osiris son of Earth (Geb). I am the Living One<sup>242</sup> for whom the expanse of the heaven and the broad earth were made, that the offerings of the ordinance (or plan) might be through me to God. My father Atum embraced (*snsn*) me when he came forth from the eastern horizon, his heart was pleased to see me. (Then) he proceeded satisfied (in peace) toward the western horizon; and he will meet (find) me (again) in his way.”<sup>243</sup>

The initiate then describes himself briefly as a creator and preserver of life, and he continues: “May the falcons and the birds live, the jackals and the swine of the desert, the hippopotamuses in their pools, mankind amid their grainfields, crocodiles and fishes whatsoever are in the waters of the Nile,<sup>244</sup> even as Atum has commanded. I lead them; I

give them life by my mouth as it were, my life is in their nostrils; I lead them while my breath(s) is in their throats. I sustain their life (*lit.* tie on their heads) by the authoritative word (*Hw*) which is in (upon) my mouth. My father Atum who came from the eastern horizon caused me to give life to fishes and creeping things which are on the surface of the earth (the back of Geb). I am truly the Living One under Nut (under the heavens, or married to Nut)."<sup>245</sup> Here the significance of the nose and mouth are explained: the nose represents the breath of life, the mouth, the power or authority to give life. The initiate is given dominion and responsibility for all God's creatures.

Coffin Text 132: According to Siegfried Schott, this is a drama. The speaker is the man who wants his family "sealed to him." "I am Atum who created the Great Ones."<sup>246</sup> "I am one of the Watchers who danced for

joy (*nhm*).<sup>247</sup> I received my place to rest in accordingly as I went about exploring (*m hh*), taking possession (*nhmnhm*), going the rounds (coming and going—*dbn dbn*). I have assumed dominion (*iw ph.n=i'*) of my domains (seats, places), I have toured (*swʒh*) my domains, my groves, my pastures, my places of delight (stopping places). I am in authority (*iw wsr=i'*), my staff is in my hand; my word is that of command of *Hw* (*rʒ=i' m Hw*), who accompanies me (*sšm.w my sw*). My two arms are raised to the gods in sacrifice, even the sacrifice of oxen to the Lord of Heliopolis. I am with those who are bound<sup>248</sup> for sacrifice, inasmuch as I am verily the bread of Re, exhausted by wounds. I have been given strength and wisdom; I sit with my back to the earth (Geb). . . . I have come forth that my family be given to me: my sons and daughters, my brothers and sisters, my father, my mother, and all who are bound

to me;<sup>249</sup> that my people who have been bound may be liberated to me, and come to receive my embrace.<sup>250</sup> ... O ye who are among their ancestors, whose names are hidden to me, I have the written documents (that say) ‘I begot him.’”<sup>251</sup> There is much more to this effect.

Coffin Text 136: The title of this text is “To unite families in the next world. I am Atum whom the Great Ones created (or, who created the Great Ones).<sup>252</sup> ... I took my lands and received my fields in the place of my repose; mine are the meadows of taking-possession, like those who go about in the land laying claim (or ever making the rounds). I have taken possession of it even to the edge of the desert. I have made a tour of inspection, through my gardens, my groves, my meadows and plots, the staff of authority (or green branch) in my hand.<sup>253</sup> I have distributed my good things to the Lords of

praise-offerings. My mouth is *Hh*; I bring (lead, conduct) most gently (*nfr nfr*). I am the mightiest of the mighty. ... I lead the sacrificial beasts at Heliopolis, I have power over them, and they do not have power over me. They atone for me (*lit.* cover my name, cf. Hebrew *kippēr*); they hide my weakness. I sit with my back to the earth.”<sup>254</sup>

In such passages we may see something of the Eden situation transferred to the rites of Heliopolis. Federn’s suggestion that the common and unpleasant insistence on not eating excrement really indicates abstention from cereal foods<sup>255</sup> and is in agreement with the teaching of certain ancient sectaries that man was condemned to eat grain after his expulsion from Eden as a sign of his fallen state—wheat is par excellence the food of man during his mortal earthly life.<sup>256</sup> Federn goes further to suggest that the

strange but common wish not to walk upside down means not being concerned at all with such inverted values as concern about food and drink.<sup>257</sup>

## The Sacred Marriage (Hieros Gamos) in the Garden

It is the *ished*-tree growing “in the Field of Turquoise ... in the midst of Heliopolis” (i.e., in the temple garden)<sup>258</sup> that brings Amun and Nut (Min and Isis, Atum and Seshat, i.e., the king’s first parents and the first pair on the earth) together at the New Year—the time of the creation—to write the king’s name on the leaves of the sacred tree itself.<sup>259</sup>

With the eating of the fruit goes dalliance in the garden, preparatory to the sacred marriage—the *hieros gamos*, which is never failing from creation and vegetation rites. The garden is the proper place for dalliance;

the idea that the divine marriage must take place in a grove is found all over the world,<sup>260</sup> and Päivö Oksala has shown the close affinity of the earliest Greek and Roman traditions on the subject with those of Egypt, specifically of Alexandria.<sup>261</sup> The place where Osiris and Isis consorted in the beginning was on a sacred island containing a hallowed grove dominated by the *mente*-tree, where all human trespassing, talking, hunting, fishing, and even music were forbidden; where stood 365 palm-decked altars; and where “the waters never ceased to flow.”<sup>262</sup> The Pyramid Texts recall such a place: “The king has bathed in the Field of Rushes. The king’s hand is in Re’s hand. O Nut, take his hand.”<sup>263</sup> At Hermopolis, “the Island of Embracing,” a green lotus land, went back ritually to the Old Kingdom.<sup>264</sup> With the fruit of the garden, the Lady offers her favors: “Thy mother Nut joins herself to

thee, she banishes thy sorrow ... she embraces thee ... the Beloved One, the Lady of the Fruit, bringing to thee what thou desirest.”<sup>265</sup> She is the Lady of Ammu, the pleasant trees; she is Neith with the perfumed (or braided) hair, the Lady of the sycamore and of the turquoise, making merry in the garden among her dancing and singing maidens.<sup>266</sup> The significance of the hairdo is seen in its imitation by the temple hierodules.<sup>267</sup> While the Lady “makes the Two Lands verdant in her name of Edjo,”<sup>268</sup> her divine spouse “is he who fixes the earth upon its foundations”<sup>269</sup> for the creation and the begetting and bringing forth of life must go together. So, as the god makes his circuit at the coronation (New Year, creation), taking possession of the land in the manner of Adam exploring the garden, he embraces the Lady, whereupon life springs up out of nothing, the earth bringing forth

spontaneously.<sup>270</sup> For “the lord of the cattle who tends the animals and cares for their stalls in the shadow of the sycamore” is “also in charge of the procreation of the *human* race”;<sup>271</sup> in the temple rites his part is enacted by the king, in the role of the first man, and the imagery is, as Otto puts it, “more idyllic than divine and creative,” showing him as a human being in a romantic situation.<sup>272</sup> He does all to please the Lady, working away as “the caretaker and preserver of nature ... who causes the garden land to come into being ... and causes the trees to bloom.”<sup>273</sup> At the festival of the valley, the glorious lady rests with uncovered face, awaiting the arrival of her consort.<sup>274</sup> The rites end with a great acclamation of the divine pair: “The mother comes fair of face, to mix the drinks.” Amon comes rejoicing: “Hail Mother, Lady of Heaven, Great Queen of All the Earth.

[Amon and Mut, Father and Mother,] give understanding and strength to the heart of the *ka* of NN forever!"<sup>275</sup> Often, on the walls of the temple of Ramses II at Karnak, the king offers flowers or fruits to a goddess under various names, who is both mother and wife; in plate 46 she is his real wife, and sometimes she appears with her husband: "Amun and Mut appear in their capacity as the king's parents in the forms of Min and Isis," hence also of Seshat and Atum, who write his name on the *ished-tree*.<sup>276</sup> In return for his love gifts, Mut (the mother) promises the king: "I give thee the life span of Re, the years of Atum, peaceful dominion of all the earth (lands), ... the perfect health and joy of Re."<sup>277</sup>

The liturgy of Papyrus Rhind is set in the turquoise fields at the creation of the world and the birth of nature, but it is in the form of an authentic epithalamium, with all the

familiar terms of endearment and desire.<sup>278</sup> In the Ramessid reliefs, the king is addressed by “Hathor, the Lady of the Southern Sycamore,” as “sweet lips,” as she tickles his nose with the *menat*-necklace in the best Amarna tradition of dalliance.<sup>279</sup> As “Nut, the Great Lady of Heaven, Wife of the Two Lands,” she receives from the king a gift of perfume and gives him in return “all food” and all life and health, while he calls her his beloved.<sup>280</sup> Aylward Blackman notes that “the present state of our knowledge does not permit us exactly to determine” the full significance of flowers in the cult of the old Egyptian divinities,<sup>281</sup> but it would seem to be clear that the Lady finds flowers most acceptable when she is in a relaxed and festive, not to say tipsy, condition.<sup>282</sup> Egyptian drawings of the Lady standing by a sycamore tree on whose branches sits a hoopoe bird<sup>283</sup> take us at once into a

worldwide realm of romantic courtship tales, for the hoopoe (lapwing, Ar. *hudhud*) is the messenger bird who comes bearing proposals of marriage from ancient kings to great queens (the story of Solomon and the queen of Sheba in Tha‘labi being the one most likely to occur to the student).<sup>284</sup>

If this aspect of the ordinances is passed over lightly in the *snsn* papyrus, it is nonetheless referred to repeatedly; the whole situation demands it, and the text is full of unmistakable hints. Even at Denderah, where the rites are depicted so fully and the marriage motif is “inserted into the very order of the cosmos,” it is *treated lightly and discreetly* as “the most mysterious and inaccessible part of the whole rite.”<sup>285</sup> When the hero (Unas) enters into a new world of light, a green and pleasant garden by the water, “he symbolizes in himself the awakening of nature in joy.”<sup>286</sup> And when

“the Beloved One, the Lady of the Fruit” enters the *Dr.t*, she says, “I bring summer and winter. . . I bring the *nb*-corn,” whereupon her consort enters as “Lord of Embracing (*hp.t*)” to the strains of the hymn, “O Lord, come to thy favorite (beloved, *hsw:t*). ”

... Receive the nourishment which the trees bear for thee.”<sup>287</sup> It is clear from many reliefs and vignettes that the romantic element that occasioned all manner of abuses and “abominations of the ancients” among other nations was never so debased in Egypt; indeed, Herodotus observes that of all ancient peoples only the Egyptians “in this as in everything else take the utmost care to preserve the propriety of their temples,” free from any hint of licentiousness.<sup>288</sup>

Throughout the ancient world, the ritual marriage at the solstice or equinox takes place in a *ritual booth of green boughs*, a fixture never missing from the “great

assembly.” In the archaic Egyptian rites the king was received by the “mistress of the acacia-shrine,” which was the ladies’ booth (*Frauenzelt*).<sup>289</sup> It was the royal baldachin, the ritual booth, tent, or shelter pitched in green gardens by the waterside, whose rich foliage proclaimed the king reclining in it to be *olbiodaimon*, the giver and source of abundance.<sup>290</sup> The idea was imported from Persia into the Greek world by Alexander, according to Andreas Alföldi,<sup>291</sup> but is really as old in the West as in the East,<sup>292</sup> as can be seen from the rites of Anna Perenna at Rome. In the Coffin Texts the hero who passes through the glory of the stars into the arms of Nut receives incense at the New Moon and celebrates in “the divine pavilion”;<sup>293</sup> and in the Ramesseum drama, a festival booth is erected for Isis beneath the lovely *im3*-trees.<sup>294</sup>

In the sixteenth hour of his journey through

the underworld, the traveler consorts with “the Beloved One, the Lady of the Fruit” in a booth set up by the waterside.<sup>295</sup> As the patroness of all green and growing things in the New Year, Isis takes the title of “Isis in the *Dbȝ.t.*,” the word signifying a green festival booth or hut.<sup>296</sup> In the royal park where the human race was begotten, according to the Petosiris report, stood “the pavilion of the goddesses,” the usual sophisticated version of the primitive festal booth.<sup>297</sup> Adam built himself such a booth,<sup>298</sup> as did Abraham in his mystic garden at Hebron, in faithful imitation of the Garden of Eden.<sup>299</sup> It is not necessary to labor the theme: the familiar green booth in Egypt, as elsewhere (the hieroglyphic symbol for the *sed*-festival and the coronation is a double booth), signifies the same kinds of goings-on. Indeed, the Egyptian word for such a booth, *sh*, may be the same as the Hebrew *sukkāh*,

best known from the Feast of Booths, confirming the significance of the whole business in the garden.

## Forbidden Fruit

Pierre Montet has shown that every temple in Egypt had its own version of the forbidden fruit in its cult drama and that in the beginning “all went back to a common and very ancient concept.”<sup>300</sup> There is a Jewish tradition that it was by converting the fruit of the tree into wine and offering it to her husband in that form that Eve brought about the fall.<sup>301</sup> Certainly it was the vine that was the forbidden fruit of our second parent, Noah, who after he had completed his strenuous passage through the waters found only one plant growing on earth, from the fruit of which he got drunk and misbehaved: “he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his booth”

(Genesis 9:21). And by this experience, according to a remarkable passage in *3 Baruch*, Noah learned that all things have their opposites and that because of his fall a Savior would be provided, so that in time the fruit's "bitterness shall be changed into sweetness, ... and that which is produced from it [the wine] shall become the blood of God."<sup>302</sup> It was by this same fruit of the vine, according to the same source, that the envious Satan (Samael) was able to seduce Adam in the beginning.<sup>303</sup> John A. Bailey has pointed out that the knowledge acquired by the fruit was not primarily carnal knowledge at all but that it opened the door to something far vaster and more far-reaching. "The garden milieu provides an excellent setting for a sexual initiation, to be sure," he observes,<sup>304</sup> but that is only part of the story; it was not sex but "knowledge of good and evil" that the pair obtained,<sup>305</sup> meaning

knowledge of “everything possible”: <sup>306</sup> “The initiation of the woman and the man focuses on their pursuit of the widest possible knowledge.” <sup>307</sup> It is the woman who takes the initiative from the first, “due to her refusal to accept the limitations of humanity,” so that “the woman is both the initiator of the man and at the same time she is initiated, along with him, into the knowledge of good and evil,” <sup>308</sup> which is to say, that the woman was led into it by her desire to become as one of the gods, knowing good from evil (Genesis 3:5–6).

To match the Noah story, the Egyptians had a very old legend that told how a woman was sent forth to discover the land of Egypt while it was still under the waters of a flood that had destroyed the human race, which had rebelled against God and been destroyed (cf. Abraham 1:23–24). The destroying flood was ritually enacted by the woman in the

pouring out of seven thousand jars of wine at Heliopolis, the first land to emerge after the flood, after which she and her ladies drank wine and celebrated the forgiveness and restoration of the human race to the earth.<sup>309</sup>

The Egyptian priests taught that wine made men wild and drunken because the vine grew up and was nourished in soil fertilized by the blood of the wicked and rebellious human race, which had aforetime been destroyed for rebelling against God; for this reason the priests of Egypt were strictly rationed in their consumption of wine, and in early times the pharaoh could not touch it at all.<sup>310</sup>

Noah's getting drunk in the booth (Hebrew *sukkāh*, e.g., Egyptian *sh*) is a reminder that for the Egyptians Dionysus is not only the god of wine, but of all liquid nature, and stands for the inundation.<sup>311</sup> In a true dionysiac, Noah, after partaking of the vine, was found naked and had his shame covered

by that same garment with which Adam covered his—the garment of the priesthood, about which early Jewish sources have much to say that cannot be followed up here; but the situation is faithfully reflected in the remarkable late-Egyptian stories of Setne.

If, as Montet has shown, there definitely was a *forbidden fruit* in the Egyptian tradition, László Kákosy made it no less apparent that there was a fall.<sup>312</sup> The picture of the king as the benevolent ruler, taking charge of the animals and helping trees and vegetation to flourish, “the caretaker and preserver of nature,” bringing bouquets to please his fair companion,<sup>313</sup> is the image of an age of pastoral innocence, “a paradisiacal *Urzeit*, when the ‘world before the creation’ knew no sin.”<sup>314</sup> The first thing the Egyptian sleeper sees upon awakening is the woman, whom he “knows,” thereby becoming man in the highest sense while still in a state of

innocence.<sup>315</sup> But we see him next “(come forth out of) the grove. He has partaken of (*lit.* swallowed) its fruit. He has received his head and joined together his bones.

... Nothing about him is as it was before.” For better or for worse, he has undergone a complete physical change, and that after taking certain fruit (a green amulet),<sup>316</sup> given him by his wife in a garden, after which he leaves said garden. Down to modern times, barren women in Egypt have been wont to seek fertility by stepping over a cone-shaped stone at the foot of a sacred tree, *eating* one of the dates of the tree at the same time.

Winifred Blackman compares this with Isis’s visit to Osiris at the *iwy*-tree in the sacred garden on the island of Biga, the place of the beginning, and notes that it is still believed that the spirit of the hero is in the tree, even as the *ba* of Osiris was.<sup>317</sup> The Book of the Dead vignettes showing the Lady

incorporated—all but her upper part, and in many cases all but her arms only—in the fruit-bearing tree suggested to Maspero that the woman *in* the tree must actually have been eaten by it;<sup>318</sup> she is the first victim, so to speak, and now invites her male companion to share her condition.

The preceding account of the drama in the garden receives partial substantiation from many sources. One of the most interesting is the Tale of Setne, which its editor, Francis Ll. Griffith, calls “one of the finest works of imagination that Egypt has bequeathed to us,”<sup>319</sup> warning us at the same time that “we must not look for history here,” the only alternative to history in 1900 being literature,<sup>320</sup> and quite overlooking the ritual significance of things the present generation of scholars almost instinctively looks for. The story comes to us in two versions, designated by Griffith as the First and

Second Tales of Khamuas, from the same time and place as the Book of Breathings: Thebes in “the last century of Ptolemaic rule and [or] the first century of the Roman Empire”;<sup>321</sup> like the Book of Breathings, it is a remarkable time binder, the Second Tale of Khamuas being “linguistically … related about as closely to New Egyptian of the twelfth century B.C. as to the Biblical Coptic of the fourth or fifth century A.D.”<sup>322</sup> The legend supplies a version of the garden episode just treated that confirms the reality and structure of the latter as we have presented it. It is the last episode that concerns us here.

Because of his presumption in taking the Book of Knowledge, which was guarded by the endless serpent, the hero, Setne, must be disciplined. One day in the court of the temple of Ptah, he sees a fair damsel with a train of fifty-two attendants (this cosmic

number keeps popping up), falls hopelessly in love with her, and sends a servant to offer her gold for her favors.<sup>323</sup> She will meet him only at Per-Bast (the House of Bast), she being the daughter of the priest of Bast (the cat that slays the serpent under the *ished-tree*).<sup>324</sup> Against all advice (the people were scandalized),<sup>325</sup> he goes to Per-Bast in a boat, landing in a garden where stands a very high house or tower (the Joseph and Asenath motif); the lady comes down and welcomes him, leading him by the hand into a green booth—a room in the tower all of lapis lazuli and turquoise: a “greenroom.”<sup>326</sup>

There she offers him wine in a golden cup and invites him to eat. He refuses at first, but she wins out.<sup>327</sup> Setne then wants to make love, but the lady insists first on a signed marriage contract deeding all he owns to her.<sup>328</sup> Then she puts on “a garment of royal linen,” and at the sight of her Setne goes

quite out of his head, even agreeing to the extermination of his children in favor of hers (the old Egyptian tension between patriarchy and matriarchy).<sup>329</sup> He hardly embraces the woman before he falls unconscious but then awakens to find himself alone and naked.<sup>330</sup> At this point he becomes aware of “a noble person … like a Pharaoh” approaching but shrinks from meeting him: “For shame he could not rise because there was no clothing upon him.”<sup>331</sup> It seems that the person is Pharaoh (impersonating the god), who asks the cowering hero, “Setne, why are you in this condition? … Have you drunk the wine?”<sup>332</sup> Setne tells him what happened with the lady<sup>333</sup> and blames Ne-nefer-ka-Ptah, who spitefully placed the woman in his way. To this the god replies: “I warned thee that they would slay thee if thou shouldst ever take the Book of Knowledge,” but “until this time thou gavest no heed.”<sup>334</sup> However,

he promises Setne relief, instructing him to go to Memphis, where he can at last find his children restored to life and embrace them.<sup>335</sup> Pharaoh at the same time gives new clothing to Setne, who at last obediently carries out his orders.<sup>336</sup> As a penitent he returns the book to its proper place, “with a fork (*w'.t šlte.t*—cf. Hebrew *šelet*) and a stick (*šbte*—Hebrew *šebet*) in his hand and a censer of fire (‘*h n ste.t*—or sword of fire? Cf. late Egyptian *ʒh.t*, knife)<sup>337</sup> on his head.”<sup>338</sup> Griffith would derive the name Setne from the title of the *sem*-priest, who, as we have seen, was the most active participant in the temple drama.<sup>339</sup>

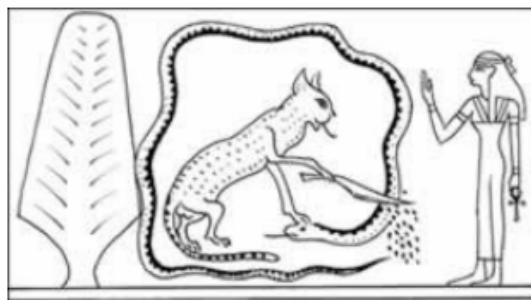


Figure 97. While the Lady supervises, the cat (who

represents her) dispatches the serpent with a sword beneath a sacred tree. A common scene in Book of the Dead 17. TCD MS 1661/1 by permission of Board of Trinity College Dublin.

Whether this is a priestly or a popular rehash of the garden story, the important elements are all there in their proper order with the usual overlapping (the story is told twice of the wise woman and the foolish man), confusion, and rationalization. Thus a *book* of knowledge is certainly more logical than a *tree* of knowledge; then there is the showdown with the serpent who guarded the book, and finally the sword and fire reminiscent of the flaming sword of Genesis 3:24.

## The Serpent

Only by the exercise of self-restraint have we avoided any mention of the *serpent* up to this point, for the snake plays a major role in

the drama—or is, rather, a standard fixture, as indispensable as the tree itself. In the Setne story he is the guardian of the Book of Knowledge and the mortal enemy of aspiring mankind. A common vignette from the Book of the Dead shows a large serpent, which a cat is beheading with a big sacrificial knife under a tree (fig. 97).<sup>340</sup> It is the sun-god or a goddess beheading Apophis beneath the *ished*-tree of Heliopolis.<sup>341</sup> Thus the cat who split the *ished*-tree and released the god also beheads the god's mortal enemy, the Apophis-serpent, beneath the same *ished*-tree. In Book of the Dead 149, the candidate proclaims in a single breath that he is the possessor of the garden who "knows the two sycamores of malachite, between which Re emerges from the sowing of Shu" (his father), the sunrise being compared with his birth from the trees, and at the same time that he is "the king who frees the land from

Apophis,” the serpent.<sup>342</sup> As no Egyptian temple could be without its holy tree and garden, neither could it be without its sacred serpent.<sup>343</sup>

The serpent is the *negation* of all things<sup>344</sup> and the archenemy of the human race.<sup>345</sup> His mighty power is only for destruction, for “he can beget nothing” and so lives by trickery and violence.<sup>346</sup> It is the fatal bite of the serpent that reduces Re himself to the extremity of helplessness.<sup>347</sup> He is “the dangerous one, who as a serpent was dangerous to Horus,” whom he bit, though in recompense the sandal of Horus treads on the serpent.<sup>348</sup> In the Metternich Stela the victim is promised that the serpent’s tooth cannot prevail against him in the end because he possesses “the same seed as that which is in the Creator of All.”<sup>349</sup> In the end the snake is always the loser, but only after reducing

man to the point of death. As Reymond reconstructs the earliest temple rites, as soon as the gods are settled happily in their garden home, the adversary appears as a serpent.<sup>350</sup> There is a showdown, with the falcon Horus leading the fight,<sup>351</sup> and after the monster is defeated, the place is “purified (*twr*) for Rē‘ and he [becomes] the lord of that place (*bw*).”<sup>352</sup> For Reymond, the temple is par excellence “the place where the snake was pierced.”<sup>353</sup> At Heliopolis, Atum in the beginning won his earthly inheritance in a showdown with a primal serpent, and Re as a great cat slew the children of the serpent (*bdš.t*, the helpless one).<sup>354</sup> The serpent is the supreme obstacle to the progress of the sun in his course and the initiate on his ritual journey. In the Book of Two Ways also, the “villain is the serpent Apophis.”<sup>355</sup> In Papyrus Bremner-Rhind, The Book of Overthrowing

Apophis and the Names of Apophis include a long and horrendous catalogue of the serpent's evil qualities and the terrible punishments inflicted upon him.<sup>356</sup> Everyone must face him in the initiation as "the principle of evil, ... Apophis, *Ttff*, *Dw-kd*, *Nh3-hr*, *Njk*, etc."<sup>357</sup> He represents the "irrational and bestial" side of human nature, which every man must recognize and overcome in himself.<sup>358</sup> In the Ramesseum drama, as Horus is being instructed in the garden, the adversary appears as Seth; the contest between them is represented by treading on grain, bringing about the death of Osiris, whom Horus then seeks to avenge on the serpent.<sup>359</sup> There are many variations on the theme, but always the serpent represents the destruction and passing away of all things, "a symbol of eternal motion [and] also the 'power of the abyss,' which must be overcome."<sup>360</sup> He is the corruption of all

things physical, the destruction of men's bodies but not of their spirits. Accordingly, when he is overcome, in the ninth hour of the Amduat, the posterity of Re stand "adorned in their garments ... in their own flesh. ... It is they who repel every serpent. ... They are the lords of life, holding the scepter."<sup>361</sup>

But the main altercation is between the Lady and the serpent; it is the woman who in the end confounds and accuses him.<sup>362</sup> In the Osiris drama the Lady is first pursued by the serpent, which is then cut up (in the form of a rope) by the followers of Osiris.<sup>363</sup> She is his most dangerous adversary.<sup>364</sup> In the Metternich Stela, when Isis curses the serpent and renders its venom harmless, she tells a Pandora story which makes it appear that the woman is under obligation to reverse the mischief of the snake because she subjected man to it in the first place; in the story, while a faithful lady guards "the House

of the Married Women,” a dangerous “Delta Girl” opens the door and lets in the serpent, who bites the son of the house.<sup>365</sup> He is rescued from death by the other lady, who hails him as “mighty Phoenix” (the resurrected one) and reminds him of his divine lineage, which in the end guarantees his immortality.<sup>366</sup> When Horus is bitten by the serpent in Syria (for the motif seems to be of non-Egyptian origin), Isis teaches him the antidote, which enables him to tread on the head of the serpent.<sup>367</sup> The first sacrificial scene of the Opening of the Mouth harks back to the controversy of Horus and Seth, in which Isis, in a tree, outwits the adversary and taunts him, “Weep for thyself! ... Thine own cleverness hath been thine undoing.”<sup>368</sup> Much is made of this cleverness and its frustration in the popular tale of the Papyrus Chester Beatty I, where Hathor finds and heals Horus after Seth has wounded him

beneath the *šn-wš* '-tree.<sup>369</sup> While the woman is clever and wise, Typhon, the adversary, is blind in trying to defeat her by preaching all manner of false doctrine, misrepresenting the sacred teaching which she has given to the initiates.<sup>370</sup> The purification of Pharaoh ends with a solemn processional hymn that calls upon the lady Nephthys to come and purify the king from the curse of the serpent; Schott confesses that he cannot imagine why a lady should be summoned for this—but there she is.<sup>371</sup> “I know the true reason for the punishing of Apophis,” says the candidate in the Book of the Dead. “It was Atum . . . it was Hathor, the Lady of the Evening.”<sup>372</sup> In the Metternich Stela it is Isis who heals the serpent’s bite,<sup>373</sup> and Nut, who is the beginning of all things, annihilates Apophis and his hosts.

As in the Old Testament, the serpent has a strangely ambivalent significance. Like the

crocodile representing the passage of time,<sup>374</sup> he consumes and destroys all physical and corruptible stuff and is thereby the agent of destruction;<sup>375</sup> he is Ouroboros, the serpent with his tail in his mouth, who destroys his own substance,<sup>376</sup> a very ancient concept in Egypt enjoying special popularity in Roman times and among the early Christians.<sup>377</sup> But at the same time, without his offices the stuff could never change to incorruptibility; hence in the end he performs a salutary function. As it was by a serpent that the children of Israel were smitten in the desert, so it was by a serpent that they were healed. It is the serpent who defeats the serpent.<sup>378</sup> The caduceus, the sign of the two interlaced serpents, was the sign of Asculapius, who healed the dead; one signifies death, the other life, and they are intertwined in life-giving copulation.<sup>379</sup> Since it is necessary in the course of life that

all physical things pass away to be reprocessed for an ever higher existence, the serpent's office is indispensable. All over the ancient Near East, in fact, "serpent images are associated with the god of the opening year" as bringer of light, electrical storms, and vegetation,<sup>380</sup> exactly as among the present-day Pueblo Indians. Kákosy suggests that the Ouroboros is at one and the same time the "symbol not only of eternity and of the universe but also of the passing away of evil spirits (*génies malfaisants*) and of their self-destruction."<sup>381</sup> By beheading a huge serpent beneath the *ished*-tree, the Lady, in the form of a cat, opens the way for one to proceed on the journey of initiation, passing through the lake of flame and thence on to the highest heaven.<sup>382</sup> It was only through working with the serpent that the Lady, in the story of Isis and Re, was able to share in Re's deepest secret and so

save him and advance herself; in one account she actually makes a serpent of clay to bite Re, forcing him to call an assembly of all the gods and there call upon her to reverse the evil done by the serpent.<sup>383</sup> Though she heals him of the serpent's bite, the Lady also worships the Horus-child, who sits within the circle of a serpent biting its own tail; these "represent symbolically the eternal life of the sun."<sup>384</sup> They are also the symbol of the endless changing of matter into other forms of matter, as well as of the serpent's frustration.<sup>385</sup>

In laying her hand upon the afflicted one, Isis, "by the power of Geb" rather than her own, rebukes by name each of the serpent's seven poisons, corresponding to the seven blows of death, which she thereby reverses.<sup>386</sup> The idea of an atonement is apparent in the regulation that if Pharaoh has knowingly or unknowingly taken life by the

shedding of blood, he must atone for it (*entsühnen*) by making a sacrifice, “by which sacrifice he is purified of the serpent which has defiled him before the gods,” the guilt being now on the serpent’s head. [387](#)

## Punishment of the Serpent

We often read of the condign *punishment* the serpent must undergo for attempting to frustrate the progress of the god on his journey or the initiate on his way. In the Anchnesneferibre coffin, the “Great Ones” who are “in the palace of many plants” prepare the candidate “to equip herself with the teachings [of Osiris]”; [388](#) someone then makes a formal report to Atum: “Behold … I have organized (*dm.n=i*) many things.

… Then I have driven out [the serpent] Apophis and have healed the wounds”; [389](#) then Sia is ordered by Atum to guard the place with fire. [390](#) The usual punishment is

for the serpent to be deprived of his arms and legs when he is driven out; he is to go with his vulnerable head in the dust, an outcast from the presence of Re: “Back[,] Apophis, enemy of Re, thou who hast no arms[,] who hast no legs! Thou hast not the body with which thou wast born. . . . Thou enemy, depart from Re! . . . May thy head be smitten when thy condemnation is carried out! Thou shalt not raise thy head. . . . May thy nature be overthrown by the sword of the great god; . . . mayest thou be placed upon thy head—do not raise thy head! Lose thy way and sorrow; do not rejoice!”<sup>391</sup> In the Book of Gates the expulsion of the serpent is repeated at a number of gates; as he is driven from the garden, the magistrates say, “May you be bewitched in order that you may be impotent,” while Atum, standing by, says, “My father is justified against you and so am I. . . . I dismiss you on behalf of Re. . . . Your

head is cut off, Apophis, after your coils have been cut. ... We consign you to your destruction!"<sup>392</sup> But at the next gate the story is repeated: there is another garden scene,<sup>393</sup> eating of bread by the man (*hy*) and woman (Maat), and then another banishing of the serpent: "May thine arms be hidden.

... Keep the serpent in custody! ... Fetter him that my glory may prevail."<sup>394</sup> Then a third time, we behold a ritual eating "under a leafy roof," or ritual booth,<sup>395</sup> and again the serpent is expelled: "Hey, rebel, who engaged in evil, Apophis, who has been the cause of evil, your face is destroyed. ... Hey, you have been expelled, you, who are to be destroyed!"<sup>396</sup> In the Overthrow of Apophis, the great serpent is smitten in nine things and denied the ten things necessary for proper existence; he is deprived of his physical body,<sup>397</sup> arms, legs, and strength of heart;<sup>398</sup>

he is cut to pieces<sup>399</sup> and slain a second time on an altar of fire;<sup>400</sup> his head is crushed;<sup>401</sup> his tail is placed in his mouth to signify that he is his own enemy and that he makes no progress;<sup>402</sup> and above all, his children will never inherit and his seed will never increase—he has no future,<sup>403</sup> no progeny,<sup>404</sup> for having rebelled, he is deprived of arms, legs, and posterity.<sup>405</sup> “O serpent, without his two arms, without his two legs, fall upon thy face!”<sup>406</sup> In fact, he can never produce anything.<sup>407</sup> Never again can he be a match for man, who has both limbs and the power to reproduce.<sup>408</sup> Man remains his master and archenemy: “I am the man who covers thy head, while I remain unharmed. . . . What is that thing which creeps on its belly?”<sup>409</sup> It is he “whose arms are hidden [i.e., who “has neither arms nor legs,” as Jan Zandee explains],<sup>410</sup> whose legs are hidden,

... serpent of the black head.”<sup>411</sup> In the end, man is the victor: “Thou passest through the waters of Re. ... Now thou livest as ‘flesh’ upon the earth which is sanctified unto thee.

... Thou wanderest through the fields (*or* garden). ... Thou shinest in the name of ‘He who drove out the One with the Hidden Arms!’ Bring light into the darkness, that the ‘flesh’ might be renewed!”<sup>412</sup>

The loss of limbs and organs guarantees that the rebel will never rise anew in his full powers, which he will never possess again.<sup>413</sup> He may never more progress, being “bound by Aker, deprived of arms and legs, bound in one place”—as Re “inflicts the blows decreed for him.” He is overthrown on his back; his face is crushed because of what he has done.<sup>414</sup> The healing blows are administered in reverse,<sup>415</sup> making them the blows of death, following the same order as in the Opening of the Mouth but with reverse

effect.<sup>416</sup> Meanwhile, man is triumphant: “What is that thing, that spirit that goes on its belly, on the back of its spine? Behold, I walk, and thy power is mine! … [Re] is kind to me when he walks through this heaven in the evening. But thou art fettered. What was commanded to be done to thee aforetime hath been done.”<sup>417</sup> The serpent has become an un-thing, having no arms and legs; he is *sfg*, which Sethe interprets as “mysterious, abnormal,” and Kees as “having a hidden form, a secret nature,” an uncanny, sinister, repellent creature with which humans cannot easily communicate.<sup>418</sup> There is total enmity between the two species, and “Seth turned himself into a roaring serpent” in an attempt to stir up confusion and intimidate the king.<sup>419</sup> If this is symbolic, it is not entirely so, for the enmity between man and serpent —a creature especially virulent in Egypt—is real.

In Egypt, as elsewhere, the role of the snake is both good and bad. In the same breath he is called the holy snake and the “wicked one.”<sup>420</sup> The concept of passing through the serpent, Re being “in his serpent,”<sup>421</sup> strikingly resembles the Hopi idea, even as Egyptian snake rituals have much in common with the Hopi snake dance (where serpent and tree are closely bound).<sup>422</sup> As Thausing sees it, “the initiate goes ‘through the body of the serpent’ and becomes strengthened thereby. By the overcoming of demoniacal powers, he gains possession of them”;<sup>423</sup> it is “the victory of the creative power of light over the ‘aeon of the serpent.’”<sup>424</sup> The aeon through which we all must pass is “the primal serpent, *Km-3.t=f*,” whose epithet means “He who has completed his time.”<sup>425</sup> He is represented by the Ouroboros, the snake with its tail in its mouth, signifying that everything within the

circle of material things must pass away and return to the condition from which it came.<sup>426</sup> His doom has been pronounced; never can he have his will on this earth, but he is baffled and frustrated in whatever direction he turns!<sup>427</sup> The snake that swallows all must, in the turning of time, regurgitate all: the god journeys the entire length of the serpent, beginning with its tail, to emerge at its mouth, thus reversing the course of death;<sup>428</sup> Horus's spear of light forces the serpent to cough up all that it has swallowed (fig. 98; see color plate 7).<sup>429</sup>



Figure 98. The candidate faces first the serpent and then the spear of Horus, representing the “sword and flame” which overcome the serpent. JSP V (BD 74, 75). © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Thausing does not hesitate to compare the serpent who blocks the progress of Re “in the meadows of the blessed”<sup>430</sup> with Satan and the antichrist.<sup>431</sup> Apophis has no beginning or end because he does not belong to the world of limited existence but occupies the middle ground between

“perishability and unperishability.”<sup>432</sup> In the last hour of the night, the dead enter the body of a snake thirteen hundred cubits long, passing from tail to mouth to be born in a new form (*hpr*)<sup>433</sup> with the instruction, “Sleep that you may awake, die that you may live!”<sup>434</sup> The snake is the “World-embracer, who represents the boundary between the World and the Non-world, Being and Non-being,” the region in which all regeneration necessarily takes place.<sup>435</sup>

So the serpent performs a necessary function; as the adversary in God’s plan, he is a Mephistopheles: “die stehts das Böse will, und stehts *das Gute schafft.*”<sup>436</sup> Try as he will to spoil everything, he only fulfills an indispensable role in the carrying out of God’s plan.

## The Flaming Sword

The two things a snake cannot resist are

steel and fire, which are combined to banish Apophis from the garden place. It is primarily in her capacity as “Great Lady of the Flame” that the Lady drives out and consumes the serpent, while the god bears the sword against him: “May thy nature be overthrown by the sword of the great god. . . . Do not raise thy head!”<sup>437</sup> When the serpent’s limbs are bound, “the sword is against him.”<sup>438</sup> The knives of Re and the two arms and the spear of Horus overcome him;<sup>439</sup> sword and flame remove his arms and legs.<sup>440</sup> Pharaoh praises the god who dispatches the serpent with sword (the archaic flint sacrificial blade) and fire.<sup>441</sup> “They spill thy blood upon the fire, crushing thy head with the flint knife; . . . the great god removes thy legs”;<sup>442</sup> Re gives to the king his sword and flame to use against Apophis.<sup>443</sup> Fire and sword are not to be separated in the

ritual punishment of evil.<sup>444</sup> “The knife gains mastery over thee, enemy of Re, the fire gains mastery over thee!”<sup>445</sup> To prevent the holy snake from coiling and striking, the “butchers” are warned, “Let your swords be sharp against the serpent, and blast the wicked one with fire.”<sup>446</sup>

From these and many other passages, it appears that fire and sword are used to punish and especially to expel the serpent and to keep him from returning. One commonly thinks of “cherubim and the flaming sword” as posted to keep Adam and Eve from returning to the garden—that may be so, temporarily, but eventually they *are* to return; paradise must be regained (Article of Faith 10). Indeed, the purpose of the ordinances, especially of the Opening of the Mouth, is to make the return to the garden possible,<sup>447</sup> and this time there will be no serpent there: the Egyptians quite logically

assume that the primary function of flame and sword is to keep Apophis from ever entering the garden again. The “Sesy of the powerful flame, ... guardians of the gates of *Him Whose Name Is Hidden*,” are posted to keep the serpent out and to let Re in.<sup>448</sup> After the overthrow of Seth, Sia, “the Smart One,” “the Swallower of serpents,” the discerning intelligence who will not be fooled, is set to guard the gate, armed with fire.<sup>449</sup> In the Amduat and the Book of Gates, the banishing of Apophis is followed by a prayer to the Ennead: “May your faces burn, may your swords be sharp against the enemies of Khepri.”<sup>450</sup> Since *hrw* is here the word for “faces” and *p ‘w* is a glowing fire in the Book of the Dead,<sup>451</sup> it is permissible to wonder whether *hrw-p ‘w* (faces of fire) with its Hebrew plural ending *-îm* might be the source of the mysterious word *cherubim* of the Bible. Or is it the Egyptian root *hrp*, “to

have control over," as in the long Book of Breathings: "Twice welcome! say the *hrp-ns.t*-priests" (i.e., "those who are in charge of the throne," they being the guardians of the gate)?<sup>452</sup> Apophis is confronted by the keepers of the pylons, standing with swords in their hands before a gate from which flames shoot forth, and is repelled by both sword and flame.<sup>453</sup> No one else can enter the place as yet either, excepting Re, since to enter it is to breathe the air of eternal life,<sup>454</sup> and man is not yet ready to live forever in his sins. The Jewish doctors, at least, made such a discrimination, telling us that when Adam was driven out of the place of delights, the watchers were placed there so that none could enter *unless* they had been first purified by the hand of the cherubim.<sup>455</sup> From the earliest times, then, fire and the sword, or the flaming sword, prevent the serpent from returning to the garden. The

serpent must remain in outer darkness,<sup>456</sup> being himself the mystery of nonbeing, the negation of all that is.<sup>457</sup> The *Pistis Sophia* gives the same explanation for the flaming sword: The time will come, it says, when the sword will be removed for Adam and he may reach forth his hand and partake of the fruit of the tree of life. But the serpent may never do so; in the end the flaming sword was for his benefit.

## Notes

1. PT 317 §§507–10, in Joachim Spiegel, *Das Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 127–29.
2. Gertrud Thausing, *Sein und Werden: Versuch einer Ganzheitsschau der Religion des Pharaonenreiches* (Vienna: Stiglmayr, 1971), 128.
3. CT 173, in Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935–61), 3:54–55.
4. CT 193, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:111; cf. CT 183, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:78.
5. CT 184, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:82–83; CT

- 167, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:21.
6. CT 162, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:394–95.
7. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani, Scribe and Treasurer of the Temples of Egypt, About B.C. 1450* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1913), 3: pl. 16.
8. Budge, *Book of the Dead: Papyrus of Ani*, 2:458; this is called the Chapter of Breathing Air.
9. Marie C. Weynants-Ronday, “Paradis égyptiens,” *CdE* 3 (1927): 74.
10. Bernard Chapira, “Légendes bibliques attribuées à Ka'b el-Ahbar,” *Revue des études juives* 69 (1919): 105 n. 4; cf. Psalm 1.
11. Henri Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), 1:30.
12. Hermann Kees, “Die Feuerinsel in den Sargtexten und im Totenbuch,” *ZÄS* 78 (1942): 42.
13. For example, Erik Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963–67), 1:32–33; 2:51.
14. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:165–66 and pl. 9.
15. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:34–36.
16. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:41–42; 2:56.
17. Karl Kerényi, “Voraussetzungen der Einweihung in Eleusis,” in *Initiation*, ed. Claas J. Bleeker (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 61.
18. Eberhard Otto, “Sprüche auf altägyptischen Särgen,” *ZDMG* 102 (1952): 195–96.

19. CT 174, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:60.
20. CT 183, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:78.
21. CT 184, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:81.
22. CT 188, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:93.
23. CT 143, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:176.
24. Adriaan de Buck, “On the Meaning of the Name H‘pj,” in *Orientalia Neerlandica: A Volume of Oriental Studies* (Leiden: Sijthoff’s Uitgeversmaatschappij N.V., 1948), 13.
25. CT 179, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:72.
26. De Buck, “On the Meaning of the Name H‘pj,” 1–22.
27. De Buck, “On the Meaning of the Name H‘pj,” 19, emphasis added.
28. For more on Hapy, see below, commentary to lines 46–47, pp. 340–42.
29. Ethel S. Drower, “The Ritual Meal,” *Folk-Lore* 48/3 (1937): 226–29; François J. Chabas, “Les libations chez les anciens égyptiens,” in *Oeuvres diverses*, ed. Gaston Maspero, BE 13 (Paris: Leroux, 1909), 5:175–85; Hugh W. Nibley, “Sparsiones,” *Classical Journal* 40 (1945): 515–43, reprinted in *The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled*, CWHN 10:148–94.
30. Cited in James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906–7), 1:263 no. 552.
31. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, trans. J. Gwyn Griffiths (Cambridge: University of Wales, 1970), 33.
32. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 34.

33. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 37–38.
34. Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 69 and 69 n. 3.
35. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 72.
36. P. Louvre N. 3279 line 47, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 50–51, 53, and 53 n. 2.
37. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 60a–61b, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 59–62, emphasis added.
38. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd rev. ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 172.
39. Coffin of Anchnesneferibre 117–18, in Constantin E. Sander-Hansen, *Die religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre* (Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1937), 53.
40. PT 208 §124, in Kurt Sethe, *Die altägyptische Pyramidentexte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–22), 1:72.
41. Philippe Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051)*: *Rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1965), 1:43.
42. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 12–13.
43. Coffin of Anchnesneferibre 259–61, in Sander-Hansen, *Religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*, 100–101.
44. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 197–98 §266.
45. Cf. “The Egyptian Ramesseum Drama,” in Theodor H. Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East*, new rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 380–98, quotations on 380–81, 389, 390,

46. Siegfried Morenz, “Zur Vergöttlichung in Ägypten,” *ZÄS* 84 (1959): 138.
47. Friedrich Preisigke, *Vom göttlichen Fluidum nach ägyptischer Anschauung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1920), 45.
48. Eberhard Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1960), 2:69 (scene 17).
49. Cited in Edouard H. Naville, “La destruction des hommes par les dieux: D’après une inscription mythologique du tombeau de Séti I, à Thèbes,” *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 4 (1875): 13.
50. BD 1, in Wilhelm Czermak, “Zur Gliederung des 1. Kapitels des ägyptischen ‘Totenbuches,’” *ZÄS* 76 (1940): 21.
51. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 66.
52. P. Leiden T 32 2/5–6 in Bruno H. Stricker, “De Egyptische mysteriën: Pap. Leiden T 32,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 56.
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324. P. Setna I 5/3, 9, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 33–34, 122–25.
325. P. Setna I 5/10, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 34, 124–25.
326. P. Setna I 5/11–16, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 34–35, 126–27.
327. P. Setna I 5/16–18, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 35, 126–29.
328. P. Setna I 5/18–20, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 35–36, 128–29.
329. P. Setna I 5/21–27, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 36, 128–31.
330. P. Setna I 5/28–30, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 37, 130–33.
331. P. Setna I 5/31–32, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 37, 132–33.
332. P. Setna I 5/32, 35–36, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 37–38, 132–35.
333. P. Setna I 5/36, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*,

38, 134–35.

334. P. Setna I 5/32–37, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 37–38, 134–35.
335. P. Setna I 5/33, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 37–38, 132–33.
336. P. Setna I 5/33–35, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 37–38, 132–35.
337. *Wb* 1:18.
338. P. Setna I 5/37–38, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 134–35.
339. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, 3–5.
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343. Montet, “*Fruit défendu*,” 87.
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345. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 153; English trans., 159; and Book of Gates 2.54–59, in Jan Zandee, “The Book of Gates,” in *Liber amicorum: Studies in Honour of Professor Dr. C. J. Bleeker* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 300–301.
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351. Reymond, *Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 35.
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366. Metternich Stela lines 76–82, in Sander-Hansen, *Texte der Metternichstele*, 44–45.
367. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, 1:93; see PT 378 §§663–66.
368. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual*, 2:76 (scene 43).
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371. Schott, *Reinigung Pharaos*, 60.
372. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 62–63.
373. Metternich Stela lines 199–204, 237, in Sander-Hansen, *Texte der Metternichstele*, 63–64, 67.
374. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.7, in PG 9:68–69.
375. CT 150, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:254.
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378. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:119–20.
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384. Piankoff, “Deux papyrus ‘mythologiques’ de Her-Ouben au Musée du Caire,” 134.
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387. Schott, *Reinigung Pharaos*, 67.
388. Coffin of Anchnesneferibre 88–90, in Sander-Hansen, *Religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*, 46.
389. Coffin of Anchnesneferibre 91–96, in Sander-Hansen,

*Religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*,  
47–48.

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393. Book of Gates 1.182–211, in Zandee, “Book of Gates,” 291–93; cf. Book of Gates 1.112, in Zandee, “Book of Gates,” 287.
394. Cf. Book of Gates 1.239–40, in Zandee, “Book of Gates,” 294–95.
395. Cf. Book of Gates 2.162, in Zandee, “Book of Gates,” 308.
396. Cf. Book of Gates 3.14–16, in Zandee, “Book of Gates,” 314.
397. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/3, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 76.
398. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/4, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 77.
399. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/10–11, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 78.
400. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/14, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 79.

401. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/15, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 79.
402. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/16, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 79.
403. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/1–2, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 76.
404. P. Bremner-Rhind 27/12–13, 29/13, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 63, 73.
405. P. Bremner-Rhind 29/23, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 75.
406. P. Bremner-Rhind 29/23–26, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 75–76.
407. P. Bremner-Rhind 27/13, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 63.
408. P. Bremner-Rhind 29/11, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 73.
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415. For more on the reversal of the blows of death, see above, commentary to lines 36–37.
416. P. Bremner-Rhind 27/10–13, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 62–63.
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423. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 49 n. 5.
424. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 46 n. 1.
425. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 289.
426. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 158; English trans., 164.
427. P. Bremner-Rhind 29/9–10, in Faulkner, *Papyrus*

Bremner-Rhind, 73.

428. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:188–89.
429. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 62.
430. BD 136.
431. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 41.
432. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 150–51; English trans., 158–59.
433. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:197.
434. PT 482 §1006 and PT 670 §1975b.
435. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 154; English trans. 164.
436. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* 1336. [The Greek term Mephistopheles means, as Goethe noted, “who desires to do evil, but does good instead” —eds.]
437. Metternich Stela lines 1–4, in Sander-Hansen, *Texte der Metternichstele*, 16–18.
438. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:121.
439. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/89, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 77–78.
440. P. Bremner-Rhind 31/25, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 85.
441. P. Bremner-Rhind 22/13, 21–22; 22/24–23:1, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 44–45.
442. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/1–2, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 76.
443. P. Bremner-Rhind 22/13, 21–22; 22/24–23/1, in

Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 44–45.

444. P. Bremner-Rhind 31/1–2, 11–15, 24–26, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 81, 83–86; Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 18.
445. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/8, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 77.
446. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:97–98.
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448. Piankoff, “*Livre des Quererts*,” 5 pl. XI.
449. Book of Night, 58, 70, in Coffin of Anchnesneferibre 98–99, in Sander-Hansen, *Religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*, 49; cf. Book of Gates 1.128–30, in Zandee “Book of Gates,” 288.
450. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:115, and Hornung, *Altägyptischen Höllenvorstellungen*, 121–22.
451. *Wb* 1:503.
452. P. Leiden T 32 1/22, in Stricker, “Egyptische mysterien,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 56.
453. P. Bremner-Rhind 30/11–15, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 77.
454. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 48–49.
455. Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 1:118.
456. Kákosy, “Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion,” 104–5.
457. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 172; English trans.,



## The Long Road Back

### Awareness of the Fall: The “Way of Life” for the Living and the Dead

We now come to the most significant part of what Joachim Spiegel calls “a drama of overpowering sublimity,” which was thought to culminate in “a literal ascent to heaven.”<sup>1</sup> The basic elements of religion are, as Gertrud Thausing points out, man’s awareness of his lost and fallen state—the *Urtragik* of his existence—and his hopes of escaping from it.<sup>2</sup> Equal awareness of his present misery and potential for glory meets him at every turn in all the nobler products of his mind. The problem is how to get from the one state to the other; that is the main

concern of the mysteries. The dark coffin chamber and the bright celestial room are the beginning and ending of the story, but the fearful passage itself, the most important learning and doing, is found in the *Mittelkammer* on the way from the one to the other.<sup>3</sup> It is becoming increasingly clear that many texts formerly regarded as purely funerary were designed to give the living a head start on the road to glory while the candidate was still in the bloom of life. This idea has been passionately rejected by all the most vocal critics of the Book of Abraham. They prefer to take the position of Siegfried Morenz, who, after conceding very real Egyptian influence on both the Jewish and Christian religions, stubbornly refuses to budge an inch on this one point, though it is the most obvious of all.<sup>4</sup> “Especially Morenz,” wrote Walter Federn, “is violently opposed to it. However,” he continues, “it

has been generally recognized in recent years that ... a good part of the [Coffin] texts ... originally were of a nonfunerary character ... destined for the living.”<sup>5</sup> At least as early as the Eighteenth Dynasty, Eberhard Otto observes, “the possibility of higher immortal existence was not limited to the funerary salvation (*Verklärung*),” for it was believed possible to aspire to glory by another path, heretofore unsuspected by scholars, entailing “an entirely new relationship between man and the realm (*Bezirk*) of godhood.”<sup>6</sup> Thus there appears “by the side of the funerary activity a new hope for eternal life, undarkened by funereal gloom.”<sup>7</sup> It was implemented by certain ordinances through which one could become sanctified even in this life. How old the idea is we do not know, for the Egyptians, ever of a speculative turn, confused things at an early date, as “they consciously copied the

old texts ... without understanding them in their proper context.”<sup>8</sup> Thus the imposing but baffling cenotaph of Seti I contains much “witless and senseless” material, proving to Henri Frankfort “how artificial the revival was” at that time—a “blind alley.”<sup>9</sup>

The essence of the “second religiosity” was the Way of Life, the passage from darkness to light.<sup>10</sup> The terminology is astonishingly like that of early Christians and Jews.<sup>11</sup> When Baruch tells us that the righteous “shall be made like unto the angels, and be made equal to the stars, and they shall be changed into every form they desire,”<sup>12</sup> or when an early apocalypse of Adam tells how the patriarch was instructed by an angel: “take the way ... of life. I have come to deliver thee from this world of darkness and to place thee on the throne of joy,” etc.,<sup>13</sup> or when Gregor of Nyssen writes, “When the soul is on its way in the search for God, it

progresses ceaselessly and is constantly being transformed into new forms ever more glorious, and so passes from glory to glory,”<sup>14</sup> they are speaking in terms quite as authentically Egyptian as the Hebrew Wisdom literature or Christian trinitarian texts, which Morenz readily recognizes as Egyptian,<sup>15</sup> while hotly denying any possible connection of the initiation motifs.

This is where Facsimiles 1 and 3 of the Book of Abraham, depicting the king (or his substitute) in his fallen and his risen state respectively, come in. Facsimile 1 furnished the frontispiece to the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings (fig. 99; see color plate 1), on the one hand, and on the other teems with the sacrificial Abraham motifs. Need we recall that Bruno Stricker, in winding up his Book of Breathings studies, cites Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac (which we have shown to be a repetition of his own experience on the

altar)<sup>16</sup> as illustrative of the main idea behind the rites of the Breathings texts?<sup>17</sup> That picture of the man on the lion couch, found at important shrines in Egypt, “represents how the king is resuscitated from his torpor. ... This scene,” says Frankfort, “represents therefore *the greatest mystery of the Egyptian beliefs*, and this may explain why the accompanying texts are protected from the profane by particularly enigmatic writing.”<sup>18</sup> As in the Forty-Day literature of the early Christians, the greatest mysteries are the ones least exposed and discussed.<sup>19</sup> The puzzling structure of which Frankfort is speaking—the cenotaph of Seti I, more a temple than a tomb<sup>20</sup>—is proclaimed by the inscriptions all through it to be a place of passage; here at “the place where death was vanquished and life renewed,”<sup>21</sup> one passes from “the Place of Destruction”<sup>22</sup> to the

height of the heavens,<sup>23</sup> bringing “light to those who are in darkness” on the way in the manner of the king in the Amduat and of Christ in the descensus.<sup>24</sup>

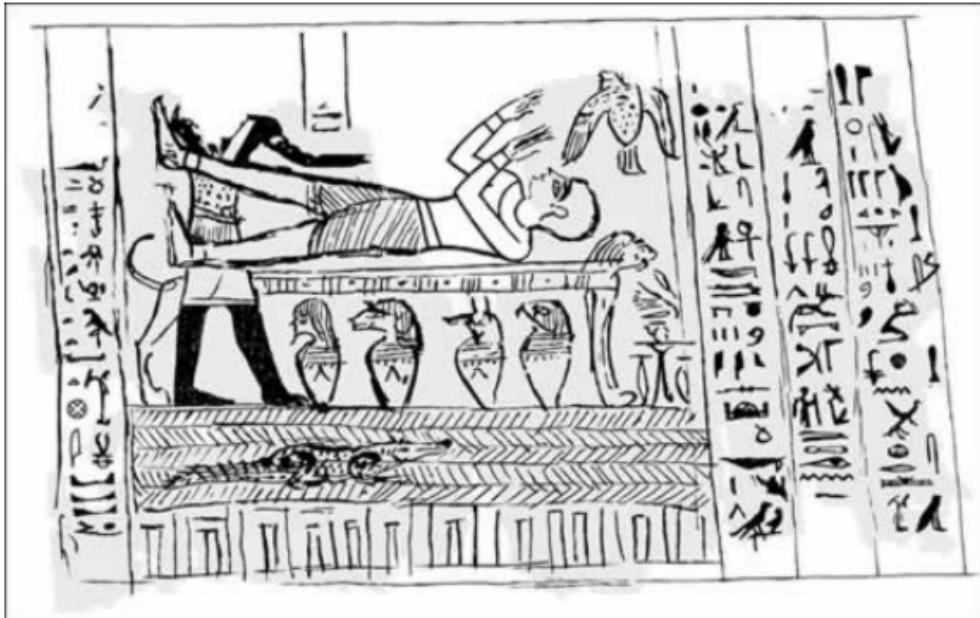


Figure 99. The lion-couch scene lies at the very heart of the Egyptian mysteries set forth in the Book of Breathings. Facsimile I from the Book of Abraham was the frontispiece to the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings (JSP XI and X). Reconstructed drawing, after JSP I. © Intellectual Reserve Inc.

While the concepts can be traced to the

earliest times, the Pyramid Texts, according to Winfried Barta, are concerned with getting a dead king secretly over the gulf to the other side, safely resurrected and glorified, while the Amduat version of the Eighteenth Dynasty is more concerned with what the king is to do after all that is accomplished—it tells “how life goes on the other side,”<sup>25</sup> describing the “one eternal round” typified by the sun in its course. But instead of an eternal return to the starting point, the course is depicted as an ever-mounting spiral—eternal progression.<sup>26</sup>

The journey begins with the miracle of *Stirb und Werde*, the very essence of all the mysteries, according to Thausing,<sup>27</sup> with the stirring of the supine figure on the lion couch, his legs already striding forward on the way. But he must be properly equipped for the perilous journey that lies ahead.

Lines 29 to 54 of our text all deal with

preparation for a journey. The candidate is assured that Anubis will guard him (line 29), that he will meet no rebuff at any of the checking points (line 30), that Thoth is handing him a document guaranteeing his survival (lines 30–31), that he is going with the authority of Re himself (lines 32–36), that he is physically fit for the walk and can meet any situation (line 37). This suggests the awakening passage that is inserted here (lines 38–41). The initiate is declared certified, stamped, and sealed (lines 41–42) and thus is identified with Re and Shu (the moving light, line 43). All places are declared open to him (lines 45–46), food is provided as he needs it (lines 46–47), divine guides offer their services (lines 48–49), a special bodyguard is enlisted (line 50), Sekhmet forestalls any adverse operations (line 52), and Horus takes over in the capacity of personal bodyguard, reserve unit,

and advanced reconnaissance (lines 53–54).

## Initiation as a Journey

“The way of initiation and the way of the next world are completely parallel in all ancient cultures.”<sup>28</sup> Every soul on earth is in the position of the primal man, passing from one existence to another.<sup>29</sup>

The initiate, like the sun, begins his journey at the winter solstice, in the place of greatest darkness. Stricker compares his condition to that of Adam, terrified by the darkness and danger surrounding him.<sup>30</sup> The main thing is that the initiate does find himself in the lower world for the time being. But fortunately he is not obliged to stay there; the whole idea is to keep moving, and the passage through the temple is described in terms of striding, hastening, even running.<sup>31</sup> The common *terminus technicus*, according to Jan Zandee, is *sw3*,

meaning “walking briskly and safely through dangerous places of the underworld.”<sup>32</sup> “O eye of Horus, get me out of here with you!” is the plea of the candidate.<sup>33</sup>

The classic passage through the underworld, so strongly reminiscent of the early Christian accounts of the descensus, is that described in the Amduat. It begins in the first hour neither in the upper world nor in the lower world, but on the horizon between them, designated as the desert (*zmy.t*) or the first cavern.<sup>34</sup> The first six divinities of the second hour are all ladies of the desert valley, their names invoking the attributes of serpent, shepherd, fighting, and fire.<sup>35</sup> As we penetrate deeper into the desert, twelve snakes “illuminate” the darkness ahead with their “fire” or poison, for we are entering a world of serpents where the serpent Uraeus is the only defense.<sup>36</sup> By the fourth hour we are completely “on the Way of Sand,”

swarming with snakes, where the sun-ship itself turns into a snake in order to get through (see pp. 398–99, fig. 129).<sup>37</sup> By the fifth hour only Isis can follow through the fiery way into the sandy land of Sokar.<sup>38</sup> In the seventh hour everything reaches its lowest point and grinds to a halt on the great sand bank; there is no water for the ship to move in, and the great serpent Apophis lies across the route, completely barring passage.<sup>39</sup> Yet it is at this point that things are set in motion again, including the stars themselves.<sup>40</sup> Then, in the eighth hour life begins to stir. “A sound is heard from the cavern like the humming of many bees, when their souls call upon Re,” in response to his call to them;<sup>41</sup> “again they sit in their garments on the sand and the God calls to them; there is a sound from the cave like the voices of people mourning”;<sup>42</sup> noises of progressive revival are heard at successive

gates—confused buzzing sounds of things just stirring to life.<sup>43</sup>

It will be recalled that both Adam and Noah, upon setting foot in this, our world, found themselves in a true desert (*midbār*) and had to work desperately, cultivating the ground merely to survive (Genesis 3:17–19; 9:20). To survive in such hostile surroundings and to travel through such strange lands, one must have both guidance and protection. This is the theme of this part of the Book of Breathings, as of the Amduat.<sup>44</sup> It will be recalled that our candidate began his progress by entering the Hall of the Two Maats. In the Amduat he is given an interpreter (Re himself), a viaticum to supply his wants on the way (this is “the Lord of Breathing … who supplies livelihood”), and “thy Two Maats to lead thee in the *Way of Darkness.*”<sup>45</sup> The older Book of Two Ways deals with that part of the

sun's journey which is through the dark underworld toward the sunrise,<sup>46</sup> including, as in the Amduat, the boat trip over the dark waters.<sup>47</sup> It is safe to say that the main theme of the last collections of Egyptian funerary literature—understood as guides to the beyond and including “such collections as the *Book of Gates*, the *Book of Caves*, ... *Amduat*,” the Book of Two Ways, and finally the Book of Breathings<sup>48</sup>—is man's journey of hope through a dark and dreary world. Let us go back and begin, as our text does, with preparation for the journey.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 29– 33

29. ... Anubis guards thee; he is (*lit.*  
*makes*) thy security.
30. There is no turning thee away from the  
gates of the *duat*. Thoth, the Most High  
(twice great [*different spelling in JSP*]),

**Lord of Hermopolis**, comes up to thee, having written [JSP: has written] for thee

31. writings [JSP: a book] of breathings with his own fingers, so that thy *ba* may go on breathing forever and thou renew thy form

32 (2/10). as upon the earth among the living, thou being deified along with the bas of the gods. Thy heart is the heart of Re;

33. thy members are the members of the great god (himself).

## **Commentary: Preparing for the Journey**

In this section all legal and other hindrances to the undertaking of the journey for which the preceding rites have been the preparation are removed. This is not the removal of barriers and obstacles along the

way—that comes in later sections—but of all valid objections to making the journey.

**Line 29:** “Anubis guards thee; he is (guarantees, *lit.* makes) thy security (protection)”

The treatment of the body is under the supervision of Anubis from the moment it becomes the object of special care. As Jean-Claude Goyon observes, *protection* is the main theme and purpose of the Books of Breathings<sup>49</sup>—protection during the times of transition when the soul, like a crab at the moment of exchanging its smaller shell for a larger one, is hopelessly naked and defenseless. “Come ye gods, provide protection for him within the womb, knowing that he is your lord and god while still in the egg!”<sup>50</sup> At the most dangerous of all moments, when the soul is in the “egg,” or embryo, of a new life, the serpent-god

himself must protect the oval in which the miracle takes place (fig. 100);<sup>51</sup> only the flame of the serpent can drive off the destroying serpents.<sup>52</sup> As is well known, the business of Anubis is to see to the proper preparation of the mummy. This makes him the Great Protector, preserving the endangered body intact against the day of resurrection. This follows the order of nature: “As long as the structural integrity of a cryptobioite remains intact the organism is capable of resuming the active state that is generally deemed to be characteristic of life”; the return to a living state with its normal “degradative reactions” requires three things: water, oxygen, and heat.<sup>53</sup> It is interesting that the primary purpose of the Book of Breathings is to supply the dead with water, air, and light, the last being actually the assurance of a “rewarming” of the body when the time comes, according to

Goyon;<sup>54</sup> the idea seems to have carried over from Egypt to Palestine at a very early time.<sup>55</sup> The ingenuity of the Egyptians in preserving the structural integrity of the human body against the possible day of resurrection—that is, the whole art of mummification—may well be not an indication of naive faith, it has been suggested, but the opposite, reflecting ever-growing doubts as to the possibility of a real resurrection.<sup>56</sup>



Figure 100. Life in the womb is for some reason represented in company of a serpent. Note the incompletely drawn eye. Redrawn from the Book of Caverns, cenotaph of Seti I, ca. 1290 B.C. After Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos*, 2: pl. 32.

**Line 30:** “There is no turning thee away from (thou shalt not be opposed at) the gates of the *duat*”

Thanks still to Anubis, the *episkopos* who holds the key to the gates of the underworld (*duat*) is therefore in a position to let the candidate pass.<sup>57</sup> As we have shown elsewhere, this passage could quite properly be translated “The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against thee!”<sup>58</sup>



Figure 101. Thoth presents the initiate with the book. The inscription says that this chapter is “to cause one to remember.” P. Turin 1791 (BD 90), ca. 150 B.C.

Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

**Lines 30–31:** “*Thoth, the Most High (twice great), Lord of Hermopolis, comes up to thee, having written (has written) for thee writings (a book) of breathings with his own fingers*”

An earlier statement appears in Book of the Dead chapter 182. “Twice [or very] great” is a common epithet of Thoth. Thoth’s headquarters is *Hmnw*, the “City of Eight” (Coptic Šmoun, today el-Ashmunein), the number eight being the expression of creation;<sup>59</sup> it was also called Hermopolis because Thoth was the Egyptian Hermes. Also in chapter 182, Thoth comes bringing breath and protection to the dead, purification of everything done on earth.<sup>60</sup> This makes him the equivalent of the lady

Maat—and indeed, at this point of our Breathings text, his name is written with nothing but a single *maat*-feather. No higher authority could be claimed for any book than is here claimed for the Book of Breathings, brought personally by Thoth from headquarters and written “with *his* own fingers” (fig. 101; cf. p. 29, fig. 4).<sup>61</sup>

As we have seen, the opening line of the Book of Breathings proclaims that Isis “made” this book in behalf of her brother Osiris, but its contents are supplied her by Thoth. He in turn is only the purveyor, however, not the initiator. His office is always that of secretary, scribe, recorder, adviser, confidential assistant, whose calling it is to record, preserve, and transmit everything of importance, not to produce it or create it.<sup>62</sup> He is identified with the moon, which does not produce but merely transmits the light of Re.<sup>63</sup> The Book of Breathings

thus no more originates with Isis and Thoth than it does with the local scribe who records that he wrote it “with his own fingers.”

As the representative of the cosmic order who conducts one through the ordinances of the eternities, Thoth is the unfailing guide of the Book of the Dead.<sup>64</sup> S. Mayassis has brought together numerous references to Thoth as the “initiateur originel et primordial”;<sup>65</sup> as being in charge of the temple personnel<sup>66</sup> and temple vestments; as author of the “initiatory books,”<sup>67</sup> the hidden books of Thoth being in the temple library at Hermopolis.<sup>68</sup> The glory of Thoth is intelligence, and his work is to assist the initiate in his aspirations to divinity.<sup>69</sup> The sacred books of initiation are the fabulous hermetic literature, which Hermes Trismegistos (it is interesting that Thoth, in this connection, is called, in our *Breathings*

text, “twice great” since Trismegistos means “thrice great”) says were handed down from Thoth to Kamaphes (the sun-bull), thence to Horus and Isis, and thence to Osiris, Osiris being the first mortal to go through the temple and learn the “great secret,” his family then following his example.<sup>70</sup>

**Line 31:** “so that thy *ba* may go on breathing forever”

The *sdm=f* suggests a purpose or result clause here since the same word for “breathing” occurs in the clause immediately preceding. The peculiar nature of the *ba* makes identity of holy beings possible at all times.

**Lines 31–33:** “that . . . thou renew thy form as (when) upon the earth among the living, thou being deified (sanctified, divine) along with the *bas* of the gods. Thy heart is the heart of Re; thy members are the members of

the great god.”

Here the subject is assured that it is himself and no other who lives on (line 32) and that his *ba* is the *ba* of a god and his *heart* is the heart of a god. As in chapter 125, on the day of creation, he announces, “I am the nose of the Lord of Breathing,”<sup>72</sup> so, in chapter 182, by bringing breath to Osiris, he establishes the world order.<sup>73</sup>

These ideas are conveyed in our text, where Thoth assures the proper order of the rites by writing down and handing a text to the candidate—this very Book of Breathings. Hermopolis rivaled Heliopolis itself in age and importance,<sup>74</sup> being, like it, proclaimed as the primal center of creation, with its primordial hill to which Re himself repaired on New Year’s Day, returning to the place where he was born.<sup>75</sup> Here were first established on earth those holy ordinances and teachings of which Thoth was the

official guardian and purveyor to mankind; hence it is necessary for him to bring his *snsn* book from there. In the Prayer of Kheruef, which contains “nearly all that we know about Thoth,”<sup>76</sup> he is addressed as “Lord of the Divine Words, keeper of the secret knowledge that is in heaven and earth; great god of the beginning … who established speech and writing causing the temples to flourish.”<sup>77</sup> At the coronation, Thoth and the new king must sign the registration book together so that the business might be recorded simultaneously above and below, sealed both in heaven and on earth.<sup>78</sup>

The Book of Breathings is the final epitome of the writings of Thoth, for all the hermetic books of the mysteries were written by him.<sup>79</sup> In the Setne story, the Book of Thoth, “written with his own hand,”<sup>80</sup> contains all knowledge,<sup>81</sup> protecting the

holder from all harm as it once protected Thoth himself.<sup>82</sup> Thoth is thus an Enoch figure, keeper of the heavenly and earthly books of remembrance and teacher of heavenly wisdom to men. When the priest in the temple drama announces, “I am Thoth. ... I have come out of heaven to earth with the secrets of the horizon dweller,” he is pronouncing a “revelation formula” or “proclamation of identification,” as Jan Bergman puts it, which serves notice that the ordinances are of a celestial order, brought to earth through the mediacy of the proper authority.<sup>83</sup> The writing known as the Eloquent Peasant appeals to Thoth (1) as Lord of Truth, as pen, scroll, palette; (2) as everything good; and (3) as the guarantor of the bona fides, his whole body with all its members being the body of a god.<sup>84</sup>

An important agent of unification is the *heart*, thanks to its peculiar power to depart

from a person while still remaining part of him: “The heart,” writes Louis Žabkar, “can, as ‘another self,’ depart from him” and this “‘externalization’ of the heart’s activities has reached the limits of a true ‘hypostatization’” even though “the heart is said to be a man’s *ka*”—strictly his own,<sup>85</sup> the heart being a *ka* in its role of that protecting genie of the individual which never leaves the dead.<sup>86</sup> Hence during the dangerous journey, the heart both provides and needs guidance, according to the Sensaos Breathings text: “O Lord of Light within the temple, turn thy face to me! ... Guide my heart to (or for) me in the moment of despair (*nbty*)!”<sup>87</sup> For the Egyptian, “the heart is the central organ, the source of all power for both life and afterlife.”<sup>88</sup>

**Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 34–**

34. Hail, Osiris, God's Father, Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon,
35. *Wsir-Wr, Justified* [JSP: **Osiris Hor Justified**], Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*,  
**Justified! Amon is at thy side constantly (every day** [JSP adds: **in the Temple (or House) of Re**] engaged in (*hr*, concerned with)
36. renewing thee (*or* thy renewing) in life.  
[JSP: **Thou repeatest life.**] **Wepwawet reports (opens, announces) to thee the right road. Thou seest with thine eye, thou hearest with thy two ears, thou speakest**
- 37 (2/15). **with thy mouth, thou walkest with thy two legs. Thy ba is deified in the duat, being about to (r; so as to) make whatever transformation (hprw) it desires.**

**Commentary: The Way Is Open,  
Wepwawet**

Here the Egyptian text begins a new section, starting with a fresh line and opening with a salutation to the candidate. The preceding section assured authorization for his journey; now, at last, the subject is actually in motion and underway.

**Lines 34–36:** “Hail Osiris, God’s Father, Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon, *Wsîr-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified! Amon is at thy side constantly (every day) engaged in renewing thee (*or* thy renewing) in life”

The same expression, “Amon is at thy side,” occurred in lines 20–21 above, representing the creation of man’s body. After “to renew thee,” Papyrus Louvre N. 3291 adds “among the living.” The situations here and at the creation are not the same, but the motif is the same: “the way of the *ba*” is the road that leads from the coffin back to the

realms above.<sup>89</sup> Mayassis thinks of this as the initiate's toiling in a lone and gloomy world toward a distant point of light—the twelfth hour of the Amduat.<sup>90</sup> As one needs knowledge for the journey, so one acquires knowledge as the voyage progresses: "I open the barriers of my *ba* and send it on to the god of the *duat*. Atum brings out my *ba* to Geb that it might learn (know) the ways of the earth. He has opened the earth and removed the barriers and given it authority (*shm*) among the gods."<sup>91</sup> "I proceed against all obstacles, walking by the instructions of every god ... at the proper time."<sup>92</sup>

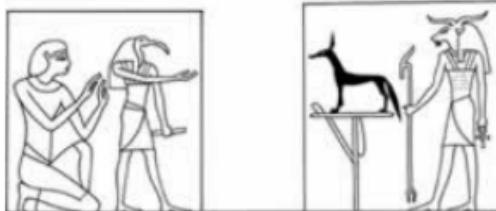


Figure 102. Two faithful guides: Thoth with his book shows the way; Wepwawet on his standard opens the way for the supreme ruler. P. Louvre N. 3092 (BD 146).

When the spirit begins its journey, Wepwawet, “the divine jackal, offers himself before his [the dead’s] eyes [as a guide] and, walking before him, leads him to the land of the mummies, the oasis, isle of the blessed” (fig. 102).<sup>93</sup> In our text he offers his services in company with others: Amon is ready at hand to protect, Thoth bustles up with a ticket all in order, and Wepwawet runs eagerly ahead to get things going.

Wepwawet is the faithful hunting dog who, in prehistoric times, ran ahead of His Sacred Majesty whenever he took to the field.<sup>94</sup> It was Wepwawet who helped Osiris conquer Egypt in the beginning, charging ahead of him with his deadly arrows.<sup>95</sup> Hence in combat he is the avenger of Horus, and none other than Pharaoh himself, “the earthly embodiment of Horus.”<sup>96</sup> Identified with Horus, Wepwawet figures prominently in myths associated with the birth and rebirth of

Pharaoh, being “one of the fundamental forms in which the king and kingship make their appearance, especially on the day of the royal succession.”<sup>97</sup> Also in the royal funeral, the king issued forth, “transformed into Upwawet,” from the pool of life.<sup>98</sup> This shows his identity with Osiris also, for it was Osiris who replaced Wepwawet in the Abydos cult at a very early time, according to Charles Autran.<sup>99</sup> “Thou hast come forth from the pool of life, being washed in the pool of Kebhu, and becoming Upwawet. Thy son Horus conducts thee.”<sup>100</sup> *Qbhw* is the waters of heaven, and in heaven also we find Wepwawet leading the procession of the Ennead, opening up a way through the midst of the enemy.<sup>101</sup> Throughout historic times the Wepwawet standard of a hunting dog mounted on a pole announces the approach of the king in the field of battle, in the hunt, and in religious processions alike, and it

was raised on the palace roof to proclaim the birth of a royal heir, “and thereby the birth of the kingship itself,” and to signify the consummation of the coronation rites.<sup>102</sup> The standard not only led out in the *sed-festival*<sup>103</sup> and at all other occasions marking royal succession to power,<sup>104</sup> but, harking back to the days of the prehistoric migration and the settling of the land, it signified the king’s taking possession of whatever ground in which it was planted.<sup>105</sup>

In Egypt, as in India, where “the animal was *sui generis a numen*,”<sup>106</sup> the faithful dog was thought to precede his master to the other world (the animal’s lifespan being tragically short) and wait for him there, as he ever ran ahead of him and waited with joyful anticipation during life. It is not necessary to see in Wepwawet a holdover from primitive African animal worship<sup>107</sup> since the relationship between man and dog has

always been an intimate one. But the Wepwawet who “plays the leading part” in the *sed*-festival itself and plays “the same role in the Osiris mysteries at Abydos”<sup>108</sup> is represented not by a dog but by a priest wearing a Wepwawet-mask.<sup>109</sup> In the funeral scenes of the Amduat, in fact, Wepwawet never appears as an animal “but always in human form.”<sup>110</sup> For he is “the son” and successor of the old king in the *sed*-rites.<sup>111</sup>

Wepwawet “opens for thee the beautiful roads,” as the common expression is usually rendered: Thus Frankfort: “Rising and setting, with the Dog Star as guide, the dead king moves on the beautiful roads which are in the Field of Rushes.”<sup>112</sup> *Nfr* means, among other things, what is proper and necessary. The important thing for the traveler here is to get the *right* road, to know which one opens to heaven and which to earth, by which one it is possible to ascend and by which one to

descend;<sup>113</sup> and to be able to distinguish major and minor roads and give them their proper names.<sup>114</sup> It is the business of Wepwawet, the clever dog, to point the right way: “the right (*nfr.t*) roads are opened for thee by Wepwawet.”<sup>115</sup> The Eloquent Peasant insists over and over again, “My way is *nfr!*”<sup>116</sup> meaning not that his path is beautiful, but that he is not trespassing and is taking the way he should take. Everything is done to achieve the purpose of the Book of Breathings—namely, to provide “total protection and security” for the dead on his journey:<sup>117</sup> “they make a road for me and keep lookout.”<sup>118</sup>

In the Book of Two Ways, the voyage of the sun-bark begins with a vigorous order making sure that all systems are “go,” that all ways are open: “Open, sky; open, earth. Open, eastern horizon; open, western horizon. Open, shrine of Upper Egypt; open,

shrine of Lower Egypt. Open, doors. Open, eastern doors, to Re that he may go forth from the horizon,” etc.<sup>119</sup>

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 41–43

41. ... They call thee Maat (*or they refer to thee as Maat*) in the presence of Osiris. They write the

42 (2/20). *mʒ ‘-hrw* (Justified) formula [*ideogram for speech or utterance*] upon thy body. Horus the protector of **his father** [JSP adds: **Horus the Behdetite**] protects [*hw; JSP: hnm, embraces, unites with*] **thy body and deifies thy spirit (ba) like all the gods** [JSP: *as all the gods do, or in the manner of all the gods*]. The ba

43. **of Re is giving life** to thy *ba*; the *ba* of Shu is infusing (uniting) **thy two nostrils**.

**Commentary: Travel Insurance,**

## the Gods Cooperate

In lines 41–43, the body is sealed up against destruction. It is stamped and sealed as completely qualified to receive the *ba* and resume breathing.

***Line 41:*** “They call thee Maat (*or* they refer to thee as Maat) in the presence of Osiris”

This passage is rendered in different ways. “You have been declared just before Osiris.”<sup>120</sup> “La vérité te sera annoncée par Osiris.”<sup>121</sup> One can announce the truth, and one can also be identified with Maat and called Maat; which is it here? In the Berlin Breathings text<sup>122</sup> we have the answer: “They say, ‘Maat is thy *name!*’” To be “declared just” is, properly, not Maat, but *mʒ '-hrw*. “Maat,” as Otto observes, “is by no means an abstract concept such as Righteousness; she is entirely concrete.”<sup>123</sup> Yet one can be wholly identified with her:

“Atum comes to thee bearing Maat. ... Thy father Shu and thy son Ra make thee Maat in thy heritage, that thou mayest be in peace and flourish by her. ... O Amon-Re, Maat unites herself to thy disk. ... Maat is the great (crown) on thy head!”<sup>124</sup> Maat, as noted above, is the only divinity that can be identified with *any* and *all* other deities;<sup>125</sup> she embodies the whole order of society, and whoever receives Maat *is* Maat (fig. 103).<sup>126</sup> As the complete and perfect *wedjat*-eye, it is “she to whom the body of the sun is united, who is his flesh and his members.”<sup>127</sup> This being the case, to split hairs in translation of the passage is pointless. The candidate is called Maat and identified with Maat when he is in a state of complete preparation. Everyone who enters the presence of divinity must “bring Maat with him, i.e., must himself be in the condition of ‘Maat.’”<sup>128</sup> That is the condition of our initiate at this point; he is

now qualified for higher spheres. “M.a.a.t must continually be actualized by men, in the first place by the pharaoh.”<sup>129</sup> This explains the identification of Maat with Horus upon assuming the kingship<sup>130</sup> and favors the translation of the above passage, “they call thee Maat in the presence of Osiris.”



Figure 103. *Maat*-feathers unlimited. The Two Maats, crowned with *maat*-feathers and holding *maat*-scepters, face the forty-two gods, also crowned with *maat*-symbols, while above, *maat*-feathers and scales denote the justice of the law. Note the intrusion of the serpents between the *maat*-feathers, representing the principle of opposition in all things. P. Nebseni (BD 125), ca. 1440 B.C. BM 9900. © Copyright The British Museum.

**Lines 41–42:** “They write the *mʒ* ‘-*hrw* formula upon thy body”

This suggests the “OK” stamp put on sacrificial animals and persons by the Egyptians to signify that the candidate for sacrifice was physically perfect and acceptable.<sup>131</sup> “I am the Red [or sacred] Bull-calf which is marked with [written] markings.”<sup>132</sup>

Holy insignia were worn not only as pendants and head plumes, but also on ritual garments or marked on the body itself. Sacred tattooing was important in Egypt: the famous Queen Nefertiti was tattooed on the arm with the Horus-eye and the uraeus.<sup>133</sup> The use of tattooing in the cults of Ptah and Bes suggests great antiquity; it belongs to the ancient mysteries elsewhere, notably in Orphism, and Julien Tondriau suggests that the Egyptian cultic tattooing was a substitute for the most primitive of garments, a fig

leaf,<sup>134</sup> which suggests in turn the ancient Jewish tradition that Adam and Eve had “characters and signs … written on their brows … and the names of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost were written on their bodies in seven places.”<sup>135</sup> In a Coptic text which shows remarkable affinities with our Book of Breathings, we read, “I adjure you by the first seal [which was] placed on the body of Adam … [and] by the second seal on the members of Adam. … Send to me thy breath of life.”<sup>136</sup>

Jacques de Horrack reads this passage, “The formulas of justification are (written) upon thy body,” and Klaus Baer interprets it, “‘*Justified* has been written on your body,’—just as the statue of the deceased would be inscribed with his [the candidate’s] name and the same epithet.”<sup>137</sup> In the Kerasher Breathings text, what is written is *mʒ ‘.ty*, with a determinative of

divinity instead of the feather.<sup>138</sup> But in none of the manuscripts is the writing designated by the ordinary *mʒ* '-*hrw* sign; in our text, the writer uses the determinative for “speech” or “formula,” implying that words were actually on the body, as when, in a washing ceremony, “the name of father, mother, children is written in green on the left (leg),” and, at the same time, “inscribed shall be their names on the bodies made of wax.”<sup>139</sup> Ritual identity with Maat was signified by the actual wearing of her insignia, the green *maat*-feather, or an image of the Lady herself wearing it.<sup>140</sup> More to the point, the ultimate in sacred investiture saw the initiate “anointed with oil. . . . Natron must be behind his ears, *Bed*-natron must be in his mouth, dressed in two new garments, having washed himself in inundation water, shod in white sandals, and the figure of the Truth goddess [Maat] being painted on his tongue in green

painter's colors."<sup>141</sup> In Upper Egypt, where ancient customs still survive, it is still the practice of the Coptic Christians to have crosses tattooed on their bodies at significant places.<sup>142</sup> Ludwig Keimer and H. R. Hall both assumed that a small figure of Osiris wearing the *atef*-crown appearing on the shoulder blade of one bronze statue of a priest and on the right breast of another represents a tattoo; Jean Yoyotte, however, rejected this, noting that such tattooing has never been found on a mummy.<sup>143</sup> The readiest explanation would be that such figures were painted on the body temporarily for the performance of rites or "written on their bodies" as part of the daily rites.<sup>144</sup> Such practices were specifically forbidden in Israel (Leviticus 19:28).

**Line 42:** "Horus the protector (avenger) of his father protects (guards) thy body and

deifies (sanctifies) thy spirit (*ba*) like all the gods”

The idea is that being immortal and divine, the candidate rates the status of godhood. In the Joseph Smith Papyrus, Horus the protector is specifically Horus the Behdetite, the rescuer who figures conspicuously in the Sokar-festival and whose special calling is to protect the god on his journeys; he is first and foremost a fighter, as is seen in the Horus myth of Edfu (fig. 104).<sup>145</sup> As settler of the Two Lands he overthrows the opposing or disgruntled inhabitants.<sup>146</sup> Usually he is represented by the winged disk, the outspread wings affording “protection against all evil.”<sup>147</sup>



Figure 104. Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II destroys the enemies of Horus the Behdetite. Egyptian texts often hint at episodes of violence and conquest by Horus in prehistoric times. Rollout drawing of column from temple of Isis, Philae, ca. 140 B.C. Champollion, *Monuments*, 1: pl. XCI.

In this section, the subject is receiving the final preparations for a journey: he is equipped with a passport by Thoth, all fixed up with apotropaic signs by Maat, and now is given a personal bodyguard in the form of the greatest fighter and campaigner of them all, Horus the Behdetite.<sup>148</sup>

**Lines 42–43:** “The *ba* of Re is giving life to

thy *ba*; the *ba* of Shu is infusing (uniting) thy two nostrils.”<sup>149</sup>

It is more than a coincidence that Maat, Horus the Behdetite, and Shu cooperate in preparing the candidate against the perils of the journey ahead. Shu bears the same truth-and-justice feather as Maat (fig. 105; see p. 285, fig. 94),<sup>150</sup> which also denotes “the gentle refreshing breeze, … the vibrant light … scattering the darkness,” light and truth being as inseparable in Egyptian as in Christian thought.<sup>151</sup> Life comes with the opening of the mouth and the eye in that order—the feather of Maat, Shu, and Horus the Behdetite signifies both “*ma* and *shou*, words signifying ‘light,’ the maat-feather, with its filaments, symbolized the rays” of the sun;<sup>152</sup> breath and light both restore life, as the scepter and the feather give birth to the Sun’s Eye.<sup>153</sup> Erik Hornung notes that in such

expressions “we seem to be in the world of scientific elemental particles” rather than of abstract moral values, and “rather of formulas than of beings.”<sup>154</sup>



Figure 105. “Shu the Lord of Heaven” supports the sky-mother Nut, “Great Mother of the Gods,” and spans the space between her and Geb the earth-god. Shu’s symbol is the same as that of Maat, the feather symbolizing air, space, light, breath—the conveyor rather than the source of life. Redrawn from the mummy case of Tabakenkhonsu, ca 950 B.C.  
Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

“Uniting” or “fusing” with the nostrils is an expression of complete intimacy. Shu was the son of Re, with whom he early fused as the “Sun’s Eye,”<sup>155</sup> just as Maat was the apple of Re’s eye. In the present passage, the *bas* of the gods fuse in the nostrils of the initiate, which was possible since “the *ba* could live in a body not its own.”<sup>156</sup> The king must receive the vital breath from Shu so that he and his followers can revive Osiris with it.<sup>157</sup> In one dramatic episode Shu revives his son, who has rebelled against him, “by the breaths of his (own) mouth, meant for (*r-dbȝw*) his son Horus.”<sup>158</sup> The ultimate joining “of the Ba to its Ka and body was supposed to take place in Heliopolis”<sup>159</sup> through the power of the Sun. In this Shu is the great mediator, being both light and air. Morenz holds that Shu is here not only identical with Re, but has a special relationship to him as “the son,” meaning

“the son of the primal god, Re-Atum of Heliopolis”; <sup>160</sup> it is in this capacity of “the son” that he is absorbed into the father, as Akhenaton fused with his father Aton by first assuming the identity of Shu. <sup>161</sup> In our text the “*ba* of Re gives life” and “the *ba* of Shu” starts the breathing; the idea that with the “breath of life” one becomes “a living soul (or *ba*)” is familiar to all from Genesis 2:7. Shu is the great go-between, the mediator of life; he is the light-filled and light-conveying space between heaven and earth, and the business of the children of Shu is “to support and fill the boundless space between heaven and earth.” <sup>162</sup> This is strongly suggestive of the Christian and gnostic doctrine of the Son (Shu) as an emanation of the Father from the “treasury of light.” When Geb declares Horus his heir, he says to him, “Son of my Son. . . As Shu gave it to me, so I give it to thee,” with Shu as the perennial

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 44– 54

- 44 (3/1). **Hail thou, Osiris**, God's Father,  
the Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods,  
Prophet
45. of Min-Amon, *Wsîr-Wr* [JSP: **Osiris**  
**Hor**], **Justified**, Son of [JSP: **born of**  
**Taykhebyt**] *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, **Justified**.  
**Thy ba breathes in** (any)
46. place thou desirest, thou being in the  
place (seat) of Osiris; Chief of the  
Westerners is thy name. It is Hapy the  
ancient (the great), the inundation-god,  
who comes to thee from Elephantine,
47. filling thine offering table with offerings  
of meat and fowl. O Osiris, God's Father,  
*Wsîr-Wr*, Justified, Son of
- 48 (3/5). *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified! There  
come to thee the gods of Upper Egypt and

Lower Egypt to guide thee

49. in acquiring a full knowledge of the  
eternities, that thy soul might live, and that  
**thou mayest follow Osiris and breathe in  
Rostau.**

50. *H3pw-nb=s* (*i.e.*, the necropolis) and the  
great god protect thee. Thy corpse lives **in**

51. **Busiris of the Thinite nome while thy  
ba lives in heaven all the time (every  
day).** Osiris, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr*,

52. Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*,  
Justified! Sekhmet hath power (*shm*) over  
those who conspire against thee.

53 (3/10). Horus the **Great of Heart is  
providing (making) thy protection;**  
**Horus the Rescuer [JSP: the Behdetite]**  
is procuring (making) thy heart, Horus the  
Seer is guarding

54. thy body.

**Commentary: They Equip Him**

## with a Viaticum

All roads are now open to the candidate, who can breathe any atmosphere. But before he can enter the next phase, which is a coronation scene, he must be in firm possession of the three things that a king must always be able to supply: an abundance of the earth's goods to sustain his subjects, victory over all his enemies, and supernal knowledge and wisdom. These things are guaranteed to the subject in this section.

**Lines 44–46:** “Hail thou, Osiris, God’s Father, the Prophet of Amon-Re King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon, *Wśir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified. Thy *ba* breathes in (any) place thou desirest, thou being in the place of Osiris; Chief of the Westerners is thy name”

The candidate is identified by a new name with Osiris the king, which is consistent with

the coronation formulas in the following sections.

**Lines 46–47:** “It is Hapy the ancient (the great), the inundation-god, who comes to thee from Elephantine, filling thine offering table with offerings of meat and fowl”

Hapy, who provides food for the trip, is not the Nile in general, but, as Adriaan de Buck has shown, “H‘pj exclusively means the Inundation”;<sup>164</sup> nay, it is “always an abundant, an abnormally great inundation.”<sup>165</sup> The theme is abundance. Here we go back to the wash water with which the Book of Breathings began, for that had to be Nile water from which all life emerged;<sup>166</sup> “the water ... was said to come from Elephantine, ... the traditional source of the Nile,” being nothing less than “the vital fluid that had exuded from the murdered Osiris ... beneath the island of Biga”; hence

it “was regarded as especially pure and potent, bubbling up direct, as it were, from the god”: <sup>167</sup> “I have come to you, Osiris,” says the initiate, “that I may worship you, that I may become clean through your effluvium” (fig. 106). <sup>168</sup> When Osiris is all but dead, it is the Nile flood that revives him: “I bring the Nile on the night of weeping (for Osiris),” says an inscription on a lion-shaped water spout in the temple of Thebes. <sup>169</sup> It was by the prayers of the king that the Nile rose to bring the waters of life to Egypt, <sup>170</sup> just as it was his grace at meals that brought abundance to the land. <sup>171</sup> An inscription from the time of Zoser calls Elephantine “the first city of the beginning, ... the beginning of the land, the Mountain of Geb (the primal hill). It is the exaltation of Re ... to give life to every man. ... ‘The Two Abysses of the Water’ is the name of the water. There are the two breasts that (bring

forth) all good things, ... the bed where the Nile renews himself to bring forth a new inundation.”<sup>172</sup> The body of the defunct, “like that of Osiris, was revivified” by waters first thought of as the waters of Nun and then as coming from Elephantine, the source of the Nile.<sup>173</sup> Both traditions are recalled in the fifth hour of the Amduat, when a great pouring of water from jars represents the flooding of the Nile and the returning to Osiris “out of the Nun” of all that ever belonged to him,<sup>174</sup> and by “a great vase ... the Two Lands were flooded with their brightness, like the stars in the body of Nut.”<sup>175</sup> Libation, birth, and breathing are inseparably connected.<sup>176</sup> At Elephantine the waters of the Nile burst forth from “the Cave of Time,” which the Greeks called the *abaton*, a word meaning “unapproachable,” etc., but which László Kákonyi now derives from the Egyptian *i ȝ.t w ‘b.t*, “the mound of

washing.”<sup>177</sup> In the end, every miraculous function of water is traced back to Elephantine; when lustration became libation, both had to be with water from Elephantine because that was thought to be the source of the Nile,<sup>178</sup> “the flood which comes out of the cavern. ... Thou art the watery abyss, the oldest, the father of the gods.”<sup>179</sup> Understandably, there exists “the closest relationship between a high inundation and the *sed*-festival,” or the royal jubilee of the coronation.<sup>180</sup>

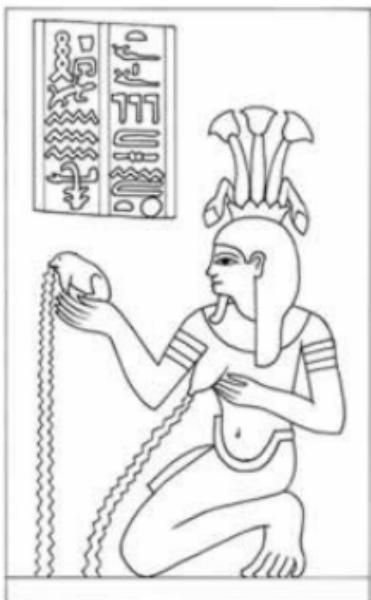


Figure 106. Hapy, the Inundation, whose waters revive vegetable and animal life. As a life-bringer, Hapy is both masculine and feminine, but like Thoth and Shu, he is a conveyor of life rather than a begetter; his waters sustain the food on which life depends, but he does not create either. Restored drawing from temple of Isis, Philae, 150 B.C.

The theme of abundance thus does not take us from the familiar motifs of washing and reviving and creation; neither does Hapy change the scene from Horus and Shu, for at the creation Horus the Behdetite “hath become Abundance upon earth.” The Table-

god is an Emanation of Shu.<sup>181</sup>

The Goyon Book of Breathings makes a great deal of Hapy: “O Hapy, Father of the Gods, (turn) thy face toward me! … Come to me [as] the water of youth every day! Refresh my heart in the flowing waters … ! Grant that I be powerful (*shm*) in the water, even as Sekhmet.”<sup>182</sup> Otto has shown how the mention of Sekhmet in connection with Hapy was meant to point to the Nile in ritual as the great fertilizer and giver of harvests.<sup>183</sup> The Breathings text continues with a discourse on the preexistence (lines 50–60a), for the Nile as “the primal water [of Nun] from which all things arose”<sup>184</sup> signifies the preexistent power of creation, of the ceaseless and irresistible ongoing bringing forth of life in all its abundance and variety.<sup>185</sup> Since Ptah, here identified with the waters of creation, never ceases to create, “he is [also] Hapy, the Father of the

Gods,” with whom the candidate identifies himself.<sup>186</sup> The power to create is the power to re-create, and here the initiate proclaims his powers of eternal rejuvenation.<sup>187</sup> Hapy represents everything human beings think of as “success.”<sup>188</sup> The Coptic Christians continued to glory in the blessings of the Nile and to engage in rites to secure them.<sup>189</sup>

## **Guides Are Provided for the Journey**

The hailing of the initiate indicates that this begins a new section. The theme is still protection, but guides are supplied with the necessary instruction and knowledge. The passage is ambiguous because it is unfamiliar, and varies greatly among the manuscripts, showing the perplexity of the ancient scribes.

***Lines 47–49:*** “O Osiris, God’s Father,

*Wsir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*,  
Justified! There come to thee the gods of  
Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt to guide thee  
in acquiring (gaining) a full knowledge of the  
eternities (*lit.* millions of years), that thy  
soul might live, and that thou mayest follow  
Osiris and breathe in Rostau”



Figure 107. Horus and Anubis are the two principal guides of the dead, the one conducting him to the world below, the other leading him out of it to the light past the scales of judgment. P. Hunefer, ca. 1300 B.C. BM 9901 © Copyright The British Museum.

Two divine persons appear to instruct the candidate. In Baer’s rendering, they come “to show you how to spend millions of years

in all together with your ba.”<sup>190</sup> But the “together with” not only is awkward but is also plainly a copyist’s error, as de Horrack points out, since it is missing in all the other manuscripts and is supplanted in Papyrus Louvre N. 3291 by the word ‘*nh*, which looks just like it and makes much better sense: “that thy soul might live,” instead of the meaningless “in all together with your *ba*.” The initiate is led toward ‘*rq*, which Raymond Faulkner renders “know, perceive, gain full knowledge of,”<sup>191</sup> and which could well refer to a course of instruction.

The safest assumption is that the two august personages have come to instruct the candidate in the things of the eternities which he must know to follow the way of Osiris, the first initiate. In the temple reliefs of Ramses II, two special guides conduct the king to the temple; they are depicted as ordinary men without any divine

characteristics or insignia, but one of them is of immense size and the other gives ‘*nh*’ symbols to the king. In parallel cases the two guides are Anubis and Horus (fig. 107), or Montu and Atum.<sup>192</sup> Likewise, the king in the temple reliefs is crowned by two human-faced gods who should be Horus and Thoth but who do not wear the usual identifying masks or insignia.<sup>193</sup> In the third hour of the *Stundenwache*, the two noble ones (Hapi and Anubis?) come to endow Osiris as he comes from the first gate;<sup>194</sup> the god himself “is standing on the *idb* (threshold) of the horizon,” having come “to give instructions to those in *hr.t-ntr.*” At the *sed*-festival the king announces: “I have run the course, when I grasped the secret (teachings) of the Two Men, the testament (*mks*) which my father Geb gave to me.” Peter Munro suggests that the two men here are Osiris and Seth—but why are they not so named?<sup>195</sup> In some

episodes the initiate is met by only one helper, appropriately the great teacher: “Thoth hath come to see thee . . . ; awake when thou hearest his words. . . . I have come as the envoy [Sent One] of my Father A.tem. My two arms are upon thee.”<sup>196</sup>

As in the Jewish and Christian apocryphal and biblical accounts, the “Sent Ones” would seem to go ordinarily in pairs.

E. A. E. Reymond calls attention in the Edfu temple texts of the sending to earth at the creation of “two divine beings, . . . *Wa* and *Aā*, . . . also called the *Two Companions of the Divine of Heart* (*tšwî ntri-i'b*), and are said to be leaders of a group of divine beings called *shebtiw*,” those mysterious beings sent to earth from time to time during the course of its creation to oversee the progress of the work.<sup>197</sup> As Reymond explains it, “the divine beings called *shebtiw* are those who are primarily responsible for

any action of creation which came to pass” upon the newly created earth; yet they are not the creators, but only agents, Sent Ones, who always “seem to have been subjects of a higher power.”<sup>198</sup> They organized the world after the manner of what had been done in other worlds. Their special calling was to prepare the grounds for the rites of the temple.<sup>199</sup> Thus it would seem that mysterious pairs of visitors were sent down to earth not only to supervise the phases of its creation, but also to instruct men concerning all things, “the knowledge of the eternities,” as our Breathings Text seems to have it. In Papyrus Salt 825, three divine beings visit the earth to instruct mankind in the ordinances; they are personified in the temple drama by three actor-priests representing Shu, the bald priest (*fkty*), the venerable and wise one; Horus, the executor of orders (*hntty*); and Thoth the *sš mdʒ.t ntr*,

who records everything that is done.<sup>200</sup> The theme is always instruction, and each one who receives it passes it on. Thus the *shebtiw* are learners as well as teachers, for “the God-of-the-Temple summoned the two Shebtiw, and apparently instructed them in the manner of creating,”<sup>201</sup> and they in turn exchange information with Tanen, whereupon “a new generation of creators appeared, ... the ‘Builder Gods.’”<sup>202</sup> As they reenact the procedures of creation, repeating “all the acts of creation already known,”<sup>203</sup> which have been revealed to them by “the *Ka* himself,”<sup>204</sup> the *shebtiw* both receive and give instruction.

We must have a “guide to lead us to the gates of knowledge where the glorious light and the pure shadow are,” says one text.<sup>205</sup> To instruct is to conduct. In the Coffin Texts the deceased is brought before Osiris, “the Guide of the Living,” to follow (*or* bless,

*smȝ '-hrw)* his footsteps. To the terror of the watchers, he casts off the dust and fills his body with immortal power, going down to lead every blessed spirit (*ȝh*) to the Isle of Flame. For he knows the ordinances (spells) and will supply all the necessary instruction to conduct one to the highest powers (*Hqȝ* and *šwty*).<sup>206</sup>



Figure 108. The inscription says that the man being led by Anubis is “setting out on the road (*šsp wȝ.t*) in Rostau.” P. Turin 1791 (BD 117), ca. 150 B.C.  
Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

A constantly recurring theme in early

Jewish and Christian apocrypha is the appearance of unearthly beings to comfort the afflicted patriarch and guide him on his tour through the other worlds; sometimes they pull in opposite directions.<sup>207</sup> The Abraham traditions are among the most instructive. We are told that “the archangel Jaoel was specifically sent by God to instruct [Abraham] and to initiate him into the knowledge of the heavenly mysteries,” but Jaoel “here seems to play the part of Metatron-Michael”<sup>208</sup>—that is, Jehovah (the Metatron) is confused with Michael. The one who taught Abraham, according to Rabbi Eliezer, was Michael, the Prince of the World, “for he discloses all the secrets of the world.”<sup>209</sup> It was Christ himself, as “the true prophet,” who came down and taught Abraham all the mysteries, according to the *Clementine Recognitions*, and hence the knowledge spread to the Egyptians.<sup>210</sup>

**Line 49:** “that thou mayest ... breathe in Rostau”

*Rostau* is conventionally identified with the necropolis of Gizeh or the tomb of Osiris near Memphis<sup>211</sup> and hence with the grave or tomb as such,<sup>212</sup> but that is only part of the story (fig. 108; see p. 255, fig. 80). Gaston Maspero suggested *r3-st3.w* as meaning “porte (*r3*) des couloirs (*st3.w*),” “porte des halages,” a gateway to passages or portages.<sup>213</sup> The gateway nature of the place is constantly emphasized, and early Egyptologists compared it to Vergil’s *fauces Orci*.<sup>214</sup> Though the term “designated the necropolis,” it applies “properly to the entrance of the empire of Osiris.”<sup>215</sup> Hornung sees in the *st3.w* element “a sloping passage,” along which the sarcophagus was dragged,<sup>216</sup> while Hermann Junker takes the first element as a form of *iry* and so rendered

*r3-st3.w Handlung des Ziehens*—“the business of pulling.”<sup>217</sup> In the fourth hour of the Amduat, Rostau is the sandy region “over which the sun-bark is drawn,” a place short on water, swarming with snakes, the nearest point of possible suffocation reached by parties passing through the Amduat.<sup>218</sup> It is the land passage through the underworld.<sup>219</sup> The significant point is that Rostau is not a place where one stays but always only a place of *passage*. Baer renders it “‘The Tomb-Shafts,’ a term of ‘necropolis’ in general and a part of that of Giza in particular,”<sup>220</sup> thus characteristically treating the shafts not as a means of passage but simply as a synonym for the one-way trip to the necropolis. Most Egyptologists accept Rostau as a gate. One does not end one’s journey in a gate—gates are for passing on through: “Whoever knows this picture of the secret ways of Rostau . . . and the hidden

gates in the land of Sokar on the sand ... eats bread beside the living temple of Atum.”<sup>221</sup> The dead has no intention of staying on the sterile sands of Rostau.

It is admitted that there actually was a place in prehistoric Egypt called Rostau, but “where in Western Thebes the ‘Valley’ or ‘Upper Restau’ were located is difficult to say,”<sup>222</sup> for the name is applied to a number of places. The name may originally have belonged to the necropolis at Memphis, being later applied to that of Thebes,<sup>223</sup> and thereafter extended to other places.<sup>224</sup> Indeed, the name of Rostau may be fittingly applied to any place of ordinances for the dead if Mayassis is right: “Rostau is a place or region eminently suited for the initiate and the soul, the place of perfect knowledge.”<sup>225</sup> It “remains the region of passage where one beholds the celestial mysteries,” and as such “it corresponds to the passage of the temple,

or the tombs, or the initiatory sanctuaries on earth.”<sup>226</sup> Far from being bad and depressing, the Memphite *rȝ-stȝ.w*, Zandee claims, was “a place of beatitude.”<sup>227</sup> Wilhelm Czermak calls Rostau the “hochgewordene Land” — the land that rose up—and a place of deep study “penetrating into the secrets of the earth.”<sup>228</sup> Taken in its various contexts, the word *rȝ-stȝ.w* (usually vocalized Rostau) strongly supports the initiatory concept as opposed to the purely funerary utility of the rites concerned.

It is notable that while it is often stated in the Book of Breathings that the subject is going to *heaven* to dwell there forever and ever, it is never indicated that he is going to the underworld forever, though that is the theme which some scholars see in every sentence. Indeed, in our text it is never unequivocally stated that the dead is in the underworld at all! This is because every

term denoting the underworld is ambiguous: “the duality of heaven/underworld ... dominates the beyond of the New Kingdom”;<sup>229</sup> on the other hand, the terms denoting heaven and celestial exaltation are quite clear and unequivocal. While in early times, as Hornung notes, the afterlife is depicted *only* in heaven and not beneath the earth,<sup>230</sup> from first to last heaven remains the preferred residence.<sup>231</sup>

**Line 50:** “*H3pw-nb=s* and the great god protect thee”

*H3pw-nb=s* means “she whose Lord is hidden”; the Kerasher version calls her *H3pw-nb=s-R* ‘ and a variant supplied by de Horrack reads *H3pw-nb=f-R* ‘, “he whose lord Re is hidden.” The mysterious lady’s name is written with a geographic determinative because it is a place—the cemetery at Abydos where Osiris lies hidden

and where the sun is also in the underworld. A significant parallel is offered by the lady *Mk.t-nb=s*, which also means “she who protects her lord” (*mk.t* is the opening word of the present sentence in our text) and is the name of the second hour of the Amduat, when “a god speaks to a god.”<sup>232</sup> *Nf.t-mk.t*, the “protectress,” is the “power that repels,” “Abwehr” as a *s3* or “active power.”<sup>233</sup> There is a lady *Šs3t.mk.t-nb=s*, “the clever one who protects her lord,” who takes over in the first hour of the Amduat, her name being shortened in the second hour to *Mk.t-nb=s*.<sup>234</sup>

The fullest form of her name is *Dw3t.t-mk.t-nb=s*, “the worshipping one who protects her lord.”<sup>235</sup> From the Twenty-first to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the four sons of Horus, the “canopic” figures, take over the business of protection, but with the Twenty-sixth Dynasty the ladies return, offering

protection, designated as *stp sȝ*, *bsȝ*, or *mk.t.*<sup>236</sup> As we have seen, the initiate starts out with Two Ladies or Two Maats in the Book of Breathings; in the long version Two Ladies provide water and two others provide protection.<sup>237</sup>

This section provides an interesting tour of cemeteries to the defunct, an itinerary of sanctification. It begins with the statement in lines 45–46 that the *ba* will be able to breathe in whatever place it chooses to visit; then we are told of food brought from Elephantine (line 46); then the subject is promised that he can follow Osiris and go on breathing in Rostau (line 49); and finally he is told:

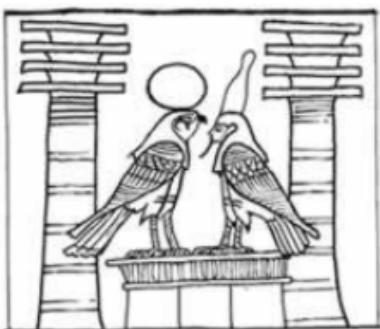


Figure 109. At Busiris, falcons with the heads of Re and Osiris perch on a temple before two *djed*-columns. P. Ani, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 10470 © Copyright The British Museum.

**Lines 50–51:** “Thy corpse lives in Busiris of the Thinite nome while thy *ba* lives (is alive) in heaven all the time (every day)”

Thus there is a steady progress from the extreme south (Elephantine, the subterranean sources of life) to the extreme northern shrine (Busiris, the age-old Egyptian center of human sacrifice) and so on up to heaven itself. Busiris is the classic place of sacrificial death.<sup>238</sup> But what is Busiris, the famous Delta shrine,<sup>239</sup> doing in the Thinite nome (*Tʒ-wr*)? Here *Tʒ-wr* has a special

meaning as a place of creation and resurrection; *twr* means a purified place, a station along the primal way of salvation traveled by Tanen and the falcon in the beginning.<sup>240</sup> Horus the Behdetite came from Busiris as “Lord of the Pure Place (*Twr, Tȝ-wr*),” which he purified from wickedness in the beginning for a fresh creation of the world.<sup>241</sup> In our text Busiris is written with two *djed*-columns (fig. 109), the name of the place being *Ddw*, the *dd* whose rites were celebrated there from prehistoric times being a bundle of greenery which, according to Wolfgang Helck, represented the familiar last sheaf of the old harvest carried over into the rebirth rites of the new.<sup>242</sup> As the foundation column of a new world, the *djed*-symbol is “the most sacred emblem of the perished world,” the symbol of transition from age to age and from creation to creation.<sup>243</sup>

While “thy corpse lives in Busiris, ... thy *ba* lives (is alive) in heaven.” “Thy mortal body is in Heliopolis, ... but thy *ba* is in heaven above.”<sup>244</sup> The soul (*ba*) shines in the sky, while the underworld conceals his body.<sup>245</sup>

## Protection Is Guaranteed

**Lines 51–52:** “Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified! Sekhmet hath power (*shm*) over those who conspire against thee”

This is a typical play on words.<sup>246</sup> Sekhmet is the most warlike and terrifying form of the mother-goddess, appearing as a fire-breathing lioness of the eastern desert bearing a huge sacrificial knife in her hand.<sup>247</sup> The theme of this brief section (lines 51–54), set apart by the candidate’s name without any of the usual titles, is the

providing of a *military escort*, consisting of four warlike figures. Beside the formidable Sekhmet we have:

**Lines 53–54:** “Horus the Great of Heart is providing (*lit.* making) thy protection; Horus the Rescuer is procuring (*lit.* making) thy heart; Horus the Seer is guarding thy body”

Horus, in three capacities or forms, provides the three operations essential to an army on the march: protection (defensive capability), capacity of attack (offensive capability), and intelligence and reconnaissance. Specifically, “Horus the Great of Heart” is responsible for the morale and safety (*mk.t*) of the march. The *Wörterbuch* renders ‘*ȝ ib*, literally “great of heart,” as “*hochherzig (?)*, *hochmütig (?)*—high spirited.”<sup>248</sup> In the form ‘*ȝ hȝty=k*, it means “great heart,” etc.<sup>249</sup> Thus it is apparent, as de Buck notes, that the

Egyptians used expressions of the heart in very much the same sense that we do today.<sup>250</sup> From this we conclude that our Horus the Great of Heart is primarily responsible for morale.

The next Horus is called *Hr Šdy.t*, and in some of the manuscripts, including the Joseph Smith version, “Horus the Behdetite.” The former term, meaning “He of Crocodilopolis,” is an epithet of Horus as a crocodile.<sup>251</sup> We have commented elsewhere on the crocodile as protector and restorer of life, but at all times the foremost quality of the beast is its dangerous and aggressive nature.<sup>252</sup> The probable location of Behdet is the region of *Tȝ-wr* and Busiris, mentioned above.<sup>253</sup> Horus the Behdetite is, before all else, a campaigning warrior, “Lord of Battle,” especially on the water;<sup>254</sup> he is the defender of the sun-god against Seth, who tries to hold up his progress.<sup>255</sup> He

overcomes the enemy at the crossing of the Red Sea, “the Sea of Hasty Crossing.”<sup>256</sup> As he makes his own royal progress, he embraces (*snsn*) his images at each of his shrines along the way,<sup>257</sup> revealing his nature as “the idolatrous god of Pharaoh.”<sup>258</sup> In a logbook of royal travels in the manner of the sun,<sup>259</sup> he goes forth from the temple of Edfu, where he was born, making his rounds of the heavens as a winged disk (fig. 110; cf. p. 147, fig. 39),<sup>260</sup> returning to his point of departure “to rest for a while” in the temple.<sup>261</sup> As son and heir of the sun-god, Horus the Behdetite is given dominion over “the entire earth … as far as the sunlight reaches … forever and ever.”<sup>262</sup>

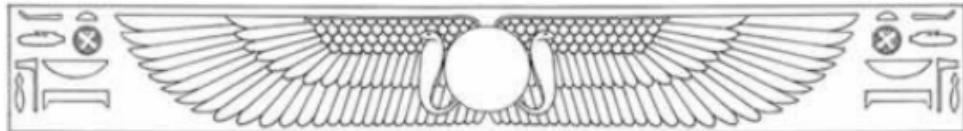


Figure 110. The famous winged disk, found over the doorways of Egyptian temples, represents the

protecting wings of Horus the Behdetite sheltering the king and goes back to prehistoric times in Egypt.

Temple of Horus, Edfu, ca. 100 B.C.

While *šdty* means “He of Crocodilopolis,”<sup>263</sup> the verb *šdi* means to extricate or rescue; hence Baer rightly calls *Hr Šdty* “Horus the Savior.”<sup>264</sup> He is the type of the prehistoric leader of migration, battle, and settlement in the old temple traditions, according to Reymond;<sup>265</sup> in his fiercer nature he is also a lion who gives the flesh of enemies to his companions to eat.<sup>266</sup> He is represented by a huge knife of Behdet-silex, which overthrows all rebels,<sup>267</sup> and he goes the length of the Nile subduing the entire land in a series of naval victories in behalf of Re, its new possessor.<sup>268</sup> He is thus eminently suited to provide the main thrust of the dangerous march. He provides the “heart” of the expedition in a neat *chiasm*

and pun in the Berlin manuscript of the Book of Breathings:

*Hr ḥȝ ib hr ir mk.t=k*

*Hr mk.t hr ir ib=k*

Horus Great Heart is making thy protection;

Horus the Protector is making thy heart.<sup>269</sup>

The third Horus is Horus the seer, acting as military reconnaissance or intelligence. His function is confirmed rather than obscured by the substitution of another name in this place, *Mr.t*, in Papyrus Berlin

3135. <sup>270</sup> Horus himself is sometimes called *nb mr.ty*, written with two eyes as a determinative, and it sometimes appears as *Hr mr.ty*. In this context *mr.t* is itself the divine eye<sup>271</sup> and can be substituted as a writing for Maat. *Mr.t* was a musician-goddess, indispensable in the Horus-cult,<sup>272</sup> and so closely bound to the god that her own

name is written with the determinative of the Horus-hawk. The idea seems to be that of the Horus-hawk in its capacity of the sharp-eyed one.

## Every Man a King

Lines 54 to 64 of the de Horrack text contain the closing section of the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings, which ends in a burst of coronation splendor. That this is the real ending and that we need not be unduly disappointed if no more columns of the Joseph Smith text are discovered is apparent if we compare its last line with those of other Breathings texts. Thus where the Joseph Smith Papyrus concludes: *nn wn hftyw=k iw=k m bʒ ntry*, “thine enemies no longer exist; thou art a divine *ba*,” the text in Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 text ends: *ink ntr ‘ʒ pr m ntr*, “I am a great god who comes forth as (or from) a god.” The Sensaos version

also ends abruptly with the declaration that the initiate is now Lord of the Elements, that being, according to Stricker, the usual ending of the version once known as “Que mon nom fleurisse.”<sup>273</sup> Furthermore, “the short version of the *Book of Two Ways* … ends with the deceased able to identify himself with the god Osiris who prevails over his enemies,”<sup>274</sup> while the winding-up of the longer version is introduced by a coronation trumpet call: “Make way for me that I may receive the great crown (which is) upon Horus.”<sup>275</sup> The accent on coronation at the culmination of the rites is entirely right and proper. “The concepts of creation, sunrise, and kingly rule are continually merged,” wrote Frankfort.<sup>276</sup> The awakening *sem-priest* is the awakening Osiris, the awakening king, at whose stirring from the sleep of death all things rejoice with great jubilation.<sup>277</sup> In our text, just before the

initiate is awakened by the rays of Re, he is hailed as a king at his coronation.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 54– 58

54. ... Thou art (*or* Be) firm in possession of  
**life, prosperity, health, remaining upon**  
**thy throne in the holy land (Deseret).**  
Come thou, Osiris, God's Father,
55. *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified! **Thou appearest in glory**  
**in**
56. **thy proper and perfect (twt) form [JSP** has a different spelling: *tyt* for *qʒi.w*], in  
**thy full ceremonial regalia, which you**  
**prepared while you were alive (or**  
**Having made preparation in life), thou**  
paskest the day hale and hearty, walking  
about and
57. breathing **everywhere. Re shines upon**  
**thy cavern (house, hill [JSP: high place]),**

**Osiris (or O Osiris!), that thou mayest  
(or mayest thou) breathe and live**

58 (3/15). by his rays. It is Amon-Re who causeth **thy ka** [*JSP adds: living, protecting, or prospering*] to live. It is [*JSP adds: in or by*] the **Book of Breathings** that causeth thee to flourish.

## **Commentary: Coronation Imagery**

***Line 54:*** “Thou art firm in possession of life, prosperity, health”

The life, prosperity, health formula is that which is always placed immediately after the name of the king or the title of His Majesty. This is enough in itself to indicate that the imagery of this section is that of the coronation since the formula is not applied to common mortals.<sup>278</sup>

## **The Initiate on the Throne in the Holy Land**

**Line 54:** “Thou art ... remaining upon thy throne in the holy land”

Given the royal salutation of life, prosperity, health, “throne” is a better rendering than “seat” here. The place- or house-determinative is a reminder that “the throne is heaven.”<sup>279</sup> The Goyon Book of Breathings makes this quite clear: “I am Horus of millions of *sed*-festivals (coronation jubilees), ruler upon the throne of all the lands, ... Horus, the heir of Re”;<sup>280</sup> “my throne is Heliopolis, my seat is the White Wall (Memphis), my house is Hermopolis; my seats are all the nomes, which are under my written orders”;<sup>281</sup> “I am victorious as Lord of the *wrr.t*-crown. ... I overcome mine enemies. ... I am mighty like Atum! I walk with my legs, I speak with my mouth, I see with my eyes, I hear with my ears.”<sup>282</sup> The *wrr.t*-crown is the crown of the

victorious Horus worn by the beatified dead,<sup>283</sup> and from this passage it appears that the Opening of the Mouth makes one a king to rule and reign. In the pyramid rite, the dead had to be crowned as Horus before he could begin his final journey to heaven, the forcible and victorious breaking out of the tomb being identified with the coronation itself.<sup>284</sup> In assuming the exalted *atef*-crown of Osiris, the dead is not presuming to rival or supplant the god, but rather to be as much like the “divine ‘prototype’” as possible.<sup>285</sup> The *mʒ'-hrw* formula in itself is enough, according to Thausing, to mark the funeral rites as a coronation.<sup>286</sup> The designation of the dead as a king is, however, in the later period “no claim to social status, but only a religious gesture (*Anliegen*),”<sup>287</sup> the coronation being the standard “seal of divine recognition and the promise of divine blessing.”<sup>288</sup>

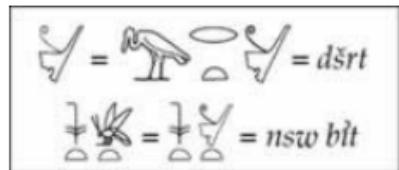


Figure 111. The figure of the Red Crown of Lower Egypt is of prehistoric antiquity and has the phonetic values of *n*, *bit* (meaning *bee*), and *dšr.t*. This invites speculation by those interested in the strange modern title of Deseret with its various implications. Can the peculiar wire loop protruding from the crown represent an antenna?

But the *sed*-festival, celebrating and renewing the coronation of the king, cannot take place unless on the preceding evening a royal *funeral* has been celebrated;<sup>289</sup> far from being in conflict, funerary and coronation rites “coalesced into a single celebration” at the *sed*-festival.<sup>290</sup> Even when the king was his own successor, as was usual at the *sed*-festival, “the ‘old king’ (must) be buried, so that the ‘new king’ can mount the throne.”<sup>291</sup> As Horus becomes

Osiris, so Osiris in the resurrection becomes Horus: without a coronation the drama is not complete.<sup>292</sup> The coronation rites, however, took place neither at a tomb nor in the palace but, significantly, in the temple, as part of the regular temple ordinances.<sup>293</sup>

Since the king is “the type and model” for all to follow in the rites,<sup>294</sup> the coronation imagery is prominent. When discovered, the dead owners of the various Books of Breathings were wearing crowns.<sup>295</sup> Also, kings must be priests, and candidates to immortality must be both priests and kings—a point which Alexandre Moret has demonstrated at considerable length.<sup>296</sup> The culmination of all initiation is coronation. Since “the same drama in ever-narrowing concentric circles is carried out for every individual, ... every individual person may experience his own coronation, corresponding to that of the king.”<sup>297</sup> There

is a fusion of personality in the coronation situation, he who assumes the crown being identified with whoever else wears it.<sup>298</sup>

The climax of the underground ceremonies of the pyramid rites is the coronation of the image in the serdab,<sup>299</sup> by which the king becomes fused with the sun-god, receiving the name Haroeris: Horus the Lord of the *smaragd* (green stone).<sup>300</sup>

Because of its peculiar resemblance to our own “Deseret,” both in sound and meaning, the word for “holy land,” *tȝ-dšr.t* (or *dšr.t*) deserves a moment of attention (fig. 111). Which land it designates depends on the context in which it is used, and it is natural in a funeral text to translate it as

“Necropolis” and “Netherworld.”<sup>301</sup> Yet *dšr.t* also means “red land, the desert,” specifically the red land of Lower Egypt, that also being the name of “the red crown of Lower Egypt.”<sup>302</sup> The red crown, in turn, is

interchangeable with the sign of the bee when it represents *bit(y)*, “king of Lower Egypt”;<sup>303</sup> indeed, the red crown symbol “is substituted for [the bee] for superstitious reasons”<sup>304</sup>—possibly concealing the true name of the bee as *dšr.t*. At any rate, the red crown of the lady Neith, with its peculiar wirelike protuberance which suggests the antenna of a bee,<sup>305</sup> did have the name of *dšr.t* and went back to the time of the migrations into Egypt. Joseph Smith attributed peculiar significance to the bee of the prehistoric, migrating Jaredites (Ether 2:3). The bee and the name Deseret still designate for the Mormons not only the honey bee but the land itself, the idealized state of Deseret, of which the bee is the symbol. Morenz sees in *T3-dsr* (note the different sound values attributed to the word by different scholars) not so much a holy land as a “land set apart,” suggesting the

realm of the mysteries, in entering which one must “be qualified for a godly sphere.”<sup>306</sup> This suggests *Tȝ-dsr*, “holy land” as a “land of preparation,” which Mayassis suggests is holy ground where only an initiate may be buried.<sup>307</sup>

## In Full Ceremonial Regalia

**Lines 54–56:** “Come thou, Osiris, God’s Father, *Wśr-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-pȝw.ty-tȝ.wy*, Justified! Thou appearest in glory in thy proper and perfect (true) form, in thy full ceremonial regalia”

In lines 55–58, the imagery of resurrection, royal aubade, and the mounting of the throne fuse in the daily morning toilet of the king. The verb *h ‘i*, “appear in glory,” applies equally to the sun or to the king arising in splendor to the top of the primal mountain or the exalted throne.<sup>308</sup> Bergman makes *h ‘i* equal to *bs nsw:t*, the achievement

of royal initiation.<sup>309</sup> Our text uses both *qi=k* and *twt=k* for “thy form,” the former emphasizing the inner nature,<sup>310</sup> the latter the outward appearance. Essential to the king’s appearing in glory was his full ceremonial attire, the dressing of the king being the main business after his washing just before sunrise.<sup>311</sup> Whether in coronation, temple, or funeral rites, the ceremonial “equipping” of the candidate with symbolic vestments shows him “ready to play the role in the divine world (*monde divin*) where he is going to continue his existence.”<sup>312</sup>

Anointing and clothing rites belong primarily to coronation.<sup>313</sup> It is by being clothed in full ritual attire that the candidate becomes “the ‘son.’”<sup>314</sup> “I have washed myself in this water in which Thoth bathed when he officiated as vizier of Horus. I have anointed myself with *aga*-oil; (then) I put on my *ds ds* garment, and took my *ames*-staff (of office)

in my hand.”<sup>315</sup> The last preparation of the dead “before being received into heaven” was when the “body was attired in one or more garments.”<sup>316</sup> To be received into heaven is the equivalent ritually of being received into the temple. An instructive sequence is shown from the temple of Karnak in which the king (Ramses II) is first drenched with water from head to foot, then clothed with a shirt and headcloth, and then “quietly stands waiting” in a scene designated by the inscription as “the putting on of the apron (*Anlegen der Schendot*)”; next he is seen sitting on a chair or throne, washing his hands in a basin, and finally we see him entering the temple from what is called the *pr-dw3.t* or “royal temple wardrobe,” where the clothing ceremonies have taken place.<sup>317</sup> It is significant that in the washing scenes the subject was shown fully clothed for reasons of piety and

modesty.<sup>318</sup>

Appearing “in one’s proper form” is another sign of victory: “Behold I have come forth on this day in my true form (*irw*) of a living *ba*; I have brought mine enemies bound, being perfect (i.e., successful, victorious, vindicated, and justified) in the court.”<sup>319</sup>

**Lines 56–57:** “which you prepared while you were alive (*or* having made preparation in life), thou passest the day (time) hale and hearty, walking about and breathing everywhere”

This appears in preference to an alternative rendering, “thou spendest the night in life, the day in health,” which requires altering the sign *grg*, “to provide for, set in order, make preparation,” to read *sgr*, “to spend the night, rest.” Though the second reading provides a neat rhetorical

antithesis, the first is the word actually written in all the texts. Papyrus Louvre N. 3291 reads *grg.n=k*, indicating antecedent action. The combination of ‘*nh* and *snb* (here rendered “hale and hearty”) recalls the royal formula again: ‘*nh*, *wdʒ*, *snb*. Preparation for the hereafter in this life and future bliss as the reward of such farsightedness is a theme known to the Egyptians. Thus the dead claims the protection of Horus in the next world because “(I) have done his will.”<sup>320</sup> The initiate constantly reminds us that he enters the testing well “equipped.”



Figure 112. At the top of the Metternich Stela and under the overarching symbol of heaven, Thoth draws our attention and worship to the symbol of supreme glory, the noonday sun over a compound ideogram for

the watery expanse. Between them and dominating the scene are the upraised arms of the *ka*, the highest expression of immortality. Ca. 350 B.C. Redrawing; original located at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The awakening of the dead in the manner of a king in his pyramid (lines 57–58) has been treated above.<sup>321</sup>

## Possessor of the Royal Ka

**Line 58:** “It is Amon-Re who causeth thy *ka* [JSP adds: living, protecting, or prospering] to live. It is [JSP adds: in or by] the Book of Breathings that causeth thee to flourish (maketh thee to prosper).”

The theme continues since Amon-Re is the sun over all the earth. Life and health were mentioned together in the preceding line, recalling the well-known royal salutation of “life, prosperity, health!” Here life (‘*nh*) and prosperity (*wdʒ*) are paired, suggesting the

same royal theme. This is confirmed in this passage by the only reference in the entire Book of Breathings to the *ka*, another sign of royalty (fig. 112; see p. 186, fig. 50).



Figure 113. The worshipper brings fire and water to the *ka* of Osiris. P. Sutimes (BD 105), ca. 1250 B.C.  
After Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, pl. CXVII.

John Wilson insists that only the king had a *ka* in the early period and that in the Old Kingdom “a noble’s *ka* may have been the pharaoh or a specific god.”<sup>322</sup> Down through the years, all sorts of definitions have been given for the *ka*. Peter Renouf saw in it a

*Doppelgänger*.<sup>323</sup> In 1915 Alice Grenfell collected thirteen expert opinions on the subject.<sup>324</sup> Georg Steindorff called it a “Schutzgeist” and a man’s “Genius”;<sup>325</sup> Adolf Erman concluded that it was a “special life power”;<sup>326</sup> Henri Sottas noted that while every man has a *ka* after death, only Pharaoh had one during life.<sup>327</sup> Moret discovered that the serdab chamber with its two eerie eyes was really “the house of the *kȝ*.<sup>328</sup> Eugène Lefébure, with whom Jacques de Horrack agreed, compared it to “the fluidic doubles seen by the hypnotised subject.”<sup>329</sup> The Egyptians had the power to see “the astral double, or Ka of the material body.”<sup>330</sup> Grenfell notes appreciatively that Gaston Maspero compared the *ka* to Paracelsus’s Evestrum.<sup>331</sup> Later Aylward Blackman pointed out that the water used in the Opening of the Mouth purifications “is

identified with the god's *ka* [fig. 113] ... and ... the primeval water *Nun*" —the birth waters of the placenta *ka*; <sup>332</sup> Blackman also showed how the smoke of incense was thought to unite the king's *ka* with the *kas* of four gods. <sup>333</sup> N. W. Thomas traced the *ka* to the African *kla*, "an image, or an imaginary being" that is "closely bound" to a person. <sup>334</sup> Moret suggested its origin in the ensign of a tribe, the name of a king, a protective genie, a source of life from which kings issue and to which they return, and the nourishment that sustains the universe. <sup>335</sup> Wilhelm Bayer found in Horus "the *ka* of the sun," "the *ka* of the winged sun," <sup>336</sup> the *ka* being specifically the *power* of the sun but as such not identified with Horus. <sup>337</sup> After 1920 *ka* research died down for a time until, in 1944, Jean Delpech-Laborie compared the *ka* to "the human aura." <sup>338</sup> Jacques Pirenne

explains that everyone has a *ka* and a *ba* and that by retaining or reuniting the two one can rejoin the company of the gods as an *akh*, or glorified spirit.<sup>339</sup> According to Žabkar, “the heart is said to be man’s *Ka*,” while *ka*, *ba*, and *akh* are all “modes of existence” which “represent the man himself. ... Perhaps we can describe these manifestations as ‘multiple personalities’ or even better ‘multiple impersonations.’”<sup>340</sup> T. G. Allen renders “*ka* as ‘spirit,’ *ba* as ‘soul,’ [and] *akh* as ‘the blessed one.’”<sup>341</sup> Thausing posits that while the *ba* flies to heaven, the *ka* is a *diesseitige Seele*, supplying strength and vitality for life here below.<sup>342</sup> In Reymond’s system of endless cycles of creation, “the deceased Earth-God” was the *ka*, and his realm was the place of origin for a new creation;<sup>343</sup> hence “the revivification of the Home of the Ka marks the starting point in the creation of a new type of sacred abode:

*the temple.*"<sup>344</sup> Alexandre Piankoff again identified the heart with the *ka* in the role of "the protective genie of the dead."<sup>345</sup>

**Line 58:** "It is [JSP adds: in or by] the Book of Breathings that causeth thee to flourish (*or* the Certificate of Breathing(s) maketh thee to prosper)"

"Prosper" is the usual rendering of *wdʒ*, though it smacks too much of the business world to apply here; a better expression would be "makes vigorous." In place of just two elements of the royal greeting formula, life and prosperity, to match the "life and health" in the preceding line, the Joseph Smith text here gives us the full formula: '*nh, wdʒ, snb!* Also it is apparent that *swdʒ* here is meant to indicate the flourishing of all nature since the word *š'y*, "book," is written quite phonetically but also symbolically, not with the pond (*s*) sign, but with the marsh or

field (*šʒ*) sign. Faulkner renders the expression *swdʒ tw ib*, “make thy heart flourish,” as meaning properly “inform yourself!”<sup>346</sup>

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 59–61

59. **Thou art following Osiris, a Horus,**  
Lord of the *Henu*-ship (*or* of jubilations),  
being as a great god at the head of (*or*  
among) **the gods.** Thy [P. Louvre N. 3284  
*omits* “thy”] **countenance liveth;**  
**beautiful** (*or* perfect) **is**
60. **thy form** (*or* are thine offspring); **thy**  
**name shall be firmly established** (*or*  
**flourish**) **henceforward** (every day).  
Come to [*other manuscripts, including*  
*JSP, have:* **enter into the gods’** [domain]]  
the exalted (*or* twice great) temple in  
**Busiris to see the Chief of the**  
**Westerners**

61. at the wag-festival. Pleasant is thine  
odor as of the venerated ones [JSP: **as or**  
**among the young men**]; great is thy name  
among the [JSP adds: **very**] **elect**  
(dignitaries, blessed dead, mummies [*the*  
*determinative is doubled in the JSP*]).

## Commentary

### Admission to the Company of the Gods, the Elect Society

He enters the highest society. Having been recognized as a king by the official greetings and the possession of a *ka*, only one higher state remains for the initiate, and that is full recognition of divinity.

**Line 59:** “Thou art following Osiris, a Horus, Lord of the *Henu*-ship (*or of jubilations*), being as a great god at the head of (*or among*) the gods”

It is permissible to say that the candidate

has now become a follower of Osiris and Horus, but Spiegel notes that when he reverses his course and definitely turns his face to the realms above, the initiate changes his name from Osiris to Horus: as one who has followed Osiris as “an Osiris,” he now becomes a Horus—an Osiris youthful and reborn (fig. 114).<sup>347</sup> On the other hand, Leonard Lesko notes that in some Pyramid Texts the king is addressed as Horus “in the passage leading into the antechamber” but “as Osiris after he has ascended to the sky in the texts of the inner chambers.”<sup>348</sup> In either case he lays claim to being the king of the gods. This theme is developed at length in the Second Book of Breathings.



Figure 114. The inscription has the subject entering into the council of the gods, here represented by the four sons of Horus holding *was*-scepters of supreme authority. P. Turin 1791 (BD 124), ca. 150 B.C.

Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

In the Papyrus of Ani: “In very truth I am Re himself. ... I am thy son, O great one. I have seen the hidden things which are thine. I am crowned upon thy throne as (*or like*) the king of the gods. I shall not die a second death in *hr.t-ntr*.<sup>349</sup>” Paul Barguet explains the situation: “From the Osiris which he was yesterday, the dead has become Re, having been preserved from destruction. ... This polyvalence ... makes the dead sometimes an Osiris, sometimes a Re, ... while he still remains himself”; however strange it may

appear to us, it is “one of the distinguishing features of Egyptian funerary literature.”<sup>350</sup> The final glory is not to become Re, according to the Book of Two Ways, but for the dead to spend “millions of years between Re and Osiris,” after which “they will all sit together in one place, with Re as the supreme god.”<sup>351</sup> The expression “as the great god (*m ntr '3*)” can mean that one is to be regarded either like the god or as the god —that is, either resembling him or functioning in his capacity or both,<sup>352</sup> in which case, holding the office, one *is* the great god, just as one *is* the king if one holds that office. As the coronation makes the king, so the ordinances make the god; the Egyptians believed that the king acquired his divinity by virtue of the ordinance of coronation.<sup>353</sup> Frankfort held, on the other hand, that ordinances did not bestow divinity but merely made manifest the divinity the

king already possessed; this, however, leaves him in a quandary, in which the divinity of Pharaoh is “the ultimate paradox” of the Egyptian doctrine of kingship.<sup>354</sup> It is not a paradox if one views the divine kingship as an office bestowed by ordinances. Hornung maintains that Pharaoh did not hold office *as* a god, but as a “witness of the active power of the creator-god in this world.”<sup>355</sup> Moret found the coronation to be the key to Pharaoh’s divinity: “The enthronement is hence already a sacred service in which the gods offer and the king receives cultic devotion, that is to say, divinity.”<sup>356</sup> He notes that Pharaoh was worshiped at his coronation and the *sed*-festival (which renewed his coronation), at other festivals (which repeat the *sed* motifs), every day in the temple, and at his funeral;<sup>357</sup> but one may well ask whether this worship is not the recognition, rather than the bestowal,

of divinity. What is the difference? Throughout the ancient world, acclamation recognized kingship and divinity and thereby bestowed it, so that to withhold such acclamation was to undermine and even destroy the authority of the man on the throne.<sup>358</sup> *Gloria* is not an innate quality but the state of being exalted by an act of joyful and general acclamation. It is the *acclamation* that bestows the *gloria* by proclaiming it.<sup>359</sup>

The baffling problems of identity in Egyptian religion, as in Jewish and Christian religions, largely disappear if we recognize that immortality is an absolute quantity. To be immortal is to share the essence of divinity. To be “a very truly perfect spirit who can never die” is to be inferior to no god, to be “more glorious than Osiris.”<sup>360</sup> To be a member of the royal family is to be royal as the king himself is royal; to be in the

family of the gods is to be divine as the highest god is divine,<sup>361</sup> just as a thing is either alive or not alive, with nothing in between, or as in the military one is either an officer or not an officer, so one either qualifies for divinity or one does not. The knowledge that one is indestructible is a full recognition of divinity; rank and degree become mere quibbles once all things become possible. Chapter 43 of the Book of the Dead is to enable one “to become as a god,” and the text begins, “I am the oldest, Son of the Great One, the Burning One, the Son of the Burning One. . . . I am exalted, I am renewed, I am rejuvenated, I am Osiris!” Which is to say, as Thausing explains in a note, “I am fortunate (*glücklich*), I am I, I am everything!”<sup>362</sup>

Once the divinity of the king was recognized as sonship,<sup>363</sup> identity with the king automatically gave one a claim on that

divinity. At the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, local princes, by imitating the royal ordinances, put themselves in the place of Pharaoh; and by the New Kingdom, “everyman” was treated at his funeral like Pharaoh—again, it was the ordinances that made that possible.<sup>364</sup>

*Hnw* is written with a ship-determinative in some of the manuscripts (e.g., the Papyri Kerasher and Louvre N. 3291), but without it in the Joseph Smith and de Horrack texts, in which case the word may be read as *hnw*, “ritual rejoicing” or “acclamation.” The bark of a god was also a *hnw*-ship of rejoicing,<sup>365</sup> since the *hnw* is the gesture by which one recognizes the arrival of a visiting deity (fig. 115; see p. 205, fig. 56). One performed the “*hnw*-rite” by raising one arm to the square with the other arm held to the breast in a V-shape while almost touching the ground with one knee.<sup>366</sup>

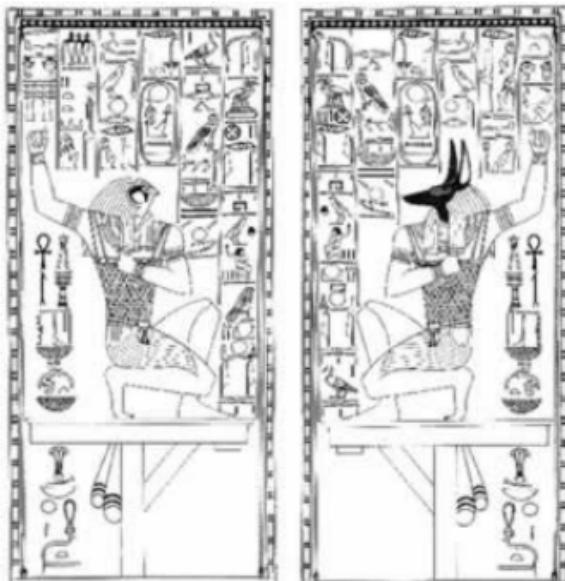


Figure 115. According to the inscription, this is how the blessed (ancestral) spirits (*b3.w*) perform the *hnw*-rite when they greet Horakhty at his coming, and by so doing, they protect him and grant him “all protection, life, endurance, divine power, health, and joy.” Restored drawing from flanking pillars before burial chamber, tomb of Seti I, ca. 1290 B.C.

Lefébure, *Les hypogées royaux de Thèbes* 2.4: pl. XXII.

**Lines 59–60:** “The [JSP: thy] countenance (face) liveth; beautiful (or perfect, *nfr*) is thy form (or are thine offspring); thy name shall be firmly established (or flourish) henceforward (continually, *lit.* every day)”

As far as supplying a comprehensible passage at this point, the Joseph Smith text is the least troublesome of the various Books of Breathings. It reads: ‘*nh hr=k nfr ms.t=k rn=k rwd r ‘ nb*. In other manuscripts both “face” and “form” are followed by the ideogram for “offspring.” Moreover, the word for “form” should be *msw.t*,<sup>367</sup> which is *not* found in any of the texts; instead, we have *ms*, with the abbreviated sign of the woman bearing a child and, except in the Joseph Smith Papyrus, plural strokes.<sup>368</sup> This gives preference to “offspring,” which also suits the context; it is precisely the words used here—*hr* (face), *ms* (offspring), *rwd* (flourish), and *nfr* (fair, young) followed by *r ‘ nb*, “every day”—which indicate perpetual freshness and renewal.<sup>369</sup> De Horrack renders the passage “Ton beau visage vit (dans) tes enfants (Thy beautiful face liveth in thy children).”<sup>370</sup>

This section deals with the social life of the candidate in the hereafter. He is in the following of Osiris, among the great gods, feasting amidst the Westerners, sharing the company of the elect, and so we would expect him to be concerned with his face and his form as they are reflected in others—naturally, his posterity. That is certainly indicated by the unusual insertion of the “offspring” ideogram after “face,” and the shared aroma in the following line.

**Lines 60–61:** “Come to the exalted (*or* twice great) temple in Busiris to see the Chief of the Westerners at the *wag*-festival”

The *wag*-festival belonged to the New Year complex of events, falling on “the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week”<sup>371</sup>—a celebration of beginning and ending, “the festival of the coming forth of every god

(*prw ntr nb*) at the *wag*-festival, . . . at the end of thy years.”<sup>372</sup> It took place when Sirius-Sothis-Isis rose with the sun in the “dog days,”<sup>373</sup> and, as a year-rite, was dominated by Re.<sup>374</sup> It was the culminating action of the mysteries of Abydos,<sup>375</sup> celebrating the last and highest step in the assumption of divine power, establishing the name of the king forever;<sup>376</sup> then it was that the king was proclaimed as the one “whose office abides, whose dominion endures as the Lord of Remembrance in heaven and on earth, to whom hymns are sung at the *wag*-festival in both lands.”<sup>377</sup> In the Kerasher Book of Breathings, at this point the subject is invited to “enter his temple.” The three- or four-day celebration was marked by gaiety at all the great archaic shrines at the same time —Letopolis, Buto (Pe and Dep), Rostau (the Memphite cemetery), and especially

Busiris;<sup>378</sup> it was a happy affair at which Osiris was hailed as “the lord of wine” as he arrived in his ship.<sup>379</sup> In Papyrus Westcar, *wag* seems to mean “shouting for joy.”<sup>380</sup>

**Line 61:** “Pleasant is thine odor as of the venerated ones (dignitaries, *or* as or among the young men); great is thy name among the elect”

This affirms the party atmosphere of the *wag*-festival. Some of the manuscripts, including the Joseph Smith Papyrus, have the candidate smelling *m hwn.w*, “as youths,” or “among the young men,” while others, including the de Horrack version, give him the odor of sanctity *mi im3h.w*, “like the venerated ones.” Both ideas are found in the funeral texts. The life-giving sweetness is alike the odor of eternal youth *and* of the imperishable exalted ones: “They place life and pleasure to his nose, and cause his

(heart) to rejoice with the fragrance of the *ibr*-ointment, ... [and] supply the king with ‘the odor of the great ones.’”<sup>381</sup> Anubis heralds the approach of Ani as one who belongs to the society of the exalted ones: “When I smell his ‘odor it is even as the odor of one of you.’”<sup>382</sup> In the Pyramid Texts, the incense and perfume expended on the dead to revive him in the Opening of the Mouth is called “the odor of the youth of Upper Egypt, who has come from Nubia; he gives to thee the incense with which the gods are perfumed.”<sup>383</sup> The “young man” in question may be identified with *Wsir hwn*, “Osiris the youth” or “Osiris the renewed,”<sup>384</sup> of whom it is said, “the smell of thy limbs is as Punt; the venerable women adore thee,”<sup>385</sup> combining the motifs of youth and venerable society. At the Sokar-rites, the risen Osiris is hailed: “O god whose perfume is agreeable.”<sup>386</sup> The adoration by

the Two Ladies is a love song or epithalamium for a youthful bridegroom—a reminder that the mother of Hatshepsut, on the night of mating with the god, was awakened by the powerful sweetness that breathed from him.<sup>387</sup> Even in the funerary situation, sweet odors are more than a countermeasure against the decay of death; they are life-giving. The purpose of the unguent and incense in the Opening of the Mouth is “to make him smell sweet,”<sup>388</sup> the air of revival being laden with a supernatural sweetness, as in early Christian resurrection stories. Two things in particular denote the presence of divinity in Egypt, according to Hornung: *Glanz* (brilliance, radiance, light) and *Duft* (fragrance, sweet aroma, “*Gottesozon*”); he notes that there was a special ointment called “Horusduft,”<sup>389</sup> youth being ever a prime aspect of Horus. The sweet odor of Horus is

inseparable from the idea of *snsn*, both as resurrecting and uniting through its suffusive embrace.<sup>390</sup>

“Great is thy name among the elect,” continues the theme. The same combination is found in the Coffin Texts: “The company on the horizon are delighted to see thee approaching in state. ... Anubis gives thee an agreeable odor in thy house,” etc.<sup>391</sup>

High social standing is the theme; one is initiated into the ordinances in order to be ready to join the company of the elect in the next world,<sup>392</sup> an idea expressed in various ways by the word *snsn*.<sup>393</sup> “He who receives these purifications belongs from that time on to the divine race.”<sup>394</sup> In this section, the candidate is declared fit for the highest society, acceptable both as an altogether pleasant and proper person and as one of proper name and status.

# Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 62– 65

62. **Hail, Osiris, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr***  
[JSP: **Hor**], **Justified**, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-*  
63 (3/20). *t3.wy*, Justified! **Thy ba lives by**  
**the Book of Breathings**, thou unitest with  
the same (*lit.* likewise [JSP has: [thou  
unitest with] a ba]). **Thou enterest (or**  
**Enter thou!) into the duat;**
64. **thine enemies do not exist, for thou art**  
**a deified ba in Busiris.** Thy heart is thine  
own, never to be separated from thee.
65. Thou hast thy two eyes, open always  
(every day).

## Commentary

### Having All Faculties Restored Forever

**Lines 62–63:** “Hail, Osiris, God’s Father,  
*Wsir-Wr*; Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*,

Justified! Thy *ba* lives by the Book of Breathings, thou unitest with the same (likewise [JSP has: [thou unitest with] a *ba*])”

Both the Joseph Smith Papyrus and Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 are here defective; the former has *ba* and the latter “thou joinest” and “likewise”—hence, “you have joined the *ba* by the same means,” referring to the book.<sup>395</sup> Papyrus Louvre N. 3291 has “thy *ba* lives by the B[ook] of B[reathings] (because) thou art provided (endowed) with (*hnm=k m*) a B[ook] of B[reathings].”<sup>396</sup> The book has saved his life by giving him the answers and instructions necessary to pass all the tests, which are specifically listed in the next section (see p. 328, fig. 101). The Joseph Smith text differs from all the others here; the word written is not *ba* but *sa*, “son,” and the word that follows is not ‘*q=k*, “thou enterest,” but ‘*n=k*, “thou returnest.”

This reading is supported by the Second Book of Breathings: “I am your Lord, the *son* of your lord. . . I have *returned* on (from) earth; I have traveled in the *duat*.<sup>397</sup>” The scribe is apparently confused. Since this is the final step of the initiation, it may be significant that the candidate, upon reaching this stage, bears only one title and only one name, “the son” being both.

With the candidate proclaimed as a living *ba*, the ordinances have reached a successful conclusion: “The foundation of the entire resurrection ritual is the establishing of complete identity between the dead and his *ba*.<sup>398</sup>” The “living *ba*” is an expression denoting the highest form of immortality.<sup>399</sup>

**Lines 63–64:** “Thou enterest (*or* that thou mayest enter—a virtual result clause) into the *duat*; thine enemies do not exist, for thou art a deified *ba* in Busiris”

Everything in this section shows that the operation is being brought to triumphant conclusion. The *duat* can be either the *duat* above or that below.<sup>400</sup> “Salvation,” said Joseph Smith, “is nothing more nor less than to triumph over all our enemies and put them under our feet.”<sup>401</sup> The word used in the Joseph Smith Papyrus for “enemies,” *hfty.w*, means rival, opponent, counteragent, i.e., *the* adversary.<sup>402</sup> Every sinner, according to the Egyptian view, has put himself in the power of the adversary, making himself a voluntary follower of Seth and, as such, guilty of the murder of Osiris; since sin is essentially rebellion against the order of things, all sins are alike in nature, differing only in degree.<sup>403</sup>

The Joseph Smith manuscript is unique in declaring that the candidate returns to the *duat* as a sanctified *akh*, while the other versions say that he enters the *duat* as a *ba*.

Here the Joseph Smith text is again vindicated by Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 Book of Breathings: “I have returned to earth, I have passed through the underworld … as an august (noble) *akh*.<sup>404</sup> This is the only time the important word *akh* (*ȝh*) appears in the Book of Breathings,<sup>405</sup> and it gives a high mark to the Joseph Smith manuscript since it is entirely proper to the final state of advancement achieved by the initiate. Wilson has examined the *akh* at some length and refers all its functions back to the original meaning of the word—“beneficial, advantageous, glorious,” the root meaning being that of “useful efficiency”: <sup>406</sup> “An *akh* [is] both a ‘being of glory’ and a continuingly ‘effective personality.’”<sup>407</sup> While Grenfell identified no less than nine distinct parts of a deceased person,<sup>408</sup> Žabkar has gone to the other extreme, holding “that the ancient Egyptians had a monistic concept of man …

[who] was not a composite of body and soul," existing forever "as a physical corporality," the well-known composite parts being really "various forms or modes of existence ... akh, ka, ba, heart, shadow, name, mummified body"; each form having its purpose, though "the highest degree of effectiveness was achieved when several of these forms were combined."<sup>409</sup> In the long Book of Breathings, the vital possessions are deliberately distributed: "Your *ba* is in heaven in the presence of Re; your *ka* is the divine image (*hnt*) of the gods; your *body* is safely bestowed in the presence of Osiris; your mummy is glorified (*ȝh.w*) in the presence of the living; your inheritance is safe in the charge of Geb (the earth); your heir is among the living; your name is established by this Book of Living in Eternity."<sup>410</sup> It is precisely this highly desirable combination of forms that we meet

in this closing section of our Breathing's text. Whatever its nature, the *akh* is always mentioned on the highest level of being. According to Hornung, what lives forever is the *ba* plus the “shadow” united in “a glorified body,” into the physical nature of which the corpse itself has been absorbed, the whole making a single glorious *akh*.<sup>411</sup> Thus the *akh* is the resurrected and glorified body in the fullest sense. To follow Thausing, while the *ba* is the entity that is aware and known, the *akh* is something still higher, being the “principle of illumination and its objectivation, hence the Enlightened One.”<sup>412</sup> Louis Speleers notes that though the *akh* “is conceived as a body, subject to the limitations of space and time,” it is never represented as a human figure;<sup>413</sup> for while the physical reality of the *akh* and its total identity with the individual is clearly understood, the *akh* now exists on such a

high plane that to represent it as only human would be misleading—the main thing about it is its fulness of glory, and that can best be conveyed by the sign of the crested glory-bird. The *akh* is the individual “playing his role among the gods,” while his other forms all denote particular and lower functions. Speleers aptly illustrates the idea by a quotation from St. Augustine: “It is called *anima* when it lives (*vegetat*); *spiritus* when it contemplates; *sense* when it feels and senses; *animus* when it knows (*sapit*); *mens* when it comprehends (*intelligit*); when it discourses, it is reason; when it records, it is memory.”<sup>414</sup>

According to Reinhard Grieshammer, failure to make the grade of *akh* amounts to the mysterious Egyptian “second death,”<sup>415</sup> a term that Zandee does not hesitate to relate to its use in the book of Revelation.<sup>416</sup> This makes *akh* the antithesis of *mt*, “dead,”<sup>417</sup>

which, however, Hornung would translate as “damned” rather than “dead,”<sup>418</sup> defining the “second death” not as nonexistence or eternal punishment, but as “annihilation” in the sense of being forever incapacitated “as an opponent of the eternal order of the cosmos.”<sup>419</sup> The ultimate damnation for the Egyptian was to be deprived of identity and freedom to move about, having no claim to renewal in the cosmic cycle of things.<sup>420</sup> Hence the supreme blessing of the Amduat is that he who knows the text of the third hour will complete his journey, become an *akh*, and go forth “breathing air in his hour.”<sup>421</sup> As the very highest exaltation, the status of *akh* imparts the right to be a judge.<sup>422</sup> From all of this it is clear that the Joseph Smith Papyrus at this point shows superior insight to the others in ending on this high and joyful note. Compare Papyrus Louvre N. 3279: “as an august *akh*, ... Re-Horakhty is my name. I

am the god, lord of the *duat*. I am Re, come forth from the horizon, justified like the lord of the *wrr.t-crown*.”<sup>423</sup>



Figure 116. The man is being given possession of his heart. P. Turin 1791 (BD 28), ca. 150 B.C. Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.



Figure 117. The man receives his heart. According to the Story of the Two Brothers, the heart can be revived by being placed in cold water in a jar. BD 26. After Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, pl. XXXVII.

**Lines 64–65:** “Thy heart is thine own, never to be separated from thee. Thou hast thy two eyes”

“O my heart, I am thy lord, do not go far from me ever!”<sup>424</sup> “My heart will not be taken away from me by the combatants of Heliopolis, (for) I am he before whom Atum made thine annals beneath the noble *ished*-tree at Heliopolis … when the light was placed within my two eyes, so as to walk by night as well as day, so as to see his rays every day.”<sup>425</sup>

Goyon finds the final possession of the heart (fig. 116) to be the main theme of Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 of the Second Book of Breathings, identifying it closely with the Memphite rather than the Theban theology.<sup>426</sup> In the Memphite theology, as in this Second Book of Breathings, the doctrine of creation by the heart and the tongue is the same. The heart is necessary both for judgment and for

life (fig. 117).<sup>427</sup> In this text, “Atum, the Word of Ptah incarnate under divine form, is truly the god to invoke”; hence “the dead is assimilated to Horus as the direct issue of Ptah.” It is Ptah as creator who effects the Opening of the Mouth, which in the Memphite theology means, before all else, the restoration of the heart.<sup>428</sup> Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 harps persistently on the theme: “Thou givest to me my mouth (that) I may speak with it. . . . Thou guidest for me my heart in the moment of peril”;<sup>429</sup> “Thou makest for me a heart in the House of Hearts, a *hʒty* (cardiac muscle, according to Goyon)<sup>430</sup> in the *hʒty*-house. Make for me a heart firm in its place (*or* on its throne), a *hʒty* in its proper position!”<sup>431</sup> Our Breathings text uses *ib*, the “psychical term” for heart, as opposed to *hʒty*, a more physiological designation, though in the later period the distinction does not always

hold.<sup>432</sup> The heart brings about “the unity of sensibility, of intellect, and of action”;<sup>433</sup> the function of all the senses originates in the heart, which represents “the totality of life and ... of the essence and personality of every being.”<sup>434</sup> For the Egyptian “the heart is the core (*Kern*) of a man and the bearer of his individual nature. ... It was the entire personality; hence for it to ‘leave its place’ could only mean helplessness or death.”<sup>435</sup> “To have power over one’s heart” is to have complete mastery of all functions of the body.<sup>436</sup> In particular, the heart was the organ of *breathing*, foreign as the idea is to our way of understanding.<sup>437</sup>

## Notes

1. Joachim Spiegel, *Das Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 7, 45, 63.
2. Gertrud Thausing, *Sein und Werden: Versuch einer Ganzheitsschau der Religion des Pharaonenreiches* (Vienna: Stiglmayr, 1971), 172.

3. Spiegel, *Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide*, 85.
4. Siegfried Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion* (Stuttgart: Kohkammer, 1960), 269–72.
5. Walter Federn, “The ‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts: A New Approach,” *JNES* 19 (1960): 246.
6. Eberhard Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue seit dem neuen Reich,” *Or* 17 (1948): 455–56.
7. Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue,” 464.
8. Wolfgang Helck, “Die Bedeutung der ägyptischen Besucherinschriften,” *ZDMG* 102 (1952): 46.
9. Henri Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), 1:31.
10. Thausing, *Sein und Werden*, 221.
11. See the appendixes at the end of this book.
12. 2 Baruch 51:10, in *APOT* 2:509; cf. *OTP* 1:638.
13. “Livre d’Adam,” in J.-P. Migne, *Dictionnaire des apocryphes* (Paris: Migne, 1856–58), 1:261.
14. Cited in Marguerite Harl, “From Glory to Glory,” in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef A. Jungmann (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), 2:730; cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18.
15. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, 269–72.
16. Hugh W. Nibley, “A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price,” *IE*, March 1970, 84–88, reprinted in *Abraham in Egypt*, CWHN 14:319–28.
17. Bruno H. Stricker, “De Egyptische mysteriën: Pap.

Leiden T 32,” *OMRO* 37 (1956): 52.

18. Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos*, 1:68, emphasis added.
19. Hugh W. Nibley, “Evangelium Quadraginta Dierum,” *Vigiliae christiana* 20 (1966): 9–10, reprinted in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, CWHN 4:14–15.
20. Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos*, 1:26–31.
21. Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos*, 1:28.
22. Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos*, 1:38.
23. Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos*, 1:65.
24. Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos*, 1:39, 41–43.
25. Winfried Barta, “Zur Verteilung der 12 Nachtstunden des Amduat in Grabe Tuthmosis’ III,” *JEOL* 7/21 (1969–70): 165.
26. Barta, “Zur Verteilung der 12 Nachtstunden,” 168; cf. 1 Nephi 10:19; Alma 37:12; D&C 3:2.
27. Thausing, *Sein und Werden*, 125.
28. Gertrud Thausing and Traudl Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch (Papyrus Reinisch) der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Cairo: Österreichisches Kulturstift, 1969), 6.
29. Rudolf Bultmann, “Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1925): 104.
30. Stricker, “De Egyptische mysteriën,” *OMRO* 34 (1953): 17; cf. Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* (1853–77);

reprint, Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967), 2:38.

31. Joachim Spiegel, "Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide," *ASAE* 53 (1956): 146–47, 413–14.
32. CT 75, in Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935–61), 1:398c; Jan Zandee, "Sargtexte, Spruch 75," *ZÄS* 99 (1972): 60.
33. CT 97, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:91.
34. Erik Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963–67), 2:40.
35. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:27–29; 2:46–48.
36. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:29.
37. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:82, 86.
38. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:84; 2:90–91.
39. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:124–26.
40. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:128.
41. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:136.
42. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:138–40.
43. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:146–48.
44. Barta, "Zur Verteilung der 12 Nachtstunden," 164.
45. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:56.
46. Leonard H. Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 135.
47. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 75.
48. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 2.
49. Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*

(Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 82–85.

50. CT 148, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:213–14.
51. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:103–7; 1:90–95.
52. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:163–64.
53. John H. Crowe and Alan F. Cooper Jr., “Cryptobiosis,” *Scientific American*, December 1971, 36.
54. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 72–73.
55. Julian Obermann, “Wind, Water, and Light in an Archaic Inscription from Shechem,” *JBL* 57 (1938): 249–50.
56. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, 208–10, 221–23.
57. Theodor Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris* (Prague: Orientalisches Institut, 1941), 1:69. For the meaning of *duat*, see above, commentary to line 18, pp. 202–3.
58. Nibley, “New Look,” *IE*, August 1969, 76.
59. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 17.
60. BD 182, in Edouard H. Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie: Einleitung* (Berlin: Asher, 1886), 1: pl. CCVII; cf. The Eloquent Peasant, Bauer (Bl) (P. Berlin 3023) lines 303–7, in Adolf Erman, *Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–9), 1: Taf. 16–17a.
61. For which expression, see Siegfried Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schrifter,” *ZÄS* 99 (1972): 24, emphasis added.
62. Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schrifter,” 22.
63. Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schrifter,” 23.

64. Paul Barguet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens* (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 98, discussing BD 94–97.
65. S. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l'Égypte ancienne: Compléments à la religion égyptienne* (Athens: BAOA, 1957), 162–63.
66. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l'Égypte ancienne*, 166.
67. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l'Égypte ancienne*, 167.
68. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l'Égypte ancienne*, 168–69.
69. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l'Égypte ancienne*, 170.
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302. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 603, emphasis added.
303. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 477, sign-list L2.
304. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 504, sign-list S3.
305. Hugh W. Nibley, “There Were Jaredites,” *IE*, April 1956, 244–45, reprinted in *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, CWHN 5319–21; cf. 192.
306. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, 106.
307. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l’Égypte ancienne*, 272.
308. Adriaan de Buck, *De Egyptische Voorstellingen*

*betreffende den Oerheuvel* (Leiden: Ijdo, 1922), 63.

309. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 101.

310. Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 276, 295–96.

311. For more on washing, see above, commentary to line 10, pp. 140–44.

312. Speleers, “Résurrection et la toilette du mort,” 38.

313. Philippe Derchain, “La couronne de la justification: Essai d’analyse d’un rite ptolémaïque,” *CdE* 30 (1955): 249.

314. Eberhard Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1960), 2:11.

315. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 194, discussing BD 145.

316. Blackman, “Some Notes on the Ancient Egyptian Practice of Washing the Dead,” 123.

317. Hermann Kees, “‘Pr-dwȝt’ und ‘dbȝ.t.’” *RT* 36 (1914): 5.

318. Jean Capart, “À propos du cercueil d’argent du roi Chechonq,” *CdE* 18 (1943): 195.

319. CT 93, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:66; cf. CT 89 and 91, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:55, 63, where the trial or testing is at the gates of hell.

320. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 69.

321. See above, commentary, part 3, section on “The Temple as a Powerhouse,” pp. 264–77.

322. John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 86.

323. Peter Le Page Renouf, “On the True Sense of an

Important Egyptian Word (𓁃 Ka)," in *The Life-Work of Sir Peter Le Page Renouf*, ed. Edouard Naville and W. Harry Rylands (Paris: Leroux, 1902–5), 2:229–45.

324. Alice Grenfell, "The Ka on Scarabs," *RT* 37 (1915): 77–78.
325. Georg Steindorff, "Der Ka und die Grabstatuen," *ZÄS* 48 (1910): 152.
326. Adolf Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin: Reimer, 1905), 88.
327. Henri Sottas, "Contribution à l'étude de la notion du Ka égyptien," *Sphinx* 17 (1913): 34–35.
328. Alexandre Moret, "Serdab et maison du Ka," *ZÄS* 52 (1914): 88–89.
329. Grenfell, "The Ka on Scarabs," 78.
330. Grenfell, "The Ka on Scarabs," 78.
331. Grenfell, "The Ka on Scarabs," 78–79.
332. Blackman, "Sacramental Ideas and Usages in Ancient Egypt," 77.
333. Aylward M. Blackman, "'The House of the Morning,'" *JEA* 5 (1918): 157.
334. N. W. Thomas, "What Is the *Ka*?" *JEA* 6 (1920): 272.
335. Alexandre Moret, *Mystères égyptiens* (Paris: Colin, 1913), 201–19.
336. Wilhelm Bayer, "Die Religion der ältesten ägyptischen Inschriften," *Anthropos* 23 (1928): 514.
337. Bayer, "Die Religion der ältesten ägyptischen Inschriften," 530–31.
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égyptien,” *CdE* 19 (1944): 62–67.

339. Jacques Pirenne, “Âme et vie d’outre-tombe chez les égyptiens de l’Ancien Empire,” *CdE* 34 (1959): 208–13.
340. Žabkar, “Observations on T. G. Allen’s Edition,” 85–86.
341. Cited in Žabkar, “Observations on T. G. Allen’s Edition,” 85.
342. Gertrud Thausing, “Die Ausdrücke für ‘Ewig’ im Ägyptischen,” in *Mélanges Maspero*, ed. Pierre Jouguet (Cairo: IFAO, 1935–38), 39.
343. Reymond, *Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 198.
344. Reymond, *Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 215.
345. Piankoff, “*Coeur*” dans les textes égyptiens, 54.
346. Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 218.
347. Spiegel, *Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide*, 51–52.
348. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 5.
349. P. Ani 4–6, in Budge, *Book of the Dead: Papyrus of Ani*, 2:459; 3: pl. 16.
350. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 23.
351. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 129.
352. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 130; English trans., 140.
353. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 131–33; English trans., 141–42.
354. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 5.

355. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 133; English trans., 142.
356. Moret, *Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 210.
357. Moret, *Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 279.
358. Hugh W. Nibley, “The Hierocentric State,” *Western Political Quarterly* 4 (1951): 226–53, reprinted in *The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled*, CWHN 10:99–147.
359. Hugh Nibley, “Victoriosa Loquacitas: The Rise of Rhetoric and the Decline of Everything Else,” *Western Speech* 20/2 (1956): 60, 67; reprinted in *Ancient State*, CWHN 10:247–48, 259.
360. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 121.
361. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 138; English trans., 146–48; for the old Jewish and Christian concept, cf. E. Cherbonnier, “The Logic of Biblical Anthropomorphism,” *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962): 198, 201, 205–6.
362. Quoted in Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 24; see also n. 3.
363. Jan Zandee, “Le roi-dieu et le dieu-roi dans l’Égypte ancienne,” *Numen* 3 (1956): 230–34; Jean Sainte Fare Garnot, *Religions égyptiennes antiques: Bibliographie analytique, 1939–43* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952), 123–78.
364. Erich Lüddeckens, “Untersuchungen über religiösen

Gehalt, Sprache und Form der ägyptischen Totenklagen,”  
*MDAIK* 11 (1943): 168–69.

365. *Wb* 3:109.
366. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 443, sign-list A8.
367. *Wb* 2:141.
368. *Wb* 2:139–40.
369. Cf. Rudolf Anthes, “Egyptian Theology in the Third Millennium B.C.,” *JNES* 18 (1959): 176–77.
370. Our interpretation is supported by P. Leiden T 32 8/16–17, in Stricker, “Egyptische Mysterien,” *OMRO* 37 (1956): 60; and P. Petosiris I lines 80–114, in Lefebvre, “Textes du tombeau de Petosiris,” 233.
371. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, 2: pl. 5, quoted in Aylward M. Blackman, “Libations to the Dead in Modern Nubia and Ancient Egypt,” *JEA* 3 (1916): 32.
372. Pieper, *Die grosse Inschrift des Königs Neferhotep in Abydos*, 30 §19 lines 23–24.
373. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, 1:163.
374. Siegfried Schott, “Zum Weltbild der Jenseitsführer des neuen Reiches,” in *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse*, 1965 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965), 186–87.
375. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, 1:146–47; Pieper, *Die grosse Inschrift des Königs Neferhotep in Abydos*, 32–42 §§22–23 lines 27–39.
376. Pieper, *Die grosse Inschrift des Königs Neferhotep*

*in Abydos*, 31–32 §§21 lines 25–26.

377. Roeder, *Urkunden zur Religion des alten Ägypten*, 23.
378. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, 1:146–47.
379. PT 577 §1524; for more on wine, see commentary, part 4, section on “Forbidden Fruit,” pp. 307–9.
380. P. Westcar 12/1, in *Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar*, ed. Adolf Erman (Berlin: Spemann, 1890), 1:68.
381. Junker, *Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien*, 2.
382. Budge, *Book of the Dead: Papyrus of Ani*, 2:569; 3: pl. 30.
383. PT 437 §803c–d, in Claudia Dolzani, “Soda e incenso nei Testi delle Piramidi,” *Aegyptus* 48 (1968): 16.
384. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 111 n. 5.
385. P. Bremner-Rhind 14/17, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 26.
386. Jean-Claude Goyon, “Le cérémonial pour faire sortir Sokaris: Papyrus Louvre I. 3079, col. 112–14,” *RdE* 20 (1968): 69.
387. Dieter Müller, “Die Zeugung durch das Herz in Religion und Medizin der Ägypter,” *Or* 35 (1966): 255.
388. Budge, *Book of Opening the Mouth*, 2:185.
389. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 122–23; English trans., 133–34.
390. PT 600 §1653d; 598 §1643a–c; 254 §276a–b; 255 §295a–d, in Dolzani, “Soda e incenso nei Testi delle Piramidi,” 17.
391. CT 45, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:195–96.

392. Federn, “‘Transformations’ in the Coffin Texts,” 254.
393. For more on the word *snsn*, see above, chapter 1, pp. 18–20.
394. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte*, 17.
395. Baer, “Breathing Permit of Hôr,” 124.
396. P. Louvre N. 3291 line 30, in de Horrack, “Livre des Respirations,” pl. XIII.
397. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 37–39, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 46–48.
398. Spiegel, “Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide,” 367.
399. For the concept of *ba*, see above, commentary to line 3, pp. 112–16.
400. For more on the *duat*, see above, commentary to line 18, pp. 202–3.
401. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 297.
402. Erik Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 34.
403. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 36–37.
404. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 39–40, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 47–49.
405. [The sign here is damaged and somewhat ambiguous as to whether it should be read *ʒh* or *bʒ*. Nibley himself read it both ways. We have retained his discussion here even if we haven’t retained this reading in the translation —eds.]

406. Wilson, *Culture of Ancient Egypt*, 67.
407. Wilson, *Culture of Ancient Egypt*, 85.
408. Grenfell, “Ka on Scarabs,” 79.
409. Žabkar, “Observations on T. G. Allen’s Edition,” 83.
410. P. Leiden T 32 1/3–5, in Stricker, “Egyptische Mysterien,” *OMRO* 31 (1950): 55.
411. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:7.
412. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 11.
413. Louis Speleers, *Textes des Cercueils du Moyen Empire égyptien* (Brussels: n.p., 1946), xv.
414. Speleers, *Textes des Cercueils du Moyen Empire égyptien*, xiii, quoting Augustine, *De spiritu et anima* 13.
415. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 70.
416. Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8; Jan Zandee, “Hoofdstuk 85 van het Doodenboek,” *JEOL* 2/8 (1942): 585; cf. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, 269.
417. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 68.
418. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 35.
419. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 33.
420. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 30–31.
421. Short Amduat, third hour, lines 70–71, in Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 3:7, 29.
422. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 70.
423. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 39–41, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 47–49.
424. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 21–22, in Goyon, *Papyrus du*

*Louvre N. 3279*, 39–41.

425. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 25–27, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 40–42.
426. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 63.
427. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 65–66.
428. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 64.
429. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 1–2, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 28–30.
430. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 35 n. 8.
431. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 11–13, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 32–33, 35–36.
432. Žabkar, “Observations on T. G. Allen’s Edition,” 85.
433. De Buck, “Chapitre de psychologie égyptienne,” 20.
434. De Buck, “Chapitre de psychologie égyptienne,” 21.
435. Müller, “Zeugung durch das Herz,” 271, 270.
436. Müller, “Zeugung durch das Herz,” 265.
437. Müller, “Zeugung durch das Herz,” 273–74.

## The Fearful Passage

### A Dangerous and Toilsome Road

The short version of the Book of Breathings ends in a blaze of glory, with the candidate triumphant, beyond the reach of all his enemies. But the longer version is extended by a fuller account of the harrowing tests and narrow escapes he must experience. “The king in his passage through the realms of the dead in search of his father is in danger,” writes Wolfgang Helck;<sup>1</sup> Hermann Kees finds almost awesome the stunning contrast between the Book of the Dead chapter 70 (i.e., what we have called the garden episode)—“an almost idyllic atmosphere,” he calls it, “bright and friendly,

like a picture of country life” —and the frighteningly “dark, mysterious” world of the Book of the Dead chapter 69,<sup>2</sup> where the life of the initiate, following the example of Osiris and the king, is in grave jeopardy (fig. 118). There are searching tests, narrow escapes, and even a full-scale trial before a stern court of law: “It is singularly characteristic of the rites,” Joachim Spiegel observes, “that the king must face the possibility of a divine prosecution and punishment and must accordingly be able to clear himself,” legally as well as morally.<sup>3</sup> The trial was no mere empty gesture, as some have maintained: “not for nothing does the beast of hell lie in wait” beside the scales in the courtroom.<sup>4</sup> Without the aid of special documents, no one would get through; the Book of Breathings is to provide the holder with identification and certification while giving him the

information necessary to cope with the dangers of the road and providing him with the necessary answers when he is formally challenged at intervals along the way.<sup>5</sup> Without the proper guidance, all would be lost, for whoever “does not know how to pass on those ways, he shall be taken by a (stroke) of death . . . , being a nonentity who has no Maat forever.”<sup>6</sup>



Figure 118. As Bruyère, “Neb-nerou et Hery-Mâat,” 39, explains this scene (which is found in four princely tombs in the Valley of the Queens), the figure with the knife is the Guardian of the First Gate, who “prepares the sacrificial block,” i.e., the altar at Herakleopolis. His name as written is *Nb-Nryw*, “Lord of Terror,” and he is showing the way to the

reluctant and frightened prince who sits on a seat representing the horizon over the gate—it is the moment of passage. But above his head are the reassuring words *hry-mj'.t*, “He rests on Truth,” or “Truth is his defense.” Restored drawing from tomb of Prince Khaemwaset (QV 44), ca. 1180 B.C.

From the earliest times, as Hermann Junker notes, even before the coming of the Osiris religion, the Egyptians believed that they would have to give an accounting in the hereafter of deeds done in the flesh, to be judged “by the Most High God and by Re.”<sup>7</sup> Junker’s thesis is that the Egyptian got himself out of this danger by conveniently resorting to magic. Others might run a dire risk, “but no Egyptian really believed that such a fate could possibly befall him as an individual”; hence the moral challenge “that could have become a blessing in the end became a curse to the people.”<sup>8</sup> The curse was the easy resort to magic; but as Herman te Velde has pointed out, the routine appeal

to magic as a quick and simple solution to problems is more a game of modern scholarship than of ancient Egyptian religion: “Levi Strauss has remarked that the term of totemism and likewise the concept of myth are categories of *our* thinking, artificial units, which only exist as such in the minds of scholars engaged in research, while nothing specific in the outside world corresponds to them any more. It seems not impossible to me that he might also call the concept of magic such an ‘unité artificielle,’ which is continually given a different content.”<sup>9</sup> Te Velde sees in magic the exploitation of that “divine creative energy, human creativity, vital potential, mysterious efficacy” visible in the operations of the world around us which still remains as mysterious as ever.<sup>10</sup> Junker himself supplies texts in which devout Egyptians confess their sinful state and pray for mercy, instead of

relying on a mechanical trick of magic: “Punish me not for my many sins! For I am one who knows not himself, a foolish mortal. All the day I am led by my mouth, as an ox seeks his feed. . . . If it is the way of the servant to sin, it is the way of the master to be merciful. The Lord of Thebes is not angry all the day long; his wrath is only for a moment, and none of it remains!”<sup>11</sup> It has a truly biblical ring, as do the Petosiris teachings to which Siegfried Morenz calls attention: “Here there is no escape in magic or respect of persons.”<sup>12</sup>

Claas Bleeker, examining the Egyptian words for *sin* and *guilt*, all of which have more than one meaning,<sup>13</sup> finds texts that “testify . . . to a sincere sense of sin and to full confidence in the mercy and the forgiveness of deity.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it is quite possible to see the diligent cultivation of magic not as a jaunty self-assurance so much

as a desperate attempt to escape, by hook or by crook, the consequences of guilt.<sup>15</sup> One theme that is receiving increasing attention in ancient studies is “catastrophism” and the effect of real calamities—natural and social upheavals of wide extent—on religious thinking.<sup>16</sup> But quite aside from the apocalyptic imagery which admonishes all to walk softly, “Men at whiles are sober And think by fits and starts, And if they think, they fasten Their hands upon their hearts.”<sup>17</sup> Even in the best of times “the element of nonexistence … penetrates all things” so that the Egyptian is reminded of threatening annihilation no matter which way he turns.<sup>18</sup> It behooves presumptuous man, in his “one moment in annihilation’s waste,”<sup>19</sup> to go wisely lest he disturb “his harmonious integration with the existing world. … He who errs is not a sinner but a fool.”<sup>20</sup> His indiscretions may be ethical sins, cultic sins,

or sins against the cosmic order,<sup>21</sup> but they are unavoidable, so that if any mortal is to escape his merited doom it will be by a narrow squeak at best; he makes it in the end, “but at the price of what labors! The dead must resort to every device: a satisfactory display of knowledge [that is where the book comes in], unflinching courage, even a measure of aggressiveness.”<sup>22</sup> For all the forms and observances, the Egyptian’s “second death” remains always a very real possibility.<sup>23</sup>

All this is brought home in the ordinances that follow. They make up a good deal of the longer Book of Breathings, so that the shorter version, which necessarily telescopes them, may seem to slight them. But the royal tombs and hypogeums of Thebes, all but monopolized by the theme of the dark and dangerous journey, leave no doubt as to its central place in the rites. In theory, the bloody

sacrifice is lawful and inescapable.<sup>24</sup>

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 66– 69

66 (4/1). Words to be spoken by the gods in the following of Osiris: O Osiris, God's Father, the Servant (Prophet) of the God Amon-Re,

67. King of the Gods, Prophet of Min-Amon-Re, Bull-of-His-Mother, upon his great throne,

68. *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified! Mayest thou follow (*or* Thou followest)

69. Re; mayest thou follow Osiris; may thy *ba* live for time and eternity!

### Commentary

The return here to the full titulary of the candidate, as well as the introductory “Words to be recited (*dd mdw*)” formula,

indicates the beginning of a new book. To the initiate's titles is added the declaration that he is now a *follower* of both Osiris and Re —a full-fledged member of the royal progress. It was the custom of the king in Egypt after his coronation to circulate throughout the entire land, visiting shrine after shrine and repeating the creation and founding rites at each.<sup>25</sup> On these occasions all the people acclaimed the king,<sup>26</sup> and in this portion of the text, the entire following of Osiris welcomes the subject into the parade.<sup>27</sup> This is the first time we have the liturgical words spoken by a multitude, and it is a reminder that salvation is a very social thing for the Egyptian.<sup>28</sup> The first hour of the Amduat ends with a dialogue between the sun-god and the local inhabitants,<sup>29</sup> reminiscent of the opening scene of more than one Greek play. At each gate thereafter the sun-god is cheered and aided on his way

by “a jubilation dance of apes, ostriches, and humans.”<sup>30</sup> At all times there he is in the midst of his crew, his followers, his disciples, and his worshippers. This strongly suggests the scene with which Diodorus, an eyewitness, describes the last act of an Egyptian funeral: “On the day of burial the relatives of one to be buried hail the corpse before the judges and the relatives and friends of the deceased, having been assured that he is about to cross the waters, uttering the name of the one examined. . . . If no charges are brought, or no one turns up to inform against him, the relatives lay aside their mourning and laud the deceased. . . . The multitude joins in the acclamation and testifies to the character of the defunct as about to pass the period (*aion*) in Hades with the Blessed.”<sup>31</sup> The above petition was addressed “by the gods”—represented by the multitude at the funeral—to the initiate;

now a second petition is directed by them to the authorities in charge.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 69–72

69. ... Words to be spoken by the gods within the *duat*
- 70 (4/5). to Osiris, Head of the Westerners, on behalf of the Osiris, God's Father, *Wṣr-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-*
71. *tʒ.wy*, Justified, to open (*or* to the end that there be opened) to him the gates of the *duat*, to receive thee (*or* that it may receive, *the word it being crossed out*)
72. in *hr.t-ntr*.

## Commentary: Dark Passages and Gates

If a ship is the best symbol of a journey to other lands, *a gate* is the clearest designation of stages along the way: “The Great Ones of

Abydos cry ‘Welcome’ to him; they reach out their arms to him in the *nšm.t*-bark ... that he may journey ... toward the gates of the Holy Land.”<sup>32</sup> The object of the dead is the double one of getting out of the place where he is and passing into a better one; hence the gate to heaven when open is the gate of hell when shut, or, as Erik Hornung notes, the gate marks the transition between “spheres on this side and on the other side” and so corresponds to the horizon between the upper and lower worlds.<sup>33</sup> The word for “gate” in our text denotes not just a barrier but rather a passageway (*Torweg*), “a section of the underworld, the center point of which is formed by the gate (*sbȝ*) of the horizon.”<sup>34</sup> The gate is the natural place to stop and challenge anyone. The designation of the official barriers as “the Gate of the Place of Truth”<sup>35</sup> indicates the gate as a place of testing, of trial: “I will not open to you, says

the door, ... unless you tell me my name!"<sup>36</sup> In another version of the same episode the dead may not enter the Hall of the Two Maats until he has named all the parts of the door, which parts were the same as those used to describe the Palace of Justice itself in the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>37</sup> Alan Gardiner actually renders '*rry.t*, usually translated as "gate," as "court of justice," noting that "one is reminded of the Judges of Israel who 'sat in the gate.' But these meanings must be secondary and derivative."<sup>38</sup> Yet nothing is more natural or inevitable than testing at the gate. Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead reads like a perfectly normal procedure. The gatekeeper asks, "Why have you come?" Answer: "To announce myself!" "What do you desire?" "I am pure from all evil, I want the king's promise of protection." "Which god shall I announce?" The answer to this is given in code, with the challenge, "Is it

that?" To which the answer, "It is Osiris!" "Correct, proceed!" and the candidate passes on.<sup>39</sup> In such a situation a Book of Breathings would be of far greater help as a prompter in giving the answers than as a ticket or permit, which would have to be handed over anyway, though it can serve as both: "Have Anubis open the(se) gates of the *duat* to me! Let me make one among the followers of Osiris! Write a decree within the temple of the *ka* of Ptah [i.e., Memphis] to countermand any opposition to my progress in *hr.t-ntr.*"<sup>40</sup>



Figure 119. Atum, Shu, and Tefnut, the creator and first parents of the race respectively, lead out in a parade of ten gods that mounts the fourteen steps or degrees that are the fourteen days between the new moon and the glory of the full moon, represented by the *wedjat*-eye on the *wadj*-column, which, along with the four canopic figures that conclude the

parade, also signifies the completeness of restoration or resurrection. Restored drawing, temple of Horus, Edfu, ca. 200 B.C.

## ***Line 72: hr.t-ntr***

*Hr.t-ntr* is “the place where the gods are,” “what is under (the sway of) the gods,” or “what belongs to the gods,” or, as Gertraud Thausing puts it, “das Gottesboden.”<sup>41</sup> Steps may take the place of gates, that being the literal designation of a “degree” of advancement (fig. 119).<sup>42</sup> The common symbolism is brought out in the Zohar: “The gates [of Psalm 24:7] ... refer to the supernal grades (*lit.* steps) by and through which alone a knowledge of the Almighty is possible to man, and but for which man could not commune with God. ... Those gates ... are doors for the soul. ... At the present time [the first of these, the door of righteousness,] remains unknown because Israel is in exile; and therefore all the other

doors are removed from them, so that they cannot know or commune.”<sup>43</sup> Here it is notable that the gate is not a “spiritual” one but must be found in the temple. The “symbols” of the Egyptian mysteries are creeds, liturgical formulas, and passwords which “*all refer to the peripetia,*” or moment of passing from one condition to another, according to Gerardus van der Leeuw.<sup>44</sup> It appears from the Amduat that the passing of a gate means a change of life; one gate is even called “Begetter of Forms” and “Great of Transformations,”<sup>45</sup> and the sun-god as a ram “changes his nature (*irf hprw*) when he passes through this gate.” Hornung suggests “sich verwandeln (to transform oneself)” as the best translation.<sup>46</sup> The change of form or nature does not, however, entail change of identity.<sup>47</sup> This same gate bars the unworthy dead from following the god any farther.<sup>48</sup> One gate is the “Raging

One Who Slaughters the Disaffected.”<sup>49</sup> He admonishes the people: “May your gate be resistant (‘*ḥj*, warlike), your portals (‘*rr:wt*, leaves of the door) firm, your bolts fast (*htm*, sealed). . . . Keep your places on the riverbank!”<sup>50</sup> In the early Christian descensus and “harrowing of hell” stories, the gates are all-important and suggest Egyptian inspiration;<sup>51</sup> thus in the Amduat: “The people at this gate say . . . ‘Open to thee is the hidden place; . . . parted for thee are the doors of the great city; light illumines the darkness, thou bringest breath to (*lit. srq=k*, permittest to breathe) the places of destruction.’”<sup>52</sup> As the god enters the gate called “the Complete Swallower” after passing through the waters of Re, he is greeted: “O appearing Great Spirit! May the *duat* receive for thee that ‘flesh’ which belongs to heaven! . . . Illumine, great light-bringer . . . expel the darkness in the hidden

room. ... Illumine the primal darkness that the flesh may live and be renewed!"<sup>53</sup> The gates represent the barriers or confinement out of which the initiate must break if he is to continue his progress as ram, bull, sun, and king;<sup>54</sup> he has the power to break out. "I escape all who would seize me," says the initiate. "I shall tear down their edifice, drive them from their seats of power, having overcome their magic!"<sup>55</sup> It is the purest harrowing of hell.<sup>56</sup>

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 72–73

72. ... Grant that his *ba* live forever. He has built mansions in *hr.t-ntr*.
73. Let his *ka* praise his god when he has received the Book of Breathings; grant him ability to breathe (make breathing)!

## Commentary

**Line 72:** “Grant that his *ba* live forever. He has built mansions in *hr.t-ntr*”

*Hr.t-ntr* occurs twice in the line. The subject is to be received in *hr.t-ntr* because he has *prepared sbh.t* there. *Sbh.t* is from the root *sbh*—“to enclose,” “shut away”—and can signify any prepared place of safety. The word is written here with the ideogram of the ritual gatehouse, with four protective uraei guarding it in four directions, followed by the house and plural signs. This suggests the four houses around the central reed hut in the rites of Papyrus Salt 825. On comparing texts, Jacques de Horrack concludes “that it is the dead who has built himself a dwelling and who is being rewarded.” The idea of building mansions in heaven is not alien to Egyptians who, like the early Christians, regarded their earthly houses as mere stopping places “because they live in them only for a short time,” their “eternal

dwellings” being on the other side.<sup>57</sup> The same foresight toward a long hereafter is expressed by the scribe Ani: “I, Ani, have come into thy presence … because I am one of those who worshipped thee upon the earth.”<sup>58</sup> So also in the Book of Two Ways: “The protection of Horus … is my protection. (I) have done his will. I have not been seized, I have not been opposed at the gates. … I am equipped.”<sup>59</sup>

**Line 73:** “Let his *ka* praise his god when he has received the Book of Breathings; grant him ability to breathe (make breathing)! ”

The section deals with unlimited breathing as the ultimate reward of pious deeds, guaranteed by a written certificate.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 74– 78

74. An offering brought by the king to Osiris,

President of the Westerners, the great God,  
Lord of Abydos. He makes invocation

75 (4/10). offerings of bread, beer, flesh and  
fowl, wine and milk (*or ale*), a sacrifice, a  
food offering (feast of abundance), an  
offering of all things

76. agreeable to the *ka* of Osiris, God's  
Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-*  
*p3w.t*,

77. may thy *ba* be hale, may thy body live;  
mayest thou flourish by the written decree  
of Re himself. Thou shalt never know  
death (diminution, extinction)

78. or pain, even as with Re, for time and all  
eternity!

## **Commentary: Sacrifice by the Living and for the Candidate**

The application of royal imagery to the  
initiate continues. The *htp-di-nsw* is  
properly “an offering brought by the king,”

which, according to Gardiner, was originally *for* the king, then *by* the king *for* his god, and finally *by* the king as a boon to those initiated into the mysteries of Osiris—a gift of the king to the initiates.<sup>60</sup> The question of who supplies the necessary feast, the heart of the question, is something of a quibble since no one comes to a wake or before a god or king without bringing a contribution with him.<sup>61</sup> Winfried Barta has given the original formula as: “The king gives an offering, (namely) the offering given to Deity X,”<sup>62</sup> and suggested that the *htp-di-nsw* magically assisted the sunrise and “the daily rebirth of the deceased king.”<sup>63</sup> These offerings are *dfȝ.w*, a feast of abundance enjoyed by all,<sup>64</sup> a sacramental meal attended by living and dead alike, affirming continued existence and family ties. Note the emphasis on blooming health and high spirits; the menu includes all that is essential (*nfr*, perfect, proper) and

agreeable to a robust existence from the Egyptian point of view.<sup>65</sup> The Goyon Book of Breathings offers a very different kind of ritual meal, representing the three things vital to existence on the highest level: light, air, and water.<sup>66</sup> There is a notable distinction here. Note that in the Book of Breathings the menu consists entirely of animal and vegetable substances, whether solid or liquid (beer and milk), whereas the other menu contains none of these highly perishable things (can this be the idea behind the unpleasant but common expression of “eating excrement”?). The long version of the Book of Two Ways has the initiate protected against one who eats “what becomes worms.”<sup>67</sup> The main difference is that one meal is sacrificial in nature, requiring the taking of life, while the other is not. It is understandable that heat, air, and water should bestow life as such, but how

can the eating of perishable animal products by an equally perishable mortal effect the painless existence here promised? Answer: by being more than ordinary food eaten at an ordinary meal—it is *dfȝ.w*, ritual food, dedicated sacrificial food, certified as an *offering* sanctified by the king.



Figure 120. The famous Papyrus of Ani begins with this picture of Ani and his wife, dressed in elaborately pleated robes, bringing a lavish food offering with a request for admission, specifically “to behold the god” and the glory of the sun and moon forever, to be registered in the tablet of the blessed followers of the god, and finally to be received into the presence of

Osiris in the land of the righteous. The usual purpose of going to the temple is “to behold the god.”

Restored drawing from P. Ani, ca. 1250 B.C. BM

10470 © Copyright The British Museum.

A constant feature of Egyptian funerary and temple texts is the opening scene of the petitioner standing with upraised hands by a lavish heap of food offerings that he has brought as a sort of price of admission (fig. 120). A minimum requirement of any suppliant to divine favor is willingness to pay a price, to express appreciation for what is offered. The way of salvation begins with a law of sacrifice. The same applies to the race as a whole: there must be willingness to sacrifice if the corporate existence is to continue. Philippe Derchain points out that the main purpose of the old Egyptian year-rite is to preserve the universe, which is in constant danger of collapse, and that the one way to do that is by sacrifice.<sup>68</sup>

In making a food offering, one is not merely paying the market price for meat and vegetables; the plant and animal life offered is actually a substitute for the life of the giver. The concept has been brought home to the writer on various occasions by observing the attitude of the American Indians toward the animals they hunt and the corn they gather: all are real offerings, redeeming man with a new lease on life. Other lives are offered that he may escape death this year.



Figure 121. The title above this picture of the man turning his back on a chopping block is "Formula for not entering into the divine slaughter-house." P. Turin 1791 (BD 50), ca. 150 B.C. Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

# Sacrifice as a Substitute Offering for the Candidate

Much has been written about the sacrifice of Pharaoh in the interest of preserving the life and guaranteeing the prosperity of the race<sup>69</sup> and the arrangement by which the king escaped death through the offices of a substitute.<sup>70</sup> The principle goes back in Egyptian tradition to the time of the flood, when the deaths of those who perished atoned for the sins of those who came after: “Your sins are remitted,” said the Lord of All, “for the sacrifice has satisfied the demand for sacrifice. *Such was the origin of sacrifice.*”<sup>71</sup> The substitute victim was not necessarily a righteous person; indeed, “foreigners, and especially prisoners of war all the world over, have provided an obvious supply of substitutes.”<sup>72</sup> So it was in

the flood situation: “Thy Temple rejoices, for the Evil One is at his slaughtering-block, and the Seba.u fiends suffer because of what he has done. For he destroyed the earth by a Flood, according to his accursed plans. The Sky-goddess ... has led him to the block.”<sup>73</sup> Thus the tables were turned, and those who planned rites of destruction themselves became the victims—as when the priest of Pharaoh who attempted to sacrifice Abraham paid with his own life and thereby gave satisfaction for Abraham and hence for Pharaoh. Such a turning of the tables is a commonplace in the funerary literature: “Thine enemy the Serpent hath been given over to the fire. The Serpent-fiend Seba.u [*sbiw*] hath fallen headlong. ... The Sons of Revolt shall never more rise up.”<sup>74</sup>

The long lines of beheaded figures parading on the walls of Ramessid tombs make it clear that somebody went to the

chopping block. It was not the king, of course, but in these same scenes His Majesty is nonetheless in a parlous situation as he braves the dangers of hell. A stock scene from the funerary papyri shows the dead person turning his back on a large chopping block (fig. 121), while accompanying texts explain that he has escaped the block:

“Enemies who slaughter in the torture chambers, ... I do not fall beneath your knives, I sit not ... at your chopping blocks!”<sup>75</sup> Émile Suys has published in parallel columns texts from the Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom, and Late Period, all repeating the same supplication: “O Re, ... save me from that god of mysterious forms whose eyebrows are the beams of the scales [of justice], on the day when the executioner takes his due, and with his lasso drags the sinner off to the abattoir for the dismembering of *bas!* Deliver me from ...”

Osiris's team of butchers. ... O let me not fall under your knives or go down into your fire pits (or pots).”<sup>76</sup> “Let not your fires claim me as victim, O you who are upon your altars of fire!”<sup>77</sup> It is the ritual sacrifice by knife and fire that figures so prominently in the Busiris and Abraham stories.

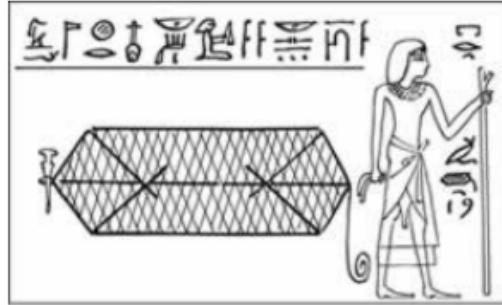


Figure 122. “Escaping from the trap” is the appropriate title of this scene, where the candidate is declared to be a *nb imʒh*, i.e., one who has achieved the worshipful state of the complete initiate “in the presence of his god.” P. Nebseni (BD 153), BM 9900  
© Copyright The British Museum.

## Initiate’s Narrow Escapes from Sacrificial Death

More frequent than supplication is the flat

assertion that one *has* escaped: “I am *Shw*, properly equipped; I am *not* seized for the holy slaughterhouse, because I am protected (covered) by the pectoral. ... I do *not* go down to the abattoir; the abyss does *not* yawn for me!”<sup>78</sup> The Amduat is full of such declarations: “You have not gone down to the place of destruction (*htmy.t*). ... Who knows these things is one who will not enter into the *htmy.t*. ... The name of this hour is ‘Who Slaughters the *Bas*.’”<sup>79</sup>

The insistent tone of such protestations more than implies that the escape of the subject is a near thing. Along with the knife and fire, other perils await him; hostile creatures attempt to grab and hold (*n̄dr*) him with relentless claws,<sup>80</sup> to catch (*hf*) him, to swallow (*'zm*) him.<sup>81</sup> The executioners nearly succeed in grabbing him by the foot.<sup>82</sup> “My soul is not seized by the falcon and is not grabbed by the pigs. ... It is not snatched

by the earth-gods ... nor caught by the power of magic. ... My soul passes by all of them without a word.”<sup>83</sup> Étienne Drioton has listed some of the narrow escapes found in volume 4 of Adriaan de Buck’s *Egyptian Coffin Texts*—from the net (fig. 122),<sup>84</sup> the cannibals,<sup>85</sup> the block,<sup>86</sup> dying a second time<sup>87</sup>—and notes that the intended victim escapes only at the last moment, the moment of extreme danger, by resorting, if necessary, to miraculous “transformations.”<sup>88</sup>

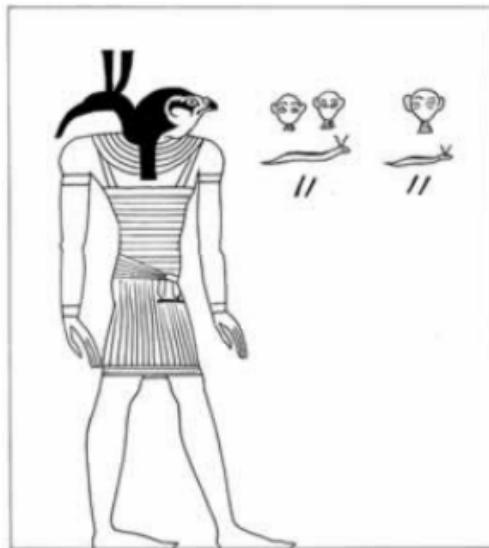


Figure 123. Horus and Seth, the mortal enemies, as

aspects of the same individual—"His Two Faces."  
Restored drawing from tomb of Ramses IX, ca. 1120  
B.C.

Is the man ever caught? He is promised that the wicked will be. Thus whoever breaks the family tie, "NN shall make his head pass under the ax of Khnum, of Nephthys, and of Re."<sup>89</sup> "The sinner who walketh over this place falleth down among the knives."<sup>90</sup> In Roman times, at least, the destroying monsters are depicted as making their catch.<sup>91</sup>

The candidate, for all his self-assurance, is never allowed to forget that the worst *can* happen and that he, as a sinner, deserves no better. In the perennial contest of Horus and Seth, each hero in turn exhausts his supernatural powers in the act of creation and then pays the price of his presumption by suffering humiliation and defeat—ritual demise—at the hand of his rival, who in turn

is reduced to impotence by his exertions and overcome by his opponent, who is really the other side of his own nature (fig. 123).<sup>92</sup> And the initiate identifies himself with at least one of the two victorious victims, for “he is evidently also involved in the contendings of Horus and Seth.”<sup>93</sup> Made aware of his own limitations, the initiate is thoroughly scared.<sup>94</sup> “He must pass through the gates whose ruddy openings dimly illuminate the frightful labyrinth” beyond with a promise of hellfires; if there is to be any escape here, it will be a narrow one.<sup>95</sup> At Delphi and at Dodona, the initiate must experience the same terrors: “bathed and anointed, ... wearing fillets like a sacrificial victim, he then approaches the oracular chasm. ... In the darkness a blow falls on his skull, so that he seems to die, and an invisible speaker then reveals ... many mysterious secrets.”<sup>96</sup>

The grimmer episodes of the rites,

especially as found in the Book of the Dead, have been examined by Kees, who emphasizes three things: their disturbingly negative nature, their extreme secrecy, and the strange way in which the initiate changes his name and identity while always remaining himself. To summarize briefly:

1. In the same “frightening underworld atmosphere” that pervades the Book of Two Ways,<sup>97</sup> the candidate, though on his way to glory, presents himself in an attitude of humility,<sup>98</sup> and what follows seems to be for the time all bad; a mystifying obscurity characterizes the “bad things (*schlimme Dinge*),” which consist of inflicting “the secret wounds (*sqrw*)” including the mutilating of the eye of the sky-god (*Himmelsgott*), the mutilating of the body of Osiris during its embalming by Anubis, and other blows.<sup>99</sup> As we have noted elsewhere, the Egyptian embalming table was

constructed exactly like an altar of sacrifice (see Abraham, Facsimile 1, fig. 4), for the embalming rites included ritual blows inflicted on the corpse in imitation of the sacrificial death of Osiris.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, Kees notes that in this phase of the rites the “royal bed” is also the royal birthplace, the throne of coronation with its lion heads, the bier of the king’s father, and, as the *mshn.t*,<sup>101</sup> the divine mother and nurse, both Edjo and Nekhbet; for the *mshn.t* is also the cosmic instrument of resurrection used in the Opening of the Mouth as well as a delivery stool for use at birth and rebirth. Thus the lion couch is more than ever the supreme *coincidentia oppositorum* of death and birth. With the fall of Seth (who thereby becomes the victim in the place of Horus—i.e., his substitute), Horus “becomes mighty through the injuries which he received.”<sup>102</sup>

2. To make the situation more baffling, the

“wounding of the god” is a thing which must not be known,’ concerning which the speaker (candidate) must be initiated only by the mouth of a priest, and which he must vow never to divulge, even to the gods.” Indeed, the ultimate crime of Seth, the adversary, was not that he inflicted damage on Osiris, but that “he named thy secret woundings,”<sup>103</sup> even as the watchers of old revealed the same in the days of Enoch, and that he also named the one receiving the wounds, the knowledge of which things is a source of power not to be given away to anyone.<sup>104</sup> Yet it is assumed, according to Kees, that the initiate has knowledge of the secret wounds himself.<sup>105</sup>

3. Another anomaly is that the initiate during the operation is always himself, even though he takes the role both of Anubis, who inflicts the blows, and Thoth, who heals them (and vice versa); he does all “in his

own name,” which makes him also both the creator and the first man—the giver and receiver of life respectively.<sup>106</sup> He comes like Horus in the lion-couch drama<sup>107</sup> to rescue his father Osiris on the bed, but to do so he lays himself on the altar bed and “feels himself in the passive situation of Osiris, being himself in need of rescue.”<sup>108</sup> It is hard to identify the initiate with any particular god, Kees notes, because he is free to take any divine role required by the occasion or simply to remain unassigned and noncommittal as suits him.<sup>109</sup> As the son, he rescues his father, Osiris, but as a mortal, he is that smitten god. As a healer, he assumes the role of Thoth sitting beside the bed; yet when he speaks of the enemy who has overcome him, he has in mind not the overcoming of Osiris by Seth so much as his own death as the consequence of evil powers.<sup>110</sup> He announces that he is “Osiris,

head of the family," "the heir of Geb," that he is "(also) Orion," "the elder Horus," "Anubis," nay, "I am the Lord of All, I am Osiris!"<sup>111</sup> This declaration comes immediately under the heading, "How to become a *substitute* (*Stellvertreter*, proxy) for Osiris." That is the answer—substitution unlimited. "The dominant motif" of the whole thing, according to Kees, "is the fate of Osiris—death," and to deal with it the candidate may assume any role or name necessary, "feeling himself in each part."<sup>112</sup> What renders such substitution possible and plausible is the profound identity of father and son: "The apparently illogical aspect of the metamorphosis is explained by the divine renewal in the son (Horus). *That is the great mystery.*"<sup>113</sup> It is symbolized most dramatically in the lion couch: The initiate, in order to achieve the ultimate glory of Horus, "suffers through death the same fate

as Osiris ... and expects to rise again ‘as an Osiris.’”<sup>114</sup>

Thausing never tires of reminding us that “every mystery calls for ‘Stirb und Werde’ (life through death). That is its only meaning! Every initiation has as its aim the experience of death.”<sup>115</sup> The complete expression of the idea is Osiris: “Osiris is, in one word, the ‘Stirb und Werde,’”<sup>116</sup> the moment of transition between opposite states of existence, whose role in the moment of passage is assumed by the king,<sup>117</sup> and whose holy office is symbolized and dramatized among the great shrines of Egypt by the figure of the man on the lion couch.<sup>118</sup> Thus a hymn to Amon proclaims: “Thou liest on thy couch conceiving [thyself], and the earth becometh light at thy birth.”<sup>119</sup>

## The Arrested Sacrifice: Christian and Jewish Parallels

While the concept of the substitute sacrifice has been studied much, an important aspect of it, the arrested sacrifice, remains little known. It is clearly set forth in the case of Isaac, who allowed himself to be bound and offered (that is the meaning of the '*aqedāh*), but whose sacrifice was arrested at the critical moment with the declaration, "now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld," neither Abraham nor Isaac withholding what was dearest to them on earth (Genesis 22:12). When the one being tested has proven his faith to the limit, there is no point to continuing the sacrifice since the price has already been paid by another and a substitute (savior) has been provided. But in order to benefit by the ransom, the one thus delivered must prove his good faith by freely offering to forfeit his life, if necessary.



Figure 124. Ani turns his back on the block in a chapter entitled “Not going to the [chopping] block of the god,” wherein Ani declares that he will not lose his head because it was firmly tied on for him in heaven, at his first birth, at his hair-cutting initiation by the gods of the *p3.wt* (premortals world), and by the mother Nut before the creation. The tying on of the head signifies the everlasting endurance of the body.

P. Ani, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 10470 © Copyright The British Museum.

So what follows after the garden episode is very serious business indeed. In the course of his journey, the candidate is subjected, as Abraham was, to a “horror of great darkness” (Genesis 15:12), to death in the form of a series of strange sacrifices. Since

he deserves death, there is no reason why the sacrifices should not be real, and they *are* real—only, at a certain point, each is *arrested*; that is the narrow escape from the block (fig. 124). (We have treated this theme at considerable length in discussing the sacrifices of Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah, especially in their Egyptian context.)<sup>120</sup>

The antiquity of the arrested sacrifice is attested by the rite of circumcision. One could not be admitted into the secret wisdom of the Egyptians without circumcision.<sup>121</sup> Scholars have viewed this as a barbaric, albeit hygienic, custom, and nothing more; yet in Egypt circumcision was the special prerogative of priests<sup>122</sup> and at all times was, as in Israel, the sign of sanctification and initiation, “signifying acceptance into the priesthood, while the circumcision itself was a dedication (*Weihen*).”<sup>123</sup> In Israel circumcision was definitely a sign of blood

sacrifice and of atonement, the mark of the initiate and the covenant, the subjects being treated as sacrificial victims.<sup>124</sup> As the visible mark of the holy covenant, says the Zohar, the circumcision performed by a father on his son is “the sacrificial act, as it were, an altar of atonement.”<sup>125</sup>

Circumcision was practiced from the earliest times in northern Syria, and it has been suggested that it was “*adapted* by the ruling classes” in Egypt at the end of the Gerzean period.<sup>126</sup> While Joshua recognized the likeness of the Egyptian and Israelite rites, he refused to accept the validity of the former (Joshua 5:2–5), a reminder that the Egyptian ordinances are but an imitation of the real ones (Abraham 1:26); the Egyptians indeed did not understand the purpose of sacrifice.<sup>127</sup> In Egypt the first initiate whose example all must follow was Osiris, who suffered sacrificial death but was restored

completely with the exception of the one member, whose defect preserved the permanent evidence of sacrifice<sup>128</sup> by the shedding of blood.<sup>129</sup> Hence we would suggest that the practice of circumcision in Egypt, as in Israel, was yet another token of arrested sacrifice in which blood was actually shed.

Among many people, ritual scars on the body are the proud marks of the initiation.<sup>130</sup> In Egypt the boast of the complete initiate (the *teleios*) is “I have inherited the horizon. ... I am indeed Lord of All. ... I have inherited the horizon. ... I am Atum, lord of wounds.”<sup>131</sup>

In Judeo-Christian tradition, the first representative of the arrested sacrifice is Adam, who, as he was sacrificing on an altar, calling upon God with upraised hands, was accosted by Satan, who tried to sacrifice him, smiting him on the right side

with a sharp stone. Adam fell upon the altar, and Satan fled. While Eve attempted to raise up her husband, and just as he was at the point of death, God accepted his blood flowing upon the altar as a sacrifice “and thus sent down his word and healed Adam.”<sup>132</sup> Thus, as in the cases of Abraham and Isaac, the sacrifice, though arrested, was no mere empty form since it was clearly in the process of being carried out to the end in good faith.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 79– 89

79. O (or Hail) thou who comest striding forth from Heliopolis! The Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsîr-Wr*, Justified, born to *Ns-hr-p3w.t*, is not guilty (*lit.* to him 80 (4/15). is no doing) of light-mindedness (or wrongdoing).<sup>133</sup>
81. O thou Great Assailant, who cometh

forth from the warrior city, Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born of

82. *Ns-hr-pȝw.t-snb*, hath committed no robbery!
83. O Thou with the Beak, coming forth from Hermopolis, Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born of
84. *Ns-hr-pȝw.t-snb*, hath not been guilty of rapacity (evil speech? oppression?)!
- 85 (4/20). Hail, (O) Swallower of the Eye, who cometh forth from the Two Caverns! The Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born of
86. *Ns-hr-pȝw.t-snb*, hath not taken property (things) in a high-handed manner.
- 87 (5/1). Hail, thou Terrible-of-face, coming forth from Rostau! Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-pȝw.t*, has not been contentious.
88. Hail, *Rw.ty* (Two Lionesses), coming forth from heaven! The Osiris, God's

Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-p3w.t*, did not do iniquity in hardness of heart.

89. Hail, Thou Whose Eye Is as Fire, coming forth from Letopolis! The Osiris, God's Father, *Wsîr-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-p3w.t*, did not do defilement.

## **Commentary: The Challenge at the Seven Deadly Gates, The Negative Confession**

In the section that follows, the grave predicament of the initiate is brought home to him by a series of savage directed assaults, charging him with a list of mortal offenses of which no man's conscience is entirely free.

In lines 79–89 the candidate is challenged. This is a form of the famous Negative Confession of the Book of the Dead chapter 125. The challenge at the gate<sup>134</sup> is a familiar form and aspect of initiation rites the world

over.<sup>135</sup> Here the candidate is challenged at seven gates, matching “the seven gates through which the solar bark passes” in the Book of the Dead chapter 144 and section 2 of the Book of Two Ways.<sup>136</sup>

These are the most definite and spectacular challenges of all. It is not merely the obstacle of the gate or a conscientious guard that challenges the aspirant, but a savage and aggressive *monster*. More realistic than we are, the Egyptians knew that there is no gentle death, that the monster’s face always strikes terror, and that after every conceivable provision has been made, there is still a chance that we are either unqualified to go on or, worse still, that we have been wishfully deluding ourselves about the whole thing.<sup>137</sup> In leaving this life, everyone is summoned by a messenger, whose appearance always catches us off guard and, to say the least, is disquieting; the

Egyptians, haunted by the too many unknown quantities connected with his mission, inevitably came to think of him as a devil and his home as hell, reflecting their own fear of the unknown.<sup>138</sup>

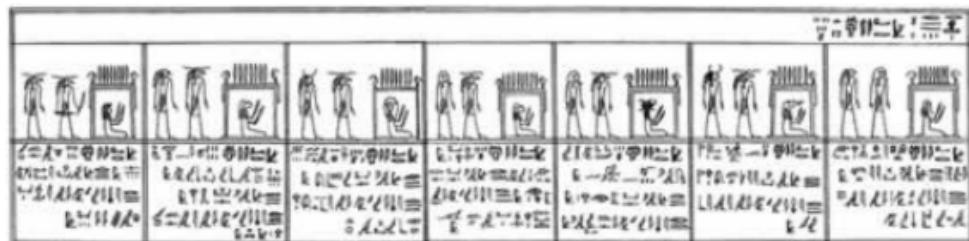


Figure 125. This document, as the title proclaims, is for “knowing the names of the guardian of the Seven Gates.” P. Turin 1791 (BD 144), ca. 150 B.C.  
Courtesy of Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy.

It is in the Negative Confession of the Book of the Dead chapter 125 that we find the closest affinities of Egyptian religion to early Judaism and Christianity. The most obvious clue in the present case is supplied by the number *seven*. Whatever the origin of the idea of seven *gates*, with seven trials, challenges, and sins to match, it is very old;

consider Abydos, city of seven gates, each with its special guardian shutting out a special domain (fig. 125).<sup>139</sup> As we find it in our Book of Breathings, Thausing notes that the soul's journey always takes place in units of seven steps.<sup>140</sup> In the Babylonian tradition also, one must pass by seven demons guarding seven gates before receiving "life and ... breath to the heart."<sup>141</sup> Gerald Wainwright finds in Egypt from prehistoric times the king's rule measured in seven-year spans, at the end of which he either was sacrificed or bought another seven-year span by offering a substitute.<sup>142</sup> A ritual variant of the seven-year period is a forty-two-year period,<sup>143</sup> and in the psychostasy it is not seven but forty-two judges who sit in the court.<sup>144</sup> The seven sins of which the candidate is cleared in the de Horrack text are the *first* seven sins in the list of forty-two

sins in *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*,<sup>145</sup> from which we may assume that the list of seven is simply an abbreviated form of the full list, for the king originally had to be cleared of forty-two sins.<sup>146</sup> But it is a symbolic abbreviation, in which the number seven is consistently and exclusively used. The seven hellish princes of the underworld in the Christian Coptic writings are a legitimate Egyptian heritage,<sup>147</sup> as are the seven *hekhalot* (heavenly halls) of Jewish tradition, with their seven doors “guarded by terrible warriors,” which can be passed “by formulas which have the virtue of compelling the angels to grant him admission.”<sup>148</sup> Back in the Thirteenth Dynasty, King Neferhotep is tested for his knowledge at each of seven gates and only qualifies for kingship because His Majesty “knows the gates . . . the pylons of the Field of Reeds,”<sup>149</sup> for interrogation is an essential

part of the business.<sup>150</sup> As we have seen above,<sup>151</sup> to “know a gate” meant to be able to describe all its parts, these being identical with the parts of the judgment hall, while each monster’s brows form the two arms of the scales of the law court,<sup>152</sup> so that facing these creatures at their gates is the same as being tested in the Hall of the Two Maats. How closely the list of seven sins in our Book of Breathings matches the traditional Christian seven deadly sins depends on the shade of meaning attributed to each one. In the Coptic *Gospel of Mary*, the soul on its journey comes to the fourth exousia or power, which has seven forms—namely, darkness, lust, ignorance, deadly provocation, the dominion of the flesh, wrath, and passion. These ask the soul: “Whence do you come, thou slayer of men?” But the soul is able to escape them by turning them aside with the declaration, “My

*epithymia* is at an end and ignorance has perished!”<sup>153</sup> Our Book of Breathings supplies the transition to this Christian version. Related lists of sins may be found in the New Testament, the Enoch literature, *3 Baruch*, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Maldwyn Hughes cites Gustav Deissman’s claim “that the Primitive Christian lists of virtues and vices were based on Jewish and pagan series”).<sup>154</sup> But while the concept of seven such sins is significant, we cannot be dogmatic about the list since the Christian lists vary<sup>155</sup> as widely as the Egyptian.<sup>156</sup> The seven sins in Papyrus Louvre N. 3292 are quite different from those in the de Horrack text, and the gods and their shrines of testing are also different.<sup>157</sup>

Drioton holds that the Negative Confession bears the marks of an initiation rite so strongly that it would seem to be the

production of a religious cult that flourished along with the Essenes, having “only a brief existence in Egyptian religion.”<sup>158</sup> George Nagel finds that the declarations of the Negative Confession as found in his Breathings text, Papyrus Louvre N. 3292, are “strictly moral,”<sup>159</sup> and Françoise de Cenival comes still closer to home in calling attention to the resemblance of the Negative Confession situation to certain examinations of members conducted by Egyptian temple associations, which in turn remind her slightly of the initiation process in the *Rule of the Community* of the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>160</sup> In Christian Egypt, Oswald Burmester finds the guardians of the gates, the accusers of Amente, and the avengers with divers faces all surviving in the Coptic apocryphal writings.<sup>161</sup> Like their ideas of sin, the Egyptians’ beatitudes are genuinely religious in nature, resembling those of the

Bible, Jacques Dupont reluctantly admits.<sup>162</sup>

**Lines 79–80:** “O (or Hail) thou who comest striding forth from Heliopolis! The Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsir-Wr*; Justified, born to *Ns-hr-p3w.t*, is not guilty (*lit.* to him is no doing) of light-mindedness (or wrongdoing)”

The titles of the candidate may here be significant. He is now Osiris without any personal name, and his father is not classified as “Justified.” The interesting thing is that the candidate here does not go by his *own* name, which heretofore he has never been without. This may be an indication that care is being taken not to put him in real jeopardy. In the Book of the Dead chapter 125, the candidate, when challenged, gives only the name of Osiris and is allowed to pass.<sup>163</sup> In each case the challenger “comes forth from his shrine” with fierce and alarming aggression. The aggressive

nature of the gatekeepers is vividly expressed in their names in the Book of Two Ways: Aggressor' is its [the way's] name. He will charge down upon its striking-force.

'Furious-of-fire' is its name," etc.<sup>164</sup> Klaus

Baer insists that "*pr m*" is only meant to indicate that each one "originates in" his particular place.<sup>165</sup> Even without the *pr*

"coming forth" with the determinative of striding legs, the preposition *m* would be enough to justify the livelier interpretation.

Would the first challenger be designated simply as the Strider if he were not in

terrifying motion? "Do not charge down upon me," says the man to the first of the seven gatekeepers ("the Butcher") in the Book of Two Ways.<sup>166</sup> Since the Wide-

Strider issuing from the sun-shrine of Heliopolis is Re, one thinks immediately of the wide-striding Apollo, the angry sun-god at his most sinister, making the rounds of his

shrines in the opening lines of the *Iliad*.<sup>167</sup> In the classic version of the Book of the Dead 125, the Negative Confession is addressed to forty-two monsters rushing from forty-two gates: “They issue forth from various designated places, temple complexes or regions of the beyond, or levels of awareness (*Erkenntnis*)”;<sup>168</sup> only in the later period were the forty-two demons converted to the more staid forty-two judges of the vignettes. But there is nothing pacific about the knife-bearing figures at the gates of the shrines in the vignettes to Goyon’s Book of Breathings (see pp. 78–79, fig. 17); waving their swords, the two men stride toward shrines with open gates—are they going in or out? Two monster-headed creatures sit before closed gates guarded by fire-spewing cobras; each of these monsters is crowned with the two *maat*-feathers of justice and holds a sacrificial knife in either

hand—they are plainly sitting in judgment at the gates.<sup>169</sup> When a god acts against anyone, he necessarily “comes forth” from his place, a biblical expression which strongly suggests the present *pr m*. Thus, to counter the serpents, Thoth “comes forth from Hermopolis” against them.<sup>170</sup> When one approaches the holy and inviolable shrine of a god, it is the god who is being challenged, and according to primordial royal code, he has no choice but to respond with instant and terrifying elan, rushing forth to meet the challenger in the manner of ancient ritual combat.<sup>171</sup>

## **Seven Sins and Seven Monsters**

The first of the seven sins in our text is not the usual and expected *isf.t*—the proper word for transgression in general as the opposite of Maat—but is, rather, *is.t*, meaning “light-mindedness.”<sup>172</sup> This could

be a scribal error, but in view of the liberty taken by scribes with these particular texts, it is not necessarily such since in the situation it makes very good sense: in these solemn moments of initiation with all their life-and-death implications, there is no greater sin and folly than to hold these high and holy things in contempt, to treat them lightly, or to approach them with mental reservations.

This is borne out at the tenth gate of the Amduat, whose hour is named the “Raging One Who Slaughters (*hs.t*) the Disaffected (or Indifferent One, *h3kw-ib*),”<sup>173</sup> where the fierce aggression of the god matches the contempt of the initiate for holy things.

Iamblichus notes that among the Egyptians, as opposed to the Chaldeans, covenants are accompanied by penalties and threats,<sup>174</sup> and certainly the worst breach of any covenant is to take it lightly.<sup>175</sup> In Papyrus Sensaos we read: “I am Horus, Lord of Letopolis (the

place of sacrifice by fire), Lord of the House (place) of coming forth to slaughter (sacrifice) those who apostatize (*wdʒ.w*, those who turn away).”<sup>176</sup> The main concern of the Egyptian Satan (Typhon) is to turn men’s minds from the ordinances in confusion, frustration, and indifference, according to Plutarch.<sup>177</sup> The six sins that follow on our list are theft, rapacity, fraud, trouble-making, arrogance, and gluttony, which compare closely enough with the classic Christian catalogue of pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, gluttony, envy, and sloth, though as noted, the Egyptian lists are by no means fixed and rigid.

**Lines 81–82:** “O thou Great Assailant, who cometh forth from the warrior city, Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsir-Wr*; Justified, born of *Ns-hr-pʒw.t-snб*, hath committed no robbery”

A new element is here added to the

father's name, *snb*, meaning health or prosperity. Why? We can only guess. *ȝt* means to attack or assail and is here written appropriately with a hippopotamus. The same word signifies a moment of time and is rendered "great of moment" by de Horrack and "Great Hour" by Wallis Budge. A variant reading, from Papyrus Louvre N. 3291, is *šfy*, which also means "majesty," making the guardian "great of majesty," though this could be a slip in writing for *š*, "attack" or "attacker." The place from which this terror issues is *Hr- 'hȝ.w*,<sup>178</sup> "the domain of the warriors," and it is interesting that the place still goes by the name of Cairo (Arabic Qahirah), "the Conquering One." The name of the tenth hour of the Amduat is "the Raging One Who Slaughters (*hs.t*, sacrifices) Him Who Lags." In the "formula for breathing" of Papyrus Sękowski, the candidate enters "the circle (*m-hnw phry.w*)

of those with warlike ('*hʒw*) face(s)" and there takes his throne or seat.<sup>179</sup>

**Lines 83–84:** "O Thou with the Beak, ... Osiris, God's Father, *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, born of *Ns-hr-pʒw.t-snb*, hath not been guilty of rapacity (evil speech? oppression?)"

The *Wörterbuch* gives *Fndy* the Latin parallel of Naso as a proper name,<sup>180</sup> but it is notable that all the seven guardians are addressed by epithets, only *Rw.ty* having what might be called a proper name—and that too is a description ("the Two Lionesses") rather than a name. With the Egyptians names are epithets, and *Fndy* properly designates Thoth as the long-beaked ibis,<sup>181</sup> the "Beaky one,"<sup>182</sup> his actual name being here diplomatically avoided. It should also be noted that at each of the gates the punishment fits the crime mentioned, the gatekeeper threatening the candidate with the

same treatment that he is accused of inflicting on others: “the punishment is akin to the sin committed.”<sup>183</sup> Thus it is the all-seeing Re of Heliopolis at the first gate whom no impiety or sin or light-mindedness escapes; it is the same hippopotamus who wrecks the fields and sheds in his nocturnal depredations who, as constable of the warrior city, punishes the robber at the second gate; and now, at the third gate, it is the ibis with formidable bill who pursues those who commit acts of insolence and oppression. Since Thoth is the god of justice and his city is Hermopolis, such acts of injustice would come under his surveillance. De Horrack gives the whole passage a legalistic turn, observing that he was not an eager litigant nor did he hale people into court!<sup>184</sup> On the other hand, the name of *Fndy* occurs in a Pyramid Text actually designated as a “Book (š ‘.t)” of Breathings, referring to

the nose of the king as Thoth “der Nasige.”<sup>185</sup>

Though the first two gatekeepers are apparently in human form, the others all have something *monstrous* about them—not as bogies to scare people, it would seem, but as reminders that there is something monstrous about sin itself. Émile Amélineau noted that Vergil’s Cerberus, “the Great Devourer,” is the same kind of monster as we find in the Egyptian funerary papyri, who for all his intimidating aspect really has no function at all since “the dead had already been declared just.”<sup>186</sup>

The crime mentioned at the third gate is a *hapax*—a word not found anywhere else—so all one can do is try to relate the root to something and consider the context. The corresponding crime named in the Ani text of the Book of the Dead is *tʒwi*, literally, “a gathering up of things”—implying theft,

greed, and covetousness<sup>187</sup>—and is ‘*wnw*, “robbery,” in Lepsius;<sup>188</sup> *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch* has *iri* ‘*wn-ib*, “doing theft in the heart,” or covetousness, translated “*Ich war nicht neidig!*” by Thausing.<sup>189</sup> Our text reads *nn ir(i) NN qmʒ* ‘*š*, “produce (be the cause of) groaning,” though *qmʒ* is not absolutely certain; ‘*š* can mean to groan in the expression ‘*š sgb*,<sup>190</sup> and Baer renders the passage, “NN has not made people groan.”<sup>191</sup> It is helpful that the parallel texts from the Book of the Dead all emphasize covetousness.

**Lines 85–86:** “Hail, (O) Swallower of the Eye, who cometh forth from the Two Caverns! The Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, born of *Ns-hr-pʒw.t-snb*, hath not taken property (things) in a high-handed manner”

The secrets of acquiring property are

craftiness and brashness, both emphasized here. The Swallower of the Eye is Seth, who steals away the moon, whether by eclipse, storm clouds, or its normal phases; “under the form of a black pig he swallowed the left eye” and then attacked the right eye, which “after [the] full moon … was eaten away piecemeal by him.”<sup>192</sup> The two caverns from which the Swallower issues forth are the abysses from which the waters of the Nile burst forth and also the regions of the underworld,<sup>193</sup> fittingly depicted in both capacities as two serpents spitting poison.<sup>194</sup> Here they are designated as the *qrr.t*, caves through which the sun-god passes on his visit to the underworld. At the right hand of the Swallower are two fire pits, or ovens of hell, matching his two eyes. Fire and water qualify equally well as swallowers, and in the Book of Gates what is fire for one person may be water for another.

**Line 87:** “Hail, thou Terrible-of-face,  
coming forth from Rostau! Osiris, God’s  
Father, *Wṣr-Wr*, Justified, born to *Ns-hr-*  
*p3w.t*, has not been contentious”

The last element of the parental name is here omitted, apparently to get the whole declaration on a single line, indicating the usual scribal flexibility. Again, the punisher fits the crime. *Nḥ3-hr* is a countenance that is “wild, fearsome, dangerous,” referring usually to dangerous and aggressive animals, especially to Apophis, the great serpent, “Repulsive-of-face.”<sup>195</sup> In the Amduat the traveler passes through the fields, taking possession of his holy land (*t3-dsr*) as he “smites and binds *Hiw* (the Smiter) and *Nḥ3-hr*,”<sup>196</sup> both names designating the serpent.<sup>197</sup> The initiate is warned that whoever does not know and perform certain rites (*hk3.w*) on earth will not be able to resist and turn aside *Nḥ3-hr*.<sup>198</sup> The name can also apply,

however, to a place, a fire, a wind, a voice, a disease, a mood, but especially a countenance, as here. It is the natural designation of evil beings—in particular, Seth and Apophis, the two archenemies of man—and is “also [thought of] as a crocodile or hippopotamus,” the two archdestroyers of Egypt.<sup>199</sup> The emphasis on the creature’s depressing appearance is for the benefit of the “troublemaker,” *shw*, “one who makes others angry, who stirs up wrath”; with its causative prefix and stick-wielding ideogram, the word means “dispute.”<sup>200</sup> *Hwn* is the deadly attack of a snake, scorpion, or horned beast and could apply to damage inflicted by evil speaking.<sup>201</sup> It is the troublemaker and backbiter who here meets his match. The serpent *Nhʒ-hr*, “Terrible-of-face,” appears also in the seventh hour of the Amduat, where the guide who gets the initiate past

this dangerous obstacle has the name of “Beheader of *Nḥȝ-hr*.”<sup>202</sup> Another name for the demon of the seventh hour is *Mds-hr*, “with violent face,” the face in question being that of a cat.<sup>203</sup> In section 4 of the Book of Two Ways, the sentinels along the way include “Numerous-of-faces,” “Great-face,” “Opposed-face” (or “Repulsive”), “Dog-face,” “Face-of-(corpses),” “Hippopotamus-face,” “Sharp-of-face”—seven faces in all, some good and some bad, the object of this operation being to “propitiate the face of Osiris.”<sup>204</sup>

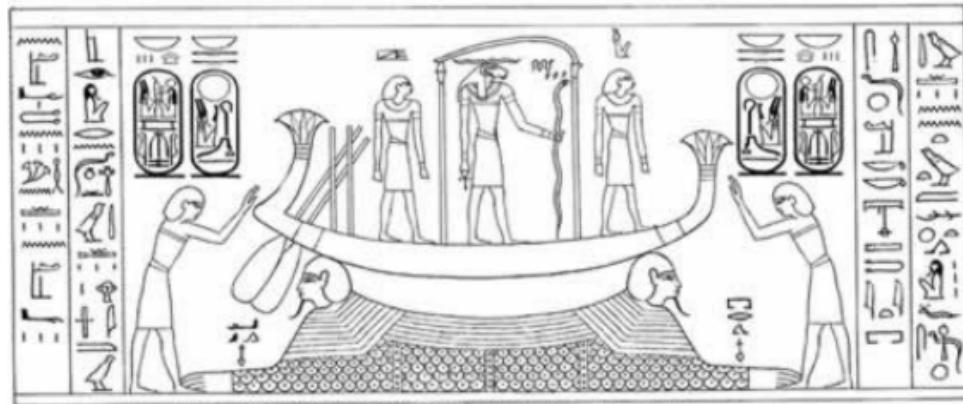


Figure 126. *Rw.ty* over a doorway in a royal tomb.

The two-headed sphinx (usually two lions) is the symbol of passage—here of the solar-bark, as is seen in the labels of the two heads, “a proper (good) entrance” and “a proper exit.” Restored drawing from tomb of Ramses IV, ca. 1130 B.C.

**Line 88:** “Hail, *Rw.ty* (Two Lionesses), coming forth from heaven! The Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsir-Wr*, Justified, born to *Ns-hr-p3w.t*, did not do iniquity in hardness of heart”

Here the hard-hearted man meets the pitiless lion of the desert. *Rw.ty*, a double-headed lion facing in two directions, is, like the Roman Janus, eminently well suited to be a gatekeeper, as the crouching lions that still flank the entrances to many a public building testify to this day. He is the guardian of the crucial seventh gate in the Amduat, the halfway point in the journey (fig. 126).<sup>205</sup> As a symbol of sacrificial death, the lion couch is familiar.<sup>206</sup> The fault to be chastened is

that of being *ht-ib*, literally “wooden-of-heart,” the sign for wood being written twice and followed by the ideogram for “hostility” or “enmity.” François Chabas drops the second wood symbol as a scribal error and interprets the two remaining ones as meaning “hardness of heart,” following the Coptic parallel *mnt-našt-n-hēt*.<sup>207</sup> While the best-known lion pair in Egypt is that of Shu and Tefnut in their warlike aspect, the present *Rw.ty* is nearer to *ȝkr*, the double lion who sits guarding the sun between two mountains in Papyrus Louvre N. 3292, it being his assignment to “give passage to the sun and to the dead in the other world,” where the candidate is sure to meet up with him (fig. 127).<sup>208</sup>



Figure 127. Four *ba*-birds, with the deceased in the lead, raise their arms in adoration to the solar disk as it rests on the two lions, Manu and Baku, representing the mountains of the east and the west. P. Louvre N. 3292, ca. 850 B.C. Courtesy of Louvre Museum.

**Line 89:** “Hail, Thou Whose Eye Is as Fire, coming forth from Letopolis! The Osiris, God’s Father, *Wsîr-Wr*, Justified, born to *Ns-hr-p3w.t*, did not do defilement”

This fiery eye is dangerous. To refer to the inevitable commonplace of the two eyes of Horus as the sun and the moon does not help much more than does careful pinpointing of Letopolis on the modern map of Egypt. The thing to note is that Letopolis was the most frightening place in Egypt, the place of awesome nocturnal rites of fire walking and

fire sacrifices.<sup>209</sup> The city's Egyptian name bears the sign of Sekhmet, the fire-breathing lioness with the great sacrificial knife. Its Greek name of Letopolis marks it as the place of Edjo, the lady of the Delta, and the fire-spitting uraeus-serpent, often identified with Hathor as the fiery Eye of Re, i.e., the burning sun.<sup>210</sup> It was the thunderbolt city of the prehistoric Min of the thunderbolt or meteorite.<sup>211</sup> Thunderbolt, fiery eye, fire-spitting serpent, fire-walking rites, Sekhmet of the fiery eye that consumes all before it—all strike dread into the heart of the morally corrupt. The crime in this case is *s3w*, moral weakness in general.<sup>212</sup> The root *s3w* has the double meaning of secrecy and satiation and is applied to Apophis in an evil sense; it also means to weaken or damage parts of the body or to move stealthily.<sup>213</sup> The sinister nature of this gate suits well with Letopolis as the place of dark, cruel, hidden, and

bloody doings. Hornung mentions the Egyptian concept of the destruction of the wicked by fire.<sup>214</sup> It is sacrificial fire from which the initiate escapes: “I come unscathed out of the fire; I am not treated with violence”<sup>215</sup> (he is able to escape the flame, being flame himself).<sup>216</sup> The longest spell of the Book of Two Ways promises whoever knows it that he will be like Re above and Osiris below and that “there is no flame against him forever.”<sup>217</sup>

## The Ritual Combat: Its Various Forms

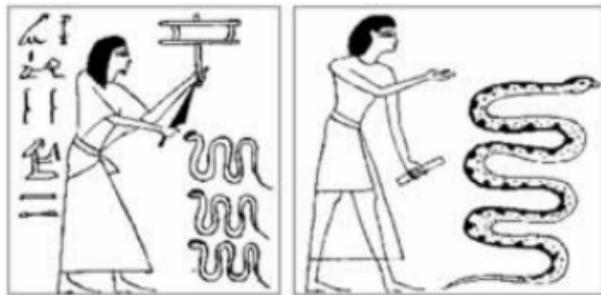


Figure 128. The contest with the great serpent Apèp, who bars the way of deliverance, is depicted in

everything from full-scale battle scenes to simple confrontation with knife and the breath of life (*snsn*), or even with the mere power of the word, shown by the scroll. P. Wesay, Khary (BD 38, 42), ca. 1325 B.C. BM 9949 and BM 9950 © Copyright The British Museum.

Behind all Egyptian year-rites from the earliest times is “the idea of perpetual conflict” with survival of the ordered universe at stake.<sup>218</sup> Derchain sees in Papyrus Salt 825 a clear declaration that the cosmic order is constantly being threatened with disruption and extinction, that the world is constantly on the defensive for its very existence, and that we should all therefore be concerned to find out if there is anything we can do to pitch in and help.<sup>219</sup> According to Papyrus Salt 825, the enemy must be overthrown anew every day forever;<sup>220</sup> those responsible for the ordinances effecting this overthrow are themselves in mortal peril and

must take every precaution against assassination;<sup>221</sup> life is a deadly duel of forces of survival and destruction trying to outwit and overpower each other,<sup>222</sup> and the end must be the total extermination of one or the other.<sup>223</sup> We can never rest because “life is always on the defensive,” what with “the powers of nonexistence constantly intruding upon the creation” so that we must stave off death from moment to moment.<sup>224</sup>

E. A. E. Reymond sees in the ritual combat the central motif of the Egyptian temple.<sup>225</sup> It was after overcoming the great serpent of the place (fig. 128) that Atum first established the rites of Heliopolis,<sup>226</sup> where later Re, in the form of a cat, destroyed the serpent’s children.<sup>227</sup> The Israelites’ “War of Jahwe” was borrowed from the Egyptians, according to Alfred Rupp, as part of the creation tradition;<sup>228</sup> and everywhere in Jewish and

early Christian tradition we find the creation following hard upon the victory of the heavenly hosts over a rebellious band in heaven, as in the opening scene of *Paradise Lost*.

The *combat* motif is constantly turning up in the Book of Breathings, taking dramatic form in the challenges at the gates. The warrior city of the second gate is really “the mythical locale and battleground of Horus and Seth.”<sup>229</sup> Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 contains the victory paean: “I spread my (two) legs in walking; appearing in glory, I overthrow my enemies. I have appeared in glory in heaven; I have conquered as a god; I have been mighty as Atum.”<sup>230</sup> The initiate in the Sensaos Breathings texts describes himself as Horus, Lord of Combat, slaughtering those who resist or rebel.<sup>231</sup> As might be expected, the ritual combat takes many forms. Thus the older Egyptian texts

constantly flash back to a time of the conquest and settlement of the land, when Pharaoh achieved his glory and dominion by brute force; in the funerary literature this tradition appears as a sort of assault on heaven itself, as in the famous Cannibal Hymn,<sup>232</sup> spell 567 of the Coffin Texts,<sup>233</sup> and chapters 10 and 11 of the Book of the Dead. In our Book of Breathings, the element of combat appears in the prominence of Horus the Behdetite, who overthrew his enemies in combat on the waters,<sup>234</sup> for even the ritual washing is cross-referenced to a water battle in which “Horus repels all evil from his father.”<sup>235</sup> The primordial water fight belongs to early solar myths which tell of the place of combat near the place of the sunrise, where the victory of the sun guarantees the rule of the Egyptian king in peace.<sup>236</sup> The serpent who blocks the progress of the solar-bark must be overcome

at the lake of combat (fig. 129).<sup>237</sup> At Hermopolis the ritual battleground was called “the Lake of the [Two] Knives,” where was found the same ritual complex of lake, fire, and primordial hill as at nearby Herakleopolis with its pool of flames.<sup>238</sup> The combat and victory motifs are thus entirely in place at the scene of the sunrise-and washing-rites, incongruous as it may seem; as Kees explains it, the Fire Island “overlaps with the Lake of the (Two) Knives, which figures prominently in the solar hymns of the New Kingdom, and merges with that of Nun or of a pool sacred to the sun-god, [out of which] the Pharaoh was thought to be reborn, like that god himself, and to be brought into close association with him.”<sup>239</sup> The fiery elements seem to have been suggested by the flaming gold of sunrise and sunset over the water.<sup>240</sup> The great antiquity of this ritual conflict may

be judged from the circumstance that the weapon sent by Re to overcome the dragon Apophis is “a knife of flint (of Behdet) brought from Behdet of the East; . . . the length of the flint knife is four spans.”<sup>241</sup> The earliest solar temples were established, Reymond posits, at places where the great serpent had been overcome since that obstacle had to be removed before the sun-god could occupy the “Island of Fury.”<sup>242</sup>



Figure 129. The great coiled serpent on the sand, here called the Terrible One, brings all life and progress to a halt by swallowing the hours and the water. The solar-ship, bearing the ram-headed god protected by a good serpent, is towed over the sand after the great serpent has failed to stop its progress. Redrawn from the sarcophagus in the tomb of Seti I. Book of Gates, fourth hour, ca. 1290 B.C. Courtesy of the Trustees Sir John Soane’s Museum, London.

In our present text and its primary

archetype, Horus and his followers must overcome at the gate of the *w'b.t*—the washing place—before the sunrise can take place.<sup>243</sup> It is a type of the resurrection in which, while all the universe looks on in amazement, “the sky is opened, the earth is opened, the doors of the Kereret [Qerert] (the caverns of the underworld) are thrown back wide Nekhen” so that Osiris may “ascend to the sky upon the wing of Thoth.”<sup>244</sup> These are also the gates of heaven that open in the temple,<sup>245</sup> where the testing of the psychostasy takes place. There is no point to forcing these gates since one who is not qualified to pass through them will gain nothing but confusion by doing so. Strangely, the savage gatekeepers seem willing to listen to reason, for in the age-old tradition even the most savage duel was preceded by the formality of exchanging names and stating the issue: before he strikes, the defender of the

gate must necessarily ask who the newcomer is and what he wants—the questioning at the gate must be as old as the gate itself since the very purpose of gates is to allow selective passage.<sup>246</sup> A satisfactory answer could avoid combat altogether: the important thing in the Book of Breathings, as we have seen, is to *know* the answer.

The battle on the waters which opens the way for the sun to rise is but one version of the many ritual and mythical situations in which the sun's rising is compared with his breaking out of confinement in the underworld. A dramatic conception is that of the smashing of the gates, familiar from the harrowing of hell literature of the early Christians. So in Coffin Text 96: "I have come to thee, ram of the Great Lady, gatekeeper of the warrior lady of the gods who guards the wicked ones, to whom the guardians of the fields (regions of the other

world) open up. With the sword I come forth by day, overcoming mine enemies.”<sup>247</sup> In the earliest coronation rites, the new king had to prevail at a battleground by the waterside, called “the Royal Gate of the Palace.”<sup>248</sup> According to one study, the prince had to prove his right to rule by forcing open the gates of the residence.<sup>249</sup> “I escape all who would seize me,” says the initiate. “I shall tear down their building and drive them from their seats of power; I overcame their magic.”<sup>250</sup> The battle by the water was explained in Plutarch’s time as the perennial conflict between the divine life-giving powers of water and the destructive powers of heat and drought, represented by Apophis as the brother of the Sun.<sup>251</sup>

The classic combat is that between the two brothers, Horus and Seth, to which every ritual showdown is usually compared. Thus when the sun-ship is finally freed from the

deadly sandbar that has halted its progress through the lower world, the rejoicing crew hail the happy event as Horus's victory over Seth.<sup>252</sup> In the Setne romance, the hero fills a boat with sand so that it will sink with him to the underworld, and there he fights and slays the great serpent three times and so acquires the book of all knowledge.<sup>253</sup> The theme in which the journey of the sun-god through the underworld meets opposition at every station runs all through the Amduat, and in whatever form he appears, the challenger is always Seth, who "opposes the sun-god in all sorts of forms and under various names."<sup>254</sup> Both combatants figure as the leaders of their respective hosts: "The dwellers in the *duat* fight for my body against Apophis; they live for my soul, they breathe for my body," while the hero in return drives out the darkness for them and turns night into day, doing all things for their welfare.<sup>255</sup>

Since the sacrificial victims were enemies taken in combat, the battle itself is a sacrificial rite. Various stations of the Amduat are marked by sacrificial gestures, and Hornung notes that “the punishment and destruction of the ‘enemies’ in this world as well counts as sacrifice to the gods.”<sup>256</sup> In Pyramid Text 477 §962a, Thoth as “Lord of the Sacrifice” with his moon-shaped knife “slaughters all who oppose the king on his way to Osiris” and so provides sacrificial offering.<sup>257</sup> The “enemy” was often dispatched in the form of a goose, fox, or pig, human victims readily changing into animals for the purpose—for if one creature can substitute, so can another.<sup>258</sup> Thus in the “night of the great hoeing in Busiris,” when the followers of Seth, the adversary, were transformed into sheep and as such were sacrificed, “their blood was received as that of the people of Busiris.”<sup>259</sup>

In the fateful seventh hour, the hero meets Apophis face to face as the monster, after drinking the river dry, lies in ambush on the bank to finish off the helpless crew; but the followers of Re cut the beast up with their swords, and the journey proceeds.<sup>260</sup> In the eighth hour the ship is again encircled by the *Mhn*-serpent, and the painful towing forward of the vessel is a proper form of conflict.<sup>261</sup> In the tenth hour the serpent is confronted by another serpent, this one wearing the hawk-head of Horus,<sup>262</sup> and a regular army opposes “the adversary, *Nḥʒ-hr*” of our Breathings text, here representing “the primal darkness,” who tries to keep the hero from reaching the gate of the eastern horizon.<sup>263</sup> With the victory, air comes to the noses of the crew, who are able to row, having power over their breath, and air fills the sails as the ship moves forward at accelerating speed;<sup>264</sup> breathing itself is a

victory, for the good wind is met by a counterwind, and there is a regular conflict of winds.<sup>265</sup>

Plutarch gives us to understand that there was a whole series of such fights between Horus and Typhon and their followers, carried out mimetically (e.g., they cut up a rope which represents Apophis).<sup>266</sup> But the sham battles, as Herodotus reports, could be pretty rough.<sup>267</sup> Some of the older versions describe the fight as a knock-down and drag-out battle in which each opponent tries to do to the other what the other would do to him:<sup>268</sup> make *him* the sacrificial victim. The object of the initiate is to turn the tables on those who would seize and destroy him,<sup>269</sup> which is another way of reversing the blows of death: “I know the secrets of Elkab,” which Horus used against him who wounded him.<sup>270</sup> Thus the climax of the Setne stories is a great battle of the magicians, which ends

up with Pharaoh inflicting on the rival false king of Ethiopia exactly the same ritual blows with which the evil viceroy disabled the king of Egypt in the beginning.<sup>271</sup> The story begins, however, with the mildest kind of combat, a game of “fifty-two” played between the hero and the dead owner of the book of knowledge—but the stakes are as deadly as those in any duel, for the loser must remain in the underworld forever.<sup>272</sup>

Without the element of danger and conflict, the story of man’s redemption would be meaningless. But like the more erotic episodes of the garden story, it was discretely depicted in highly ritualized and abstract forms. The essence of the *stumme Ritual*, according to Spiegel, was the combat,<sup>273</sup> with its original “battle episode of the storming of heaven and its cruel victory celebration”<sup>274</sup> put well out of the way in unreadable positions on the walls.<sup>275</sup>

Thus this part of the initiation may sometimes be overlooked by the casual observer—but it is always there.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 90–93

90. O ye gods who are within the *duat!* Hear the voice of the *Wsîr-Wr*, Justified, Son of *Ns-pʒw.ty-tʒ.wy*, Justified, who has come into your presence!

91 (5/5). There is no sin at all upon him; no offense is held against him; no accuser riseth against him. He liveth on Maat; he feedeth on Maat. The gods are pleased with everything he hath done.

92. He hath given bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked. He hath made offerings to the gods, even invocation offerings (*or* funeral feasts) for those glorified ones (the deified ancestors). There is not made

93. a report of any kind against him before all the gods (*i.e.*, in assembly).

## **Commentary: Psychostasy: The Initiate Is Pronounced Guiltless**

The most impressive fragment of the Joseph Smith Papyri is a large drawing depicting the testing of the dead in a court of law—the famous psychostasy, or weighing of the soul or heart of the dead by balancing it in a huge set of scales against the weight of truth (fig. 130; see color plate 5; cf. p. 252, fig. 79). If war is the continuation of politics by violent means,<sup>276</sup> the court of law for the Egyptians is the continuation of the violent altercation between Horus and Seth by gentler means. The Island of Fire, where Re defeated his enemies in the beginning in order to assume his dominion, was, according to Kees, “at the same time the place of judgment for the dead. The

‘accuser’ steps forth in the role of Seth, the enemy of the god,” and the ordinances of the mysteries are equated to a trial at law.<sup>277</sup>

After Horus and Typhon fought with arms, the contest was continued in a court of law where, with the aid of Thoth, Typhon was defeated, as he was in two other combats.<sup>278</sup>

After the initiate breaks out of the gates “with violence and force, overcoming his enemies,” he proceeds to the divine college to settle the affair—it is not with force (as in our society) but with law that the ultimate decision rests.<sup>279</sup> Even the most dignified court trial, however, was understood to present the plaintiff and defendant as types of Horus and Seth, respectively engaged in their primordial bloody combat.<sup>280</sup> In the Amduat the court of the twelve gods tries Osiris every day when the enemy brings charges, justifies him, and “overthrows his [Osiris’s] enemies” as on a fair field of

combat.<sup>281</sup> Re also fights in the court as on the field: “Hail Re, Justified; (*m3 ‘-hrw*), Re, Smiter of His Enemy! Thou art Justified, O Re, against thine enemies!”<sup>282</sup> Following their example, the dead “appears with his enemies before a court of law, where he is acquitted and *they* are condemned,” whereupon the winner is represented as the falcon, the victorious Horus, or the triumphant *ba*-bird.<sup>283</sup> And just as the initiate is tested at the gate, so the gate was also a court.<sup>284</sup>



Figure 130. The court scene from Joseph Smith Papyri IIIA–B. The defendant is being instructed by Maat herself, while an unusual symbol just under the lotus designates the place as the Hall of the Two Maats. Behind Amentit, the waiting monster that threatens the guilty, stands Thoth, who is recording everything. The judge is Osiris on the throne, holding “the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand” (Book of Abraham, Facsimile 3, fig. 1). Reconstructed drawing, after JSP III. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Among the Breathings texts, Papyrus

Sensaos emphasizes the court imagery where the trial is clearly a representation of ritual combat: “Hail Thoth! Grant that thy face be turned toward me; justify me, even my words against mine enemies, even as thou didst justify Osiris against his enemies in the presence of the great court held in Heliopolis, on that night of the fighting to overthrow these rebels, and the day when the enemies of the Most High God were smashed”; [285](#) “Justify my words against my enemies as thou didst the words of Osiris against his enemies! O Lord of Light in the great temple, … give me my mouth that I may speak with it.”[286](#) Our Book of Breathings refers plainly to the trial situation when, in lines 90–93, *the aspirant is pronounced guiltless.*

**Lines 90–91:** “O ye gods who are within the *duat!* Hear the voice of the *Wsir-Wr,*

Justified, Son of *Ns-p3w.ty-t3.wy*, Justified,  
who has come into your presence! There is  
no sin at all upon him; no offense is held  
against him; no accuser riseth against him”

Here the candidate is designated by only two names: he is no longer “the Osiris So-and-so” but simply *Wsir-Wr*, “Osiris the Great”; only his personal name and that of his father are given, and both names are qualified by “Justified”—True of Word, particularly appropriate at this point where the express purpose of the rites is to establish his *m3'-hrw*. There is no mention of Horus, but the initiate is specifically designated as the son of his father.

However ancient the trial motif, the well-known pictures of the big pair of scales in the court seems to be a concept of the later period; it is a striking way of expressing the concept of the Two Ways, which underwent various changes of detail.<sup>287</sup> Thus in the

famous text known as the Eloquent Peasant, the just man is repeatedly compared with a just balance.<sup>288</sup> Reinhard Grieshammer thinks that the picture of the weighing of the soul was added as an afterthought by way of illustrating the earlier Negative Confession, which we have already met with at the gates.<sup>289</sup> Also, the weighing of the soul became more and more in graphic presentation the weighing of the heart.<sup>290</sup> The psychostasy, very popular in the latest period, is found represented as late as the third century A.D.<sup>291</sup> The picture is omitted from the Kerasher Book of Breathings for the reasons, suggested by Budge, that it was “thought to be superfluous” or that the artist “was unequal to the task of painting it.”<sup>292</sup> It never seems to have been absolutely indispensable and indeed is never described in any funerary text, though it is vividly before us in the Setne story, where Setne and

his son enter the seventh hall and see Osiris upon a golden throne, crowned with the *atef*, having Anubis on his left hand and Thoth on his right, with the gods standing on either side, and “the balance being set in the midst before them, they weighing the evil deeds against the good deeds,” as Thoth writes everything down and Anubis reports it.<sup>293</sup> But even in the Coffin Texts we learn that the candidate “may now proceed to enter heaven” after he “has passed all the tests ... and has been weighed in the balance.”<sup>294</sup>

The seemingly casual treatment of the psychostasy emphasizes its symbolic nature. In the oldest funerary texts, Grieshammer has found, there was *no trial* at all; no charges were brought against the candidate,<sup>295</sup> whose sins, at any rate, had been washed away in the purification rites *before* the initiation began.<sup>296</sup> The weighing, moreover, was not carried out as a test of the soul itself, but

merely to determine whether statements sworn to by the initiate were true or false.<sup>297</sup> The charges are never specific, and the whole thing has a detached and timeless air;<sup>298</sup> and Junker observes that no Egyptian really thought himself in danger in the psychostasy.<sup>299</sup> Indeed, it is the *Breathings* texts that show how unintimidated the Egyptians were by the supposed awful majesty of the law court. The maker of Papyrus Louvre N. 3292, for example, takes “surprising liberties” with the theme, according to Nagel, as he borrows according to his fancy from Egyptian mythology and gives names to the judges which are not found in any other such text.<sup>300</sup> Whether the negative or positive aspect of one’s past behavior was to be emphasized in such scenes was entirely up to the taste of the individual scribe or customer, according to Drioton.<sup>301</sup> The trial idea was never very

popular with the Egyptians anyway, Grieshammer finds; they preferred the much less risky primitive examination by the doorkeepers.<sup>302</sup> This, in our *Breathings* text, takes the place of the trial. Yet the two ideas of challenging monsters and fateful scales are combined in chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead and other texts when the eyebrows of the grim gatekeepers become the arms of the balance.<sup>303</sup>

In lines 90–91 of our *Book of Breathings* we are first told that the subject has not only never been convicted but has never even been *accused* of any sin whatever—there has never been any question of his innocence with respect to the crimes specified (compare, from the Coffin Texts: “No one denounces me; no one accuses me!”).<sup>304</sup> The routine categorical denial of guilt is found on funeral stelae long before it meets us in the *Book of the Dead* chapter 125;<sup>305</sup> and as far

back as the trial motif can be traced, the “trial” seems to be a mere formality amounting to no more than a categorical statement of innocence, with no indication whatever of possible guilt; the great scales that stand so impressively in the courtroom of the Two Maats are only to confirm the legality and accuracy of statements made in the court,<sup>306</sup> thus giving the accused a defense against “the possible perfidy of an enemy.”<sup>307</sup>

Amélineau once observed that the judgment scenes in the Egyptian funerary books have no real function since “le défunt était toujours censé juste.”<sup>308</sup> Other studies confirm this, especially on the basis of two things which the “accused” brings into the courtroom with him, namely his *mʒ ‘-hrw* title and his crown of justification. The initiate is addressed as *mʒ ‘-hrw*, Justified, etc., as soon as he sets foot in the temple,

and this can only mean that he is already justified. “He who knows this name *on earth*,” says the Amduat, “is as one *mʒ ‘-hrw* in the court of Re who reckons up the scores (*hsb.t- ‘ʒ.w*).”<sup>309</sup> Permission to proceed to heaven depends on “the justification of one’s earthly life,” a formal statement of justification being tested by a regular court examination.<sup>310</sup> The Hall of the Two Maats, where our initiation began, was itself such a court of inquiry.<sup>311</sup> The *mʒ ‘-hrw* of the long Breathings text is accordingly interpreted by Stricker as a lawyer’s summary of a case before a court and signifies a favorable decision for the defendant, whose part the judge now actively takes.<sup>312</sup>

On acquittal, the defendant, according to ancient custom, received a crown.<sup>313</sup> If *mʒ ‘-hrw* means “justified by acclamation,” then the crown is “the visible symbol of [that] exclamation.”<sup>314</sup> Its origin was not funerary,

according to Derchain.<sup>315</sup> It is remarkable, Stricker observes, that the people who owned the Breathings texts did not wait for the final verdict of Thoth but crowned themselves while still on earth as mummies —they enter the next world already crowned.<sup>316</sup> The flower-wreath crowns worn by all the members of the Soter family were crowns of justification,’ bestowed on Osiris and the dead as signs of their triumph in the tribunal on the other side” and are the equivalent of the title *mʒ'-hrw*.<sup>317</sup> Hans Bonnet finds it significant that olive leaves prevail in the crowns as well as in the bouquets buried with the Egyptian dead. In the “chapters of the crown” from the earlier literature, Thoth is supplicated to justify the candidate against his enemies as he once did for Osiris.<sup>318</sup> A plurality of crowns suggests to Jean Capart that the dead may have had to undergo a special trial just before burial,

independent of the trial to come before the tribunal of Osiris.<sup>319</sup> The “crown of justification” is not a typical crown but a band of cloth substituting for a modest wreath,<sup>320</sup> which was tied on.<sup>321</sup> It survives in the imagery of the New Testament.<sup>322</sup>



Figure 131. A most unusual psychostasy scene, in that it shows the subject actually in the custody of the monster Aamut, who bears the sacrificial knife! Let us hope that the document under the victim's arm will get him through. P. Louvre N. 3092 (BD 125). After Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, pl. CXXXVI.

The most arresting figure in the psychostasy or judgment scenes is that of the monster Aamut, who crouches, waiting to seize the defendant should he be found guilty (fig. 131). The terrifying creature has the

relentlessly efficient head and jaws of a crocodile, the awesome mane of the fierce and aggressive lion, the forelegs of the swift cheetah that nothing can outrun, and the massive and immovable hind part and hind legs of a hippopotamus. The absurd combination banishes any illusion of reality, but no one could fail to get the symbolism of it. No drawing ever shows this fabulous creature performing its dire office, and only in the Setne story are we told how she seizes the wicked and “does not allow him to breathe ever again.”<sup>323</sup> From this it would appear that her office is not to seize and destroy but to frighten. Even the terrifying Apophis in the Amduat serves that function primarily: “*zu einem wirklichen Kampf kommt es gar nicht.*”<sup>324</sup> The fifty-two gods who sit in the Hall of the Two Maats are “the watchers of evil things, who drink blood on the day of judgment in the presence of *Wn-*

*Nfr.*"<sup>325</sup> In Papyrus Ani it is twelve judges who sit on thrones above the law court.<sup>326</sup> If bogies don't frighten anyone, death does; and the day of trial, Grieshammer notes, is identified with the day of dead, the judgment day, the day of vindication, of triumph, of coronation.<sup>327</sup> It is the *dies irae*, or day of wrath, which no one can take lightly. The Negative Confession and the mock trial are no mere game of make-believe, for in the end the existence of all things rests on *maat*—what is just, righteous, true, proper, and good.<sup>328</sup>

## **Righteousness and Morality**

**Line 91:** "He liveth on Maat; he feedeth on Maat. The gods are pleased with everything he hath done"

In the case of Maat, as we have seen, such a diet is possible;<sup>329</sup> it is the ultimate stamp

of righteousness and integrity. To live and feed on Maat is to be wholly true and upright by nature, unaffected and without pretense—the ideal of Akhenaton. The final vote of approval is that the gods are pleased in their hearts (“joyful of heart”) with what he has done—well done, thou good and faithful servant!

**Line 92:** “He hath given bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked. He hath made offerings to the gods, even invocation offerings (*or* funeral feasts) for those glorified ones (the deified ancestors)”

Compare this with a Hebrew declaration of the dead: “I shared my bread with the poor. I wrought godliness; all my days I kept truth.”<sup>330</sup> Here are the first two commandments, on which hang all the rest: reverence to Deity and charity toward one’s fellowmen, living and dead; respect alike for

what is above and what is below. As de Horrack observes, this section “bears the stamp of a truly religious sentiment and contains moral maxims, whose striking agreement with the precepts of the Jewish lawgiver and those of the Christ has already been pointed out by Egyptologists.”<sup>331</sup> The Egyptian, Paul Barguet notes, had a sound and sincere regard for true moral values; “he would never think of deceiving by any artifices a divinity such as Re or Osiris, the very incarnation of justice and truth,” and (contrary to the image that has been diligently cultivated in our time) “he dreaded the malicious spirit of black magic.”<sup>332</sup> The principle of *hms.wt* guaranteed for the Egyptians “that every man receive the fate which he has deserved by his actions.”<sup>333</sup>

**Lines 92–93:** “There is not made a report of any kind against him before all the gods (*i.e.*,

in assembly)"

As the last act of the funeral, the whole community is invited to raise any final objections, if such there be. Barguet holds that this episode is an appendage to the Book of the Dead proper, being chapters 191–92.<sup>334</sup> Yet this step is the unfailing victory and triumph motif with which all major ceremonies conclude. From chapter 163 on, the Book of the Dead is all the triumphant imagery of the coronation at Heliopolis. Chapter 192 is a true harrowing of hell: “the double gates … are opened for thee, the gates … are smashed for thee”—a concept going back to Pyramid Text 462a–b.<sup>335</sup>

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 93– 97

93. … (Spoken by the entire assembly?): Let him enter into the *duat*, none opposing. Let him attend (follow) Osiris, along with the

gods of the

94. lower regions (caverns), being praised among the living and deified among the proven ones. Grant that he live; grant that his *ba* may live; let
95. his *ba* be received into whatever place it chooseth; let his Certificate of Breathing be duly recognized (received). Grant that he may go on (make) breathing along with this, his *ba*, in (?)<sup>336</sup>
- 96 (5/10). the *duat*, along with the making of whatever transformations (*hprw*) his heart may be inclined (given) to, along with (*or* like) the dwellers in the west. And grant that his *ba* may go about whithersoever it pleaseth, whenever it happens to be living upon
97. the earth, for all time and throughout all eternity. The end.

## Commentary: The Initiate Is

## Admitted to the Duat

Here is the request for (or granting of) final clearance. The preceding section was a series of flat declarations. The change to the imperative mood implies another speaker, the opening words “let him enter” being most appropriate to the gods to whom the petition and statement of worthiness have just been made. Whether this is the petition or the actual granting of the petition is, however, a quibble since there can be no possible doubt but that the petition is granted. In the Kerasher version it is Thoth, Hathor, Maat, or all three who say, “Come, pass thou on (*bs=k*, ‘be thou initiated’) to the place where thy father is[,] that he may place thee among the divine favoured ones.”<sup>337</sup>

**Lines 93–94:** “Let him enter into the *duat*, none opposing. Let him attend (follow) Osiris, along with the gods of the lower

regions (caverns), being praised among the living and deified among the proven ones”

According to this, existence may continue on three levels, as expressed in the statement: “Thy *ba* lives in heaven with Re, thy *ka* is divine in the presence of the gods. Thy body is in the underworld with Osiris; thy *s ‘h* is radiant among the transfigured ones (*ʒhw*).”<sup>338</sup> The word we have rendered “sanctified,” *ntr.yt*, implies deification and “may reflect the restoration of divine powers or status”;<sup>339</sup> indeed, it is exaltation and return to a former glory. The emphasis on mingling on a level with exalted beings recalls the homecoming scene from the early Christian hymn of *The Pearl*,<sup>340</sup> as well as Book of the Dead chapter 17: “O ye standing there, give me your hands! For I am one of your own number!”<sup>341</sup> and Pyramid Text 306: How lovely to see! How pleasing to behold! say they, namely the gods, when this god

ascends to the sky, when you ascend to the sky with your power upon you. ... There come to you the gods the Souls of Pe, the gods the Souls of Nekhen, the gods who are in the sky, and the gods who are on earth. They make supports for you upon their arms.”<sup>342</sup> In some passages of the Coffin Texts, great emphasis is laid on rejoining one’s family and associates, for example, “The Uniting of a Family in the Next World. I am Atum. ... I have received and entered into my kingdom. ... I advanced on my feet, I stretched forth my two arms; heaven was perfect for me; the divine council was satisfied. They granted that I should reunite with them. So my family, my children, my brothers, my sisters, and my dear friends everywhere were included.”<sup>343</sup> “Thou hast gathered together those who are in heaven and on earth” is almost reminiscent of the “gathering” motif in Israel.

**Lines 94–97:** “grant that his *ba* may live; let his *ba* be received into whatever place it chooseth; let his Certificate of Breathing be duly recognized (received). Grant that he may go on (make) breathing along with this, his *ba*, in (?) the *duat*, along with the making of whatever transformations (*hprw*) his heart may be inclined (given) to, along with (*or* like) the dwellers in the west. And grant that his *ba* may go about whithersoever it pleaseth, whenever it happens to be living upon the earth, for all time and throughout all eternity”

Here the Book of Breathings finishes its business. The passing of gates is definitely related to breathing, the gates themselves being sometimes thought of as respiratory passages. The first hour of the Amduat concludes: “I have come ... that I might let my members breathe, that they might be raised up ... and let Osiris Head of the

Westerners breathe as *sfg-irw*. ... Jubilation before thee who causest the transfigured ones to breathe when thou reachest the gate” of *hr.t-ntr*.<sup>344</sup>

In this section the dead qualifies as a “living *ba*,” that expression denoting “the quality of divinity par excellence, the eternal.”<sup>345</sup> The “living” is an epithet applied by the Egyptians “to one who has been redeemed.” “He casts his sins to earth and so purifies himself and arises on the horizon like Sothis.” He is not one who has never died, but one who has died and overcome death in the resurrection.<sup>346</sup> It is only by becoming “a living *ba*” that one is finally free from all limitations of time and place and can take any form one pleases. The forms taken by the living *ba* are its *hprw* from the verb *hpr*, which can mean “to be” as well as “to become, exist, happen,” and just as the gods can share their *bas* with each

other, so “gods who have their *hprw*” in another god *are* that god.<sup>347</sup> Thus many gods, though created and distinct from Ptah, are, through their *hprw*, manifestations of him and identical with him.<sup>348</sup> *Hpr* signifies the moment of transition or state of change, the great god Khepri is just ready to be born.<sup>349</sup> In spite of the changing of *hprw* in one’s preexistent state, the individual always maintains his unique identity as his proper *hpr*.<sup>350</sup> The deliberate distortion by Jewish and Christian polemicists represented the Egyptian use of images as the grossest materialism, whereas the Egyptians themselves held that an image was only a reminder of a god, and its material only dead stuff.<sup>351</sup> The Egyptians distinguished various forms of being with a “Feinheit und Klarheit”<sup>352</sup> far surpassing modern thought; this is seen in the various aspects of the pharaoh, who is a person (*hm*,

“Leiblichkeit”) but also a power—*ny-sw.t*, *nb*, *iti* (“king, lord, sovereign,” respectively)—acquiring two natures at his coronation and undergoing a metamorphosis at every rite of passage, passing from being the son of Re in life to a state of pure divinity at his death.<sup>353</sup> Changes in life forms were more important to the Egyptians than to us, as they lived much closer to nature; and indeed, those marvelous changes—of the human embryo, tadpoles, caterpillars, etc.—remain an unexplained mystery.<sup>354</sup> Thus the cocoon of the nymph of the scarabaeus beetle, the Egyptian sign for *hpr*, represents “the soul, the immortal principle of eternal renewal.”<sup>355</sup> “Coming into being” is the fundamental concept of *hpr*, and in the creation story of the “Book of Knowing the *hprw* of Re,” the word occurs seven times in one line, each time with a different connotation, though all dealing with

creation.[356](#)

### **Line 97: “The end”**

The expression *iw=f pw* means “literally perhaps: this is it arrives.”[357](#) At the end of texts it means “it is finished.”[358](#) Raymond Faulkner renders it at the end of the Songs of Isis and Nephthys portion of Papyrus Bremner-Rhind as, “It is at an end.”[359](#) Baer gives it, “Here ends the Breathing Permit of Hôr,”[360](#) providing an excellent illustration of the leeway that must be left to a translator since the three words in the text do not include “Hor,” “breathing,” or “permit.” Naturally “the end” placed at the end of *Ivanhoe* really means “Here endeth the tale of Ivanhoe,” and if the reader might miss the point, it is perfectly proper to add the explanatory words.

## **Notes**

1. Wolfgang Helck, "Die Herkunft des abydenischen Osirisrituals," *ArOr* 20 (1952): 79.
2. Hermann Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien (Totenbuch Kapitel 69 und 70)* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1954), 31.
3. Joachim Spiegel, *Das Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 92.
4. Hermann Junker, "Die Osirisreligion und der Erlösungsgedanke bei den Ägyptern," in *Internationale Woche für Religions-Ethnologie* (Paris: Geuthner, 1926), 289.
5. See Winfried Barta, "Zur Verteilung der 12 Nachtstunden des Amduat in Grabe Tuthmosis III," *JEOL* 7/21 (1969–70): 164.
6. Leonard H. Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 20–21.
7. Junker, "Osirisreligion und der Erlösungsgedanke bei den Ägyptern," 276, 289.
8. Junker, "Osirisreligion und der Erlösungsgedanke bei den Ägyptern," 289.
9. Herman te Velde, "The God Heka in Egyptian Theology," *JEOL* 7/21 (1969–70): 186, emphasis added.
10. Te Velde, "The God Heka in Egyptian Theology," 186.
11. Hermann Junker, *Pyramidenzeit: Das Wesen der altägyptischen Religion* (Zürich: Benziger, 1949), 105–6.
12. Siegfried Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion* (Stuttgart:

Kohlhammer, 1960), 140–41.

13. Claas J. Bleeker, “Guilt and Purification in Ancient Egypt,” *Numen* 13 (1966): 81–82.
14. Bleeker, “Guilt and Purification in Ancient Egypt,” 84.
15. See Gertrud Thausing, *Sein und Werden: Versuch einer Ganzheitsschau der Religion des Pharaonenreiches* (Vienna: Stiglmayr, 1971), 123.
16. Klaus Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1970), 103–11; Hugh W. Nibley, “Tenting, Toll, and Taxing,” *Western Political Quarterly* 19 (1966): 599–630, reprinted in *The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled*, CWHN 10:33–98.
17. A. E. Housman, “Could Man Be Drunk For Ever,” in *Last Poems* (London: Richards, 1922), 26.
18. Erik Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 174; English trans., *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. John Baines (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 179; cf. 2 Nephi 9:7.
19. Omar Khayyám, *Rubáiyát*, stanza 38, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Books, 1952), 59.
20. Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (1948; reprint, New York: Harper, 1961), 73.
21. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 73–75.
22. Max Guilmot, “La signification des métamorphoses du défunt en Égypte ancienne,” *RHR* 175 (1969): 9.
23. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, 217; Reinhard

Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970), 70.

24. For example, E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead; Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefar, A.nhai, Kerāsher and Netchemet* (London: British Museum, 1899), pl. 2.
25. Kurt Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zur altägyptischen Mysterienspielen: Der dramatische Ramesseumpapyrus: Ein Spiel zur Thronbesteigung des Königs* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1928), 96.
26. See Nibley, “Tenting, Toll, and Taxing,” 609–11, reprinted in *Ancient State*, CWHN 10:46–48.
27. Cf. the colorful parade in P. Leiden T 32 5/17–24, in Bruno H. Stricker, “De Egyptische Mysteriën: Pap. Leiden T 32,” *OMRO* 34 (1953): 23–24.
28. On entering the company of the gods, see below, commentary to lines 93–94, pp. 408–9.
29. Erik Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963–67), 1:18; 2:32–33.
30. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:13–22; 2:28–29.
31. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca (Library)* 1.92.
32. Jacques J. Clère, “Un passage de la stèle du général Antef,” *BIFAO* 30 (1931): 427.
33. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:4.
34. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:5; cf. Howard Carter and Alan H. Gardiner, “The Tomb of Ramesses IV and the Turin Plan of a Royal Tomb,” *JEA* 4 (1917): 147; Kurt Sethe,

“Die Türteile bnš und ‘rj.t.’” ZÄS 67 (1931): 115–17.

35. Alexandre Piankoff, “Les deux papyrus ‘mythologiques’ de Her-Ouben au Musée du Caire,” ASAE 49 (1949): 137.
36. BD 125, in Adriaan de Buck, *Egyptian Readingbook: Exercises and Middle Egyptian Texts*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1963), 121.
37. Sethe, “Die Türteile bnš und ‘rj.t.’” 115–17; Gertrud Thausing and Traudl Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch (Papyrus Reinisch)* der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Cairo: Österreichisches Kulturinstitut, 1969), 38.
38. Carter and Gardiner, “Tomb of Ramesses IV,” 147.
39. BD 125, in Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 39.
40. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 18–20, in Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 36–39.
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42. Wilhelm Czermak, “Vom großen Gedanken Ägyptens,” *Archiv für ägyptische Archäologie* 1 (1938): 208–9; BD 22.
43. Zohar, *Vayera* 103b, in Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon, *The Zohar*, 2nd ed. (London: Soncino, 1984), 1:332.
44. Gerardus van der Leeuw, “The SUMBOLA [Symbola]

in Firmicus Maternus,” *Egyptian Religion* 1 (1933): 69.

45. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:167.

46. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:11; 2:24–25, 40.

47. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:20.

48. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:12–13; 2:24–25.

49. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:167.

50. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:21; 2:39.

51. Cf. Étienne Drioton, “Portes de l’hadès et portes du paradis,” *Bulletin de la Société d’archéologie copte* 9 (1943): 59, 66–67.

52. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:29–30.

53. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:37; 2:55.

54. Cf. Philippe Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051): Rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1965), 1:7.

55. CT 75, in Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935–61), 1:398c–402a; Jan Zandee, “Sargtexte, Spruch 75,” *ZÄS* 99 (1972): 50.

56. See the many texts in Philippe Derchain, “La couronne de la justification: Essai d’analyse d’un rite ptolémaïque,” *CdE* 30 (1955): 225–87, in which the initiate resorts to force.

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58. P. Ani 15, in E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the*

*Dead: The Papyrus of Ani, Scribe and Treasurer of the Temples of Egypt, About B.C. 1450* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1913), 2:497–98; 3: pl. 20.

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61. Hugh W. Nibley, “Sparsiones,” *Classical Journal* 40 (1945): 524–26, reprinted in *Ancient State*, CWHN 10:152–54.
62. Kenneth A. Kitchen, review of *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, by Winfried Barta, *Or* 41 (1972): 130.
63. Kitchen, review of *Aufbau und Bedeutung*, 131.
64. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 322.
65. Erik Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllvorstellungen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 13.
66. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 50–55, 58–61b, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 51–52, 54–62.
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68. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:11.
69. For example, see Gerald A. Wainwright, *The Sky Religion of Egypt: Its Antiquity and Effects* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1938).
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72. Wainwright, *Sky Religion of Egypt*, 60–61.
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75. Émile Suys, “Les messagers des dieux,” *Egyptian Religion* 2 (1934): 131.
76. Suys, “Les messagers des dieux,” 126–27.
77. Suys, “Les messagers des dieux,” 127–28.
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79. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:60–61; 2:71.
80. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 114.
81. Zandee, “Sargtexte, Spruch 75,” 58–59; and Jan Zandee, *Death as an Enemy: According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions*, trans. Mrs. W. F. Klasens (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 184–86.
82. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 69–70.
83. CT 75, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:397b–399b;

- Zandee, “Sargtexte, Spruch 75,” 49–50.
84. CT 341, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 4:343–44.
85. CT 340, 343, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 4:342, 349–50.
86. CT 335, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 4:282.
87. CT 335, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 4:283.
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93. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 126.
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98. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 19.
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102. Barta, “Zum scheinbaren Bedeutungswandel des Seth,”

- 103. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 20.
- 104. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 20.
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- 106. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 21.
- 107. BD 178; CT 312, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 4:68–86; cf. Nibley, “New Look,” *IE*, August 1969, 75–80.
- 108. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 20.
- 109. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 19–20.
- 110. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 7, 21.
- 111. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 6–7.
- 112. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 20.
- 113. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 26, emphasis added.
- 114. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien*, 25.
- 115. Thausing, *Sein und Werden*, 145; see also Mircea Eliade, “L’initiation et le monde moderne,” in *Initiation*, ed. Claas J. Bleeker (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 3–5.
- 116. Thausing, *Sein und Werden*, 77.
- 117. Thausing, *Sein und Werden*, 106–7.
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- 119. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of Opening the Mouth* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1909), 1:220.
- 120. Nibley, “New Look,” *IE*, January 1969, 26–33; February 1969, 64–67; March 1969, 76–84; March 1970, 84–94; April 1970, 79–95, with portions reprinted in *Abraham in Egypt*, CWHN 14:319–81.

121. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.15, in PG 8:768.
122. Constant de Wit, “La circoncision chez les anciens égyptiens,” ZÄS 99 (1972): 43.
123. Hans Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 109–10.
124. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 5:568–76, s.v. “circumcision.”
125. Zohar, *Beshalah* 66b, in Sperling, Simon, and Levertoff, *Zohar*, 3:208.
126. Jack M. Sasson, “Circumcision in the Ancient Near East,” JBL 85 (1966): 476, emphasis in original.
127. Gerhard Fecht, “Ägyptische Zweifel am Sinn des Opfers,” ZÄS 100 (1973): 15–16; de Wit, “Circoncision chez les anciens égyptiens,” 48 n. 63.
128. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* (Of Isis and Osiris) 18; Theodor Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris* (Prague: Orientalisches Institut, 1940), 1:99–103.
129. BD 17; de Wit, “Circoncision chez les anciens égyptiens,” 42.
130. André Caquot, “Pour une étude de l’initiation dans l’ancien Israël,” in *Initiation*, ed. Bleeker, 123.
131. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 67.
132. “Livre du Combat d’Adam,” in J.-P. Migne, *Dictionnaire des apocryphes* (Paris: Migne, 1856–58), 1:330.
133. [There is some question about how the verbs in this series, which are written as though they were older

negative future forms, are to be understood at the time the papyrus was written. They can either be taken as negative future forms (*nn sdm=f* forms), or, taking *nn* as a miswriting for *n* as is also common at this time period, as negative past forms (*n sdm=f* forms). Nibley has taken them as negative past forms—eds.]

134. For more on the gate, see above, commentary to lines 69–72, pp. 373–76.
135. See the vivid passage in Zohar, *Vayera* 103b, in Sperling and Simon, *Zohar*, 1:332.
136. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 45.
137. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 176; English trans., 182; cf. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, 198–201.
138. Suys, “Messagers des dieux,” 136–37.
139. Émile Amélineau, *L'enfer égyptien et l'enfer virgilien: Étude de mythologie comparée* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1914), 16.
140. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 53.
141. S. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations dans la préhistoire et protohistoire de l'anté-diluvien à Sumer-Babylone: La familiarité divine originelle* (Athens: BAOA, 1961), 435.
142. Wainwright, *Sky Religion of Egypt*, 78–82; cf. Daniel 4:20–22.
143. Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967), 238–39, reprinted in *Since Cumorah*,

144. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 12.
145. See Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 33–35.
146. Max Pieper, *Die grosse Inschrift des Königs Neferhotep in Abydos: Ein Beitrag zur ägyptischen Religions- und Literaturgeschichte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), 58.
147. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 12.
148. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 6:333, s.v. “hekalot rabbati; hekalot zu-ṭarti.”
149. Pieper, *Die grosse Inschrift des Königs Neferhotep in Abydos*, 27–28 §18 lines 21–23.
150. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:82–83; 2:98.
151. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:211 and fourth hour (Schematische) at the end of the volume.
152. Suys, “Messagers des dieux,” 126–27.
153. *Evangelium Mariae (Gospel of Mary)* 15–16.
154. H. Maldwyn Hughes, “The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, or 3 Baruch: Introduction,” in *APOT* 2:529.
155. Marie Gothein, “Die Todsünden,” *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 10 (1907): 416–84.
156. Bleeker, “Guilt and Purification in Ancient Egypt,” 81–82.
157. George Nagel, “Un papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire (Louvre 3292 [inv.]),” *BIFAO* 29 (1929): 97–98.
158. Étienne Drioton, “Contributions à l’étude du chapitre

CXXV du Livre des Morts: Les confessions négatives,” in *Recueil d’études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de Jean-François Champollion* (Paris: Champion, 1922), 559, 564.

159. Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 87.
160. Françoise de Cenival, “Les associations dans les temples égyptiens d’après les données fournies par les papyrus démotiques,” in *REHR*, 17.
161. Oswald H. E. Burmester, “Egyptian Mythology in the Coptic Apocrypha,” *Or* 7 (1938): 364–66.
162. Jacques Dupont, Béatitudes égyptiennes,” *Biblica* 47 (1966): 221.
163. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 39.
164. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 50.
165. Klaus Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham,” *Dialogue* 3/3 (1968): 125.
166. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 109.
167. Homer, *Iliad* 1.37–47; P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 42–43, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 47–50, bears this out.
168. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 33 n. 3.
169. Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 28–43.
170. Étienne Drioton, “Une statue prophylactique de Ramsès III,” *ASAE* 39 (1939): 70–71.

171. Nibley, “Tenting, Toll, and Taxing,” 615–19, reprinted in *Ancient State*, CWHN 10:53–57.
172. Cf. Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 30.
173. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:167; 2:161.
174. Iamblichus, *De mysteriis (On the Mysteries)* 6.7, in Theodor Hopfner, *Fontes historiae religionis Aegyptiacae* (Bonn: Marcus and Weber, 1922), 500–501.
175. 1QS II, 12–18.
176. P. Sensaos 9, in Bruno H. Stricker, “De Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” *OMRO* 23 (1942): 37, 40.
177. Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris* 27, 49.
178. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:116.
179. P. Sękowski 3/3, in Albertyna Szczudłowska, “Pyramid Texts Preserved on Sękowski Papyrus,” *ZÄS* 99 (1972): 26–27.
180. *Wb* 1:578.
181. Siegfried Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften,” *ZÄS* 99 (1972): 24.
182. Alan H. Gardiner, “The Coronation of King Haremhab,” *JEA* 39 (1953): 14.
183. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, 300.
184. Philippe-Jacques de Horrack, “Le Livre des Respirations d’après les manuscrits du Musée du Louvre,” in *Oeuvres diverses*, ed. Philippe Virey and Gaston Maspero, BE 17 (Paris: Leroux, 1907), 132, citing Chabas on this line: “je n’ai pas été un producteur

de réclamations, d'appels; je n'ai pas été exigeant."

185. PT 539 §1305c; Schott, "Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften," 24.
186. Amélineau, *L'enfer égyptien et l'enfer virgilien*, 10.
187. Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 302–3.
188. BD 125, in Lepsius, *Todtenbuch der Ägypter*, pl. 157.
189. Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, 34.
190. *Wb* 1:227.
191. Baer, "Breathing Permit of Hôr," 125.
192. E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (New York: Dover, 1973), 1:62.
193. *Wb* 5:58, 62; de Horrack, "Livre des Respirations," 132.
194. *Wb* 5:58; Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 4.
195. *Wb* 2:290.
196. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:55.
197. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:57; cf. P. Bremner-Rhind 32/31, in Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (British Museum No. 10188)* (Brussels: FERE, 1933), 90.
198. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:123.
199. *Wb* 2:290.
200. Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 240.
201. *Wb* 3:247; note ideogram.
202. Short Amduat, seventh hour, line 177–94, in Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 3:16–17.

203. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 105; cf. English trans., 115.
204. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 61–76.
205. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:117.
206. Nibley, “New Look,” *Improvement Era*, July 1969, 97–105.
207. Cited in de Horrack, “Livre des Respirations,” 132–33.
208. Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 54.
209. Gerald A. Wainwright, “Letopolis,” *JEA* 18 (1932): 167.
210. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, 424; Wainwright, “Letopolis,” 159–62.
211. Wainwright, *Sky Religion of Egypt*, 22.
212. Heinrich K. Brugsch, *Dictionnaire hiéroglyphique et démotique* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1867–82), 4:1160; de Horrack, “Livre des Respirations,” 133, renders it “corrupt, to practice corruption.”
213. *Wb* 3:418–19.
214. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen*, 21–29.
215. CT 711, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 6:342.
216. CT 75, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:378–80; Zandee, “Sargtexte, Spruch 75,” 48, 52.
217. Lesko, *Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 131.
218. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:109–10.
219. Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 1:6–7, 10.
220. P. Salt 825 5/1, in Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 2:5\*.
221. P. Salt 825 7/3–4, in Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 2:9\*.
222. P. Salt 825 8/6–7, in Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*,

2:11\*.

223. P. Salt 825 9/2, in Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 2:11\*–12\*.
224. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 175–77; English trans., 180–82.
225. E. A. E. Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), 13, 25, 107, 209, etc.
226. BD 115, in Hermann Kees, “Die Feuerinsel in den Sargtexten und im Totenbuch,” *ZÄS* 78 (1942): 44; cf. Jürgen Trumpf, “Stadtgründung und Drachenkampf,” *Hermes* 86 (1958): 149–54.
227. BD 17, in Kees, “Feuerinsel in den Sargtexten und im Totenbuch,” 44.
228. Alfred Rupp, “Geschichte und Seinszusammenhang,” *BiOr* 26 (1969): 24–25.
229. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:116.
230. P. Louvre N. 3279 lines 42–43, in Goyon, *Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, 47–50.
231. P. Senaos 8–9, in Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Senaos,” 37.
232. Raymond O. Faulkner, “The ‘Cannibal Hymn’ from the Pyramid Texts,” *JEA* 10 (1924): 98.
233. CT 567, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 6:166–67.
234. Günther Roeder, *Urkunden zur Religion des alten Ägypten* (Jena: Diederichs, 1915), 129.
235. Hermann Junker, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera*,

*Edfu und Philae* (Vienna: Hölder, 1910), 108.

236. Kees, “Feuerinsel in den Sargtexten und im Totenbuch,” 45–46.
237. Émile Chassinat, “Le livre de protéger la barque divine,” *RT* 16 (1894): 115–17; Roeder, *Urkunden zur Religion des alten Ägypten*, 128.
238. Kees, “Feuerinsel in den Sargtexten und im Totenbuch,” 47.
239. Cf. Aylward M. Blackman, “Some Notes on the Ancient Egyptian Practice of Washing the Dead,” *JEA* 5 (1918): 118.
240. Kees, “Feuerinsel in den Sargtexten und im Totenbuch,” 45.
241. P. Salt 825 6/5, in Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, 2:7\*.
242. Reymond, *Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 233–35.
243. Junker, *Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien*, 120.
244. P. Sękowski 22/8, 23/1, in Szczudłowska, “Pyramid Texts Preserved on Sękowski Papyrus,” 62.
245. Gertrud Thausing, “Der ägyptische Schicksalsbegriff,” *MDAIK* 8 (1939): 63; Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 225–26; English trans., 229.
246. See Nibley, “Tenting, Toll, and Taxing,” 619–21, reprinted in *Ancient State*, CWHN 10:57–60.
247. CT 96, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:84–85.
248. Wilhelm Spiegelberg, “Ein Bruchstück des Bestattungsrituals der Apisstiere,” *ZÄS* 56 (1920): 18–22.

249. Peter Munro, “Bemerkungen zu einem Sedfest-Relief in der Stadtmauer von Kairo,” *ZÄS* 86 (1961): 71.
250. CT 75, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:400–402; Zandee, “Sargtexte, Spruch 75,” 50.
251. Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris* 36.
252. P. Louvre N. 3129 C/12–17, in Siegfried Schott, *Urkunden mythologischen Inhalts* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), 13–15.
253. P. Setna I 3/28–37, in Francis Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis: The Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1900), 24–25, 100–103.
254. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:15.
255. Amduat, second hour, concluding text (following variant), in Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:42–43.
256. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:45–46; 1:25–26.
257. Schott, “Thoth als Verfasser heiliger Schriften,” 23.
258. For example, see P. Setna I 3/26–33, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, 23–24, 98–103.
259. Paul Barguet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens* (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 66, discussing BD 18.
260. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:139–40.
261. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:141; 2:145.
262. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:174.
263. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:172–76; 2:168.
264. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:176–77.
265. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:184.
266. Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris* 19.

267. For overcoming opposition on the water, see above, commentary to lines 21–22, pp. 222–27.
268. CT 149, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:239–42; cf. Sinuhe B 144–47 (P. Berlin 3022), in Adolf Erman, *Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–9), 2: Taf. 9–9a.
269. CT 75, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:396–404; Zandee, “Sargtexte, Spruch 75,” 50.
270. CT 158, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:349–50.
271. P. Setna II 4/2–5/9, 5/29–37, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, 54–58, 60–61, 174–85, 190–93.
272. P. Setna I 4/27–33, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, 30–32, 116–19; the “Green Knight” motif.
273. Joachim Spiegel, “Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide,” *ASAE* 53 (1956): 413–17.
274. Spiegel, “Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide,” 416; PT 254–56 §§276–303.
275. Spiegel, “Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide,” 417.
276. See Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. J. J. Graham, rev. ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), 3:97.
277. Kees, “Feuerinsel in den Sargtexten und im Totenbuch,” 49.
278. Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris* 19; also Alan H. Gardiner, *The Library of A. Chester Beatty: ... The Chester Beatty Papyri, No. 1* (London: Oxford University Press,

1931), 13–26 and pls. 1–16.

279. CT 96, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:84–87.
280. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 114.
281. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:155.
282. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:58.
283. CT 75, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:401; CT 149, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:228–45, cited in Zandee, “Sargtexte, Spruch 75,” 61.
284. Carter and Gardiner, “Tomb of Ramesses IV,” 147.
285. P. Sensaos 15–16, in Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 38.
286. P. Sensaos 19–20, in Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 39.
287. See Kákosy, “Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion,” 96–97.
288. *The Eloquent Peasant*, Bauer (B1) (P. Berlin 3023), in Erman, *Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches*, 1: Taf. 6–22.
289. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 112.
290. Kákosy, “Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion,” 97.
291. Kákosy, “Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion,” 96.
292. Budge, *Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, A.nhai, Kerāsher and Netchemet*, 34.
293. P. Setna II 2/4–6, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, 46, 153.
294. CT 44, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:181.

- 295. CT 21, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:59.
- 296. CT 22, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:65.
- 297. CT 20, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:56.
- 298. CT 33, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:113.
- 299. Junker, “Osirisreligion und der Erlösungsgedanke bei den Ägyptern,” 289.
- 300. Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 29.
- 301. Drioton, “Confessions négatives,” 562.
- 302. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 112.
- 303. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 47; Suys, “Messagers des dieux,” 126–27.
- 304. CT 40, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:173.
- 305. Drioton, “Confessions négatives,” 545–64.
- 306. Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 56.
- 307. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 21.
- 308. Amélineau, *L'enfer égyptien et l'enfer virgilien*, 10.
- 309. Amduat, ninth hour, introduction, in Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 1:154.
- 310. Spiegel, “Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide,” 377–78; cf. PT 257–58, 260, 278 §§304–11, 316–23, 419.
- 311. PT 260 §317a.
- 312. Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 44 n. 1.
- 313. Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 45, citing 2 Timothy 4:8, and P. Chester Beatty I 16/7, in Gardiner, *Library of A. Chester Beatty*, pl. 16–16a.
- 314. Derchain, “Couronne de la justification,” 231–32.
- 315. Derchain, “Couronne de la justification,” 234.

316. Stricker, “Lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” 31.
317. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, 121.
318. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, 44; BD 18–20.
319. Jean Capart, review of “De lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” by Bruno H. Stricker, *CdE* 17 (1943): 266.
320. Derchain, “Couronne de la justification,” 226–30.
321. Derchain, “Couronne de la justification,” 243.
322. Derchain, “Couronne de la justification,” 252–53.
323. P. Setna II 2/7, in Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, 153; cf. 47.
324. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:139.
325. BD 125, in Thausing and Kerszt-Kratschmann, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, Taf. 3.
326. Budge, *Book of the Dead: Papyrus of Ani*, 3: pl. 3.
327. See Grieshammer, “Der Zeitpunkt des Gerichtes,” in *Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, 107–15.
328. Dieter Müller, “I Am Isis,” review of *Ich bin Isis*, by Jan Bergman, *OLZ* 67 (1972): 122.
329. See above, commentary to lines 38–41, pp. 250–52.
330. *Testament of Issachar* 7:5, in *APOT*, 2:328; *OTP*, 1:804.
331. De Horrack, “Livre des Respirations,” 134.
332. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 21.
333. Klaus Koch, “Wort und Einheit des Schöpfergottes in Memphis und Jerusalem: Zur Einzigartigkeit Israels,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 62 (1965): 269.
334. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 276.
335. PT 302 §462a–b; see Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht in*

*den Sargtexten*, 59.

336. [The scribe has written *nw* “of” for the expected *m* “in.” As Demotic and Coptic transcriptions show, there often seems to be no distinction made in the pronunciation of these two terms—eds.]
337. Budge, *Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, A.nhai, Kerāsher and Netchemet*, 34.
338. Walter Wreszinski, “Das Buch vom Durchwandeln der Ewigkeit nach einer Stele im Vatikan,” *ZÄS* 45 (1908–9): 114.
339. Gaballa A. Gaballa and Kenneth A. Kitchen, “The Festival of Sokar,” *Or* 38 (1969): 43.
340. See below, appendix 3, pp. 487–501.
341. Hermann Grapow, *Das 17. Kapitel des ägyptischen Totenbuches und seine religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung* (Berlin: Paul, 1912), 9.
342. PT 306 §476–79, in Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 94.
343. CT 136, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:160–64; cf. CT 134–35, 137, 142, 146, etc., in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 2:158–60, 165–72, 174–75, 180–205, etc.
344. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2:33.
345. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, 19.
346. Hans O. Lange and Otto Neugebauer, *Papyrus Carlsberg No. I: Ein hieratisch-demotischer kosmologischer Text* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1940), 49.

347. Hermann Junker, *Die Götterlehre von Memphis (Schabaka-Inschrift)* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1940), 19.
348. For more on Ptah, see above, commentary to lines 20–21, pp. 219–20.
349. Short Amduat, twelfth hour, lines 270–74, in Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 3:35.
350. CT 75, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:332.
351. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, 164.
352. Siegfried Morenz, review of *Die Stellung des Königs im Alten Reich*, by Hans Goedicke, *OLZ* 56 (1961): 247.
353. Morenz, review of *Die Stellung des Königs*, 246–47.
354. Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, “Poissons, tabous et transformations du mort: Nouvelles conditions sur les pélerinages aux villes saintes,” *Kêmi* 13 (1954): 33–42; TB *Baba Qamma* 16b (I, iv), in Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Der babylonische Talmud* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1933–35), 6:54.
355. Piankoff, “Deux papyrus ‘mythologiques’ de Her-Ouben au Musée du Caire,” 143.
356. P. Bremner-Rhind 26/21–24, 27/1–3, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 59–61.
357. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 143 §189.
358. Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 12.
359. Raymond O. Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—I,” *JEA* 22 (1936): 132.
360. Baer, “Breathing Permit of Hôr, 126.

# Culmination and Conclusion

## Instructions for Wrapping

The Joseph Smith Papyri and Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 both contain a short section of final instructions that is only rarely found in Books of Breathings—Philippe-Jacques de Horrack found it in “mutilated and altered” condition in only three of the many Breathings texts in the Louvre. It appears as an appendix to the Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 but has the place of honor in the Joseph Smith text, where it figures as a preface, written in larger, bolder, and clearer characters than the other columns. The texts of de Horrack and Joseph Smith are almost identical and both almost perfectly

preserved, but they are so puzzling in content that we have thought it best to supply the reader with the expert translations of Professors Richard Parker, Klaus Baer, and de Horrack along with our own speculations.

## Papyrus Louvre N. 3284 lines 98–108

98 (6/1). Osiris is to be as one towed **into** (*lit. to within*) **the**

99. **great lake (pool) of Khonsu** [JSP  
*inserts the initiate's name*] **after**

100. he hath taken possession of his heart  
[JSP: **[has clasped] his two arms upon**  
**his breast, being as wrapped**]

de Horrack <sup>1</sup>	Parker <sup>2</sup>	Baer <sup>3</sup>
After he has repossessed	After his two arms are [fast]ened to	after his arms have been <i>placed</i> on his heart

his heart, one buries in the coffin	his breast, one wraps	and ... has been wrapped
101. <b>the Book of Respirations, which</b>	101. the Book of Breathings, which is	101. the Breathing Permit (which
102 (6/5). is written on two sides <b>[JSP: written according to what is in the books inside and out]</b>	102. with writing both inside and outside of it,	102. [Isis] made and has writing on its inside and outside)
103. <b>on suten-cloth. Placed under his left arm</b>	103. with royal linen, it being placed at his left arm	103. in royal linen and placed under his left arm

<p><b>104. near to his heart.</b></p>	<p>104. near his heart, this having been done</p>	<p>104. near his heart;</p>
<p>105. [De <i>Horrack</i> <i>writes in his</i> <i>commentary:</i> “I have not been able to decipher line 8 of the hieratic text”; <b>JSP: Having been done for his wrapping on the outside.]</b></p>	<p>105. at his wrapping and outside it.</p>	<p>105. the rest of his mummy bandages should be wrapped over it.</p>

**106. As for the one for whom this writing**

**is made (or If he makes this book for him), he shall go on breath-**

107 (6/10). **ing** along with (vs. JSP: like)  
**the bas of the gods for**

108. **time and for eternity.**

## **Commentary**

**Lines 98–100:** “Osiris is to be as one towed (infinitive?) into (*lit.* to within) the (this) great lake (pool) of Khonsu after he hath taken possession of (*lit.* seized upon) his heart”

Getting possession of the heart is the satisfactory goal and conclusion of all the preceding rites.<sup>4</sup> Hence the final procession to the necropolis begins only after that has been accomplished.

## **The Lake of Khonsu, Osiris as Sokar**

The pool of Khonsu is definitely the end of

the road, and these are the last of the last rites. The scene is overpoweringly dark and impressive, but there is plenty of ritual information behind it. An important clue here is the word *towed* (*stʒw*). The Book of Two Ways also ends with the towing of the solar bark,<sup>5</sup> first on the land way and then on the oft-mentioned “lake,”<sup>6</sup> while chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead finds the subject in the following of Osiris being towed along with the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt.<sup>7</sup> The “towing of Osiris” as the final act of the funeral is “the overcoming of the world, and death” (fig. 132; see p. 419, fig. 134).<sup>8</sup>

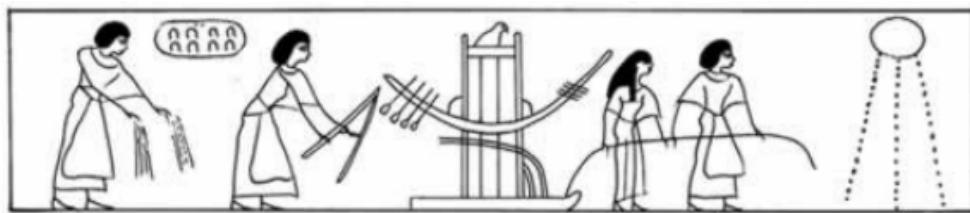


Figure 132. The subject and his wife draw the Sokar-bark on its sled toward the life-giving sun; he also sows and cultivates, showing the old seasonal vegetation character of the rites, which deal with the

renewal of life. P. Busca (BD 18), location unknown.  
After Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch*, 1: pl.  
XXXI.

In his capacity of being towed (*stʒw*), this Osiris is *Sokar*; as early as the Pyramid Texts the Osiris mysteries include a “Sokaris-litany” of Horus on the Sokar-bark.<sup>9</sup> Chapter 100 of the Book of the Dead, entitled “Entering the Great Ship of Re,” begins, “I open the caverns of the Nile, I free the Way of Aton; I tow Sokar on his sled.”<sup>10</sup> The god who is towed to the pool of Khonsu is Osiris as the “sleeping Sokar” being taken to his resting place.<sup>11</sup> Just as the king, acting as Khonsu,<sup>12</sup> represents the great turning point, “the beginning and the end,”<sup>13</sup> so the king *must* become Sokar to inaugurate both the year and the regeneration of the cycle of vegetation.<sup>14</sup> The towing of the bark took place at all year-rites as well as at the *sed-*

festival, all of which, as rites of passage, ideally fall at the solstice, the turn of the year.<sup>15</sup> In these rites the ship of Re is equated to the sled of Sokar; and indeed, the Sun when he is towed on a ceremonial sled is specifically Sokar in the temple reliefs of Karnak,<sup>16</sup> where it is the king himself who pulls the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris sled in the rite designated as “the towing of Sokar.”<sup>17</sup> In the Middle Kingdom Ptah-Sokar-Osiris was known “both as a single god and as a plurality,” but after the New Kingdom Sokar became simply “a name or aspect of Osiris.”<sup>18</sup>

At Thebes the *djed*-column of Osiris was raised “for Sokar,”<sup>19</sup> and the god takes on various forms as he passes through different regions, the process being completed when he enters the holy ship by the secret ways of the West.<sup>20</sup> As early as the First Dynasty there was “a periodic ‘feast of the Maaty

Barque' involving Sokar and the king,"<sup>21</sup> which feast was, in the Old Kingdom, immediately preceded by the *wag*-festival<sup>22</sup> as part of the New Year's rites; the day following this Sokar-festival came the *Nhb-kȝ.w* on the first day of the year, marking "the accession of Horus as legitimate and triumphant successor of his father," with reference to the *sed*-festival as well.<sup>23</sup> In Ptolemaic times, at least, the towing of the Sokar-bark took place at the time of the winter solstice, the true turn of the year, the moment at which the sun is lowest and all is darkest.<sup>24</sup> *Wag*- and Sokar-festivals coincide because they represent the completion of a life cycle, "at the end of thy (the king's) years."<sup>25</sup> Sokar himself is "Lord of time who gives years," "the eldest son of the Primeval One," he "who holds the earth in its place."<sup>26</sup> At Medinet Habu "Sokar's triumphal peregrination with the dawn is

tacitly equated with Rē’s emergence in the East upon crossing the Lake (and Isle) of Flames.”<sup>27</sup> The Sokar-ship is the Sokar, who is Shesmu, a “passive,” “gloomy,” underworld type, a chthonian “god of death [rather] than of the dead”—representing the dormant life of things sleeping in the earth;<sup>28</sup> this is the moment when everything seems deadest, and hope and vitality are at their lowest ebb. *Towing* is emphasized because the ship can no longer proceed on its way otherwise—it has run out of water and so must be dragged as a sled rather than a ship over the hot sand in a snake-filled desert.<sup>29</sup> “Towed is this great god on the prepared ways of the *duat*, in the upper half of the secret cave of Sokar on the sand.”<sup>30</sup> The case is desperate; the ship cannot even be towed without the magic assistance of Isis,<sup>31</sup> and only those who know the proper pictures can avoid becoming stranded on the

sandbox of Nehaher (*nh3-hr*).<sup>32</sup> Nothing can be more depressing than the nocturnal navigation for the burial of “the embalmed Sokar-Osiris”<sup>33</sup> at the winter solstice.<sup>34</sup> This is the vessel stranded and motionless,<sup>35</sup> trapped in the sands of the most secret, invisible, dark, and holy Sokar-land.<sup>36</sup> But the darkest hour brings hope; the towing of the god through the bowels of death is actually the means of affecting rejuvenation —it is a case of “death [as] the begetter of gods and men.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the passage of Sokar in the depths is a true *descensus*, bringing life to others: as he is “towed on the sand of a dried-up wadi,” the god sees the shores lined with spirits of the dead, languishing in captivity.<sup>38</sup> He has come to teach them and deliver them.<sup>39</sup> At the first hour along the route of the Amduat, “the teachings of the sun-god to the inhabitants of

the underworld” were preserved on a monumental stela representing the sun-god as Re, Atum, Khepri, and Osiris.<sup>40</sup> At his various subsequent stopping places, “they in Wernes come when he makes a stop. ... He preaches, teaching them in a loud voice from his boat, ... and they gather around his bark. ... Then they lament ... as he proceeds on his way.”<sup>41</sup> “It is a lamentation that surrounds him after he has imparted his teachings.”<sup>42</sup> The ship represents the ever-forward motion of creation and of the world itself;<sup>43</sup> it brings both light and enlightenment into the darkness.<sup>44</sup> “Lift up your face(s), inhabitants of [the] D[u]at! Osiris Nes-Min ... has come to you. You can see him. ... You recognise Osiris Nes-Min ... as the lord of all of you. ... [He] gives commands to [the] people. He judges the living [on the shore of the] D[u]at.”<sup>45</sup> The Sun’s *descensus* is the parousia of the Lord to those who sit in

darkness.

To the turning point of the year, Carl Hentze, in his provocative *Mythes et symboles lunaires*, gave the name of “point mort,” the instant when everything stops dead still.<sup>46</sup> For at the winter solstice a miraculous thing takes place; the shadow of the sunstone, which up until that moment had been for half a year lengthening itself daily toward the north, is *suddenly* (by the use of simple instruments) found to be moving in the opposite direction! There must have been a moment at which it stopped and reversed its course.

So while Sokar represents the moment at which all things come to an absolute halt, the theme of his cult is renewal. At Karnak under Thutmosis III “the whole complex would seem to be dedicated to the renewal of the divine king in terms of the festival of Sokar (4th of Akhet), the feast of Neheb-kau

(1st Peret, day 1 [i.e., the New Year]) and the *Sed*-feast or jubilee. ... The emphasis is on the king and his renewal.”<sup>47</sup> In such a situation the breathing motif is in order: the breath of life is the wind that moves the boat and the oxygen that enables the crew to resume rowing: “O ye who sail upon the waters of Nun, ... may there be wind in your souls, that they may not be cramped (suffocated), that your arms may row.”<sup>48</sup> The unpleasant experience on the sand only heightens the joy and sense of elation that comes when the ship is freed and again moves forward over the waters; what rejoicing when they are off the sandbar! “Apèp has been overthrown, and the majesty of this God has been vindicated! The hour of Khonsu has come!” Upon reaching the Field of Reeds, all the gods tumble happily out of the boat to celebrate; “the heaven is in beauty, all the earth is happy (*htp*).”<sup>49</sup> As the

ship moves on, we remember that after all it is the solar-bark, a sky-ship, “moving in light” (fig. 133).<sup>50</sup> “Through [the night journey] the Sun is towed or hauled by the stars, ‘the Indefatigables.’”<sup>51</sup> The dead person being towed as Sokar on his sled is also Re being towed in the phoenix-vessel of light and resurrection,<sup>52</sup> and the waters of passage are the waters of Nun, the heavenly ocean, the *Qbhw*, the life-giving waters of the sky.

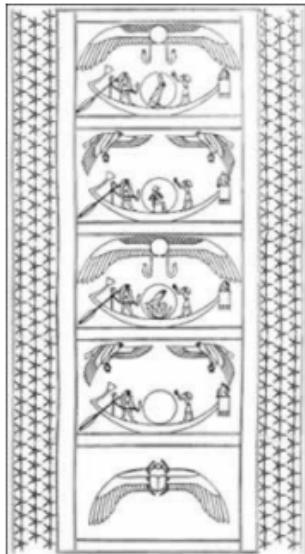


Figure 133. The last two stations of the solar-ship

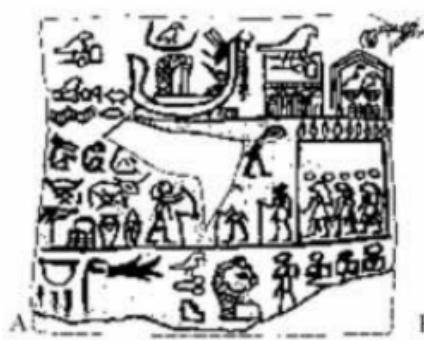
before it leaves the Underworld show it bearing the Sokar-hawk emerging from his wrappings above an opening lotus (the sign of the resurrection), followed by the sun at its rising in the east, lifted by the winged Khepri-beetle. Ceiling of temple of Isis, Philae, ca.

A.D. 210.

The magnificent reliefs from Medinet Habu depict the stunning dramatization of the Sokar-journey in the temple rites. In a triumphant procession through the temple,<sup>53</sup> with the choir chanting as the parade moved from room to room and with the temple head himself acting as recitant and director of ceremonies,<sup>54</sup> Sokar passes through symbolic gates of heaven to be greeted with the *hnw*-rite hailing the presence of a divinity on earth (see p. 361, fig. 115).<sup>55</sup> The cult object was the prehistoric figure of a hawk emerging from mummy wrappings and riding in a shrine on a golden ship mounted on a sled equipped with carrying rods so that

the whole could be carried or pulled over land or water (fig. 134).<sup>56</sup> The sled attachment and the carrying rods were no mere afterthought: they are never missing from the vessel. To have both sled runners and a ship's hull is quite in agreement with the situation of the seventh hour in which the ship lacks water and has to be towed over the sand or even carried. It would seem that amphibious travel—*Schiffahrt auf dem Lande*—was an authentic heritage of the early migrations which brought the dynastic race into Egypt;<sup>57</sup> the old amphibious craft have survived to modern times in northern Sudan,<sup>58</sup> and actual ceremonial ship-cars, “floats” of the ancient Egyptians, have been discovered.<sup>59</sup> At Thebes, “any ‘navigation’ westward ... would be a land procession, and a ‘navigation’ only metaphorically; it is even possible to suggest that it may have been enacted in the temple precinct.”<sup>60</sup> But it

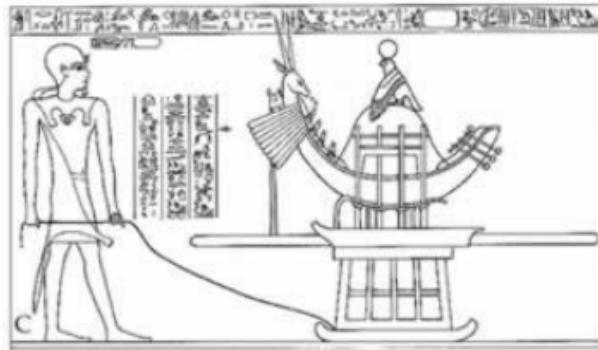
was nonetheless a ship procession.<sup>61</sup> The Egyptian temple was provided with processional passage both by land and water.<sup>62</sup> As every pyramid complex had its landing wharf, so every temple has its “ship room (*Barkenraum*)” and a passage provided around the ship shrine.<sup>63</sup> Ramses II provided ships, wagons, and “many horses” for the procession of “his father Khonsu.”<sup>64</sup>



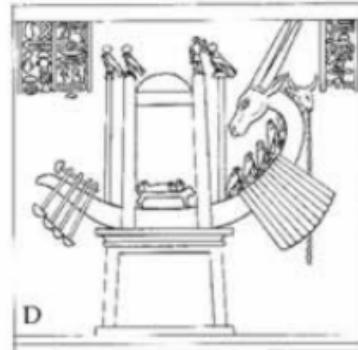
A



B



C



D

Figure 134. The basic form of the Sokar-ship has remained recognizable for more than three thousand years. (A) The oldest example is an ivory jar label that shows the ox head and reverse oryx head.

Restored drawing from ivory plaque, ca. 3100 B.C.

Courtesy of Cairo Museum. (B) Ramses II runs toward Thoth and his father, Seti, towing an elegant

Sokar-ship, while two forms of the Sokar-hawk emerge from his wrappings. Restored drawing from temple of Seti I, Abydos, ca. 1260 B.C. (C) Pharaoh himself tows the Sokar-ship, which has both carrying-rods and runners to travel over land and water. The passenger is Sokar, emerging from his wrappings atop a burial mound. The reverse oryx head at the prow identifies the ship, according to Derchain, with the skin or garment of rebirth which enveloped the dead king. The inscription designates the scene as a rite of rejuvenation in which Sokar, brought forth in glory and circumambulating the shrine of Elephantine (as once at Heliopolis), assures the repeated appearance of the sun on the horizon and the ever-renewed youth of Re.

Restored drawing from photograph of temple of Horus, Edfu, ca. 200 B.C. (D) Hawk-headed Osiris-Sokar, wrapped as a mummy, rests on a lion couch with the Sokar-ship awaiting resurrection. Restored from photograph and drawing of Osiris chapel on roof of temple of Isis, Philae, ca. A.D. 200.

At Memphis and Medinet Habu, “some kind of sacred lake may have existed (or a canal [to] be sailed on), for corresponding ‘navigation’ rites”—that is, corresponding to the nocturnal navigation associated with the burial of the embalmed Sokar-Osiris.<sup>65</sup> It would seem that every Egyptian temple had such a lake, filled naturally by seepage from the Nile, the true water of life and death, and that such lakes were used to float the model ships of the temple.<sup>66</sup>

## **Khonsu**

***Line 99:*** “great lake (pool) of Khonsu”

*Khonsu* (as the name is written here) is usually represented as a youthful moon-god, his name being interpreted as “he who passes through” (see p. 117, fig. 28).<sup>67</sup> The name is quite suitable to the present situation; at the moment that the ship becomes freed and moves away from the

terrible sandbar that threatens to bring all life to a permanent close, the joyful cry is raised: “Khonsu’s hour has come!” while all the gods begin a wild celebration.<sup>68</sup> It was Khonsu who turned death to life—the patron of Egyptian medical doctors, whose Asculapian baton restored the dead to life at a touch.<sup>69</sup> Siegfried Morenz compares his mysterious name with that of Amon, “the hidden one, the invisible god,” and asks whether these two names may not be what he calls “taboo-names,” designed not to reveal but, rather, to conceal the real name and identity in fear of the supernatural (*aus numinoser Scheu*), designating the god by an epithet only, indicating only some of his limited and special aspects or activities.<sup>70</sup> A Theban text says of Khonsu that his name is not known and that his nature and form are not known but that he goes by the name of Amon—which is appropriate enough since

Amon also means unknown.<sup>71</sup> To dismiss Khonsu, therefore, as the youthful moon-god is a neat and easy reply to the layman's curiosity, but it leaves one with the completely false impression that the Egyptians themselves had nothing else in mind. Erik Hornung warns against the old established practice of glibly labeling an Egyptian deity as "moon-god" or "earth-god," as if that explained everything, ignoring the fact that universal or cosmic gods often take special forms for special occasions, when their epithets fall far short of conveying their total nature.<sup>72</sup> Equally precarious is the attempt to explain the nature and origin of any Egyptian god as the primitive patron of this or that local shrine since one and the same god may be found operating in the earliest times at both local and universal levels.<sup>73</sup>

Like Sokar, Khonsu is, above all, a symbol

of divine authority on earth; in a study of his name, Georges Posener designates Khonsu as the model king,’ ‘the king who makes kings,’ ... ‘the child of the king,’ ” etc.—the quintessence of royalty.<sup>74</sup> In ritual it is he who hands over to the king at the New Year the authority of rites and ordinances dealing with creation and initiation, along with the scepters of life, endurance, and divine power (*wjs*),<sup>75</sup> emphasizing his powers exercised at the creation, where Khonsu is “the Maker of Plans (*pʒ ir(i) shrw*).”<sup>76</sup> Aylward Blackman noted that the commonest spelling of the name, *Hnsw*, identifies him with the king’s placenta or earthly double,<sup>77</sup> regarded in primitive times as the “twin” or “brother of the king.”<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, Blackman found the usual interpretation of *hns* as “Traveller” “not very convincing.”<sup>79</sup> In yet another study, however, Posener emphasizes the element of heavenly motion

in the Khonsu image: as the god “travels throughout the earth (*hns sȝt.w*),” so the dead, following his lead, “removes himself (*hns*) like Khonsu and scintillates (*hȝbȝs*) like the stars (*hȝbȝs*).”<sup>80</sup> Posener, however, does not reject the other interpretation of the name which derives it from *h-n-nsw.t*, “child (*h*) of the king (*nsw.t*)”—that is, the son of Pharaoh.<sup>81</sup>

It is entirely fitting and proper that the Breathings text should conduct one to the pool of Khonsu. Papyrus Rhind describes “the celebration of the great lake of Khonsu” as the final step before one goes to his rest in the necropolis.<sup>82</sup> As the last lap of the journey, the pool of Khonsu offers, so to speak, his last chance to be saved—and that chance is not wasted, for Khonsu brings life-restoring breath; he is nothing less than “the windpipe of Amun,”<sup>83</sup> and his lake is the gateway to heaven. As a person, Khonsu is

usually portrayed as a youth in mummy wrapping and youth curl, standing immediately behind Amon on the throne, bearing the three royal scepters and wearing the moon-crown as the third member of the royal family;<sup>84</sup> at the same time, Amon is handing the identical royal scepters to the earthly pharaoh, the kneeling Ramses II. In Medinet Habu the king is “conducted by Mut and Khonsu into the temple” where he “dance[s] with the ship’s gear before Amon-Re,” showing that Khonsu in the palace does not lose his interest in navigation.<sup>85</sup> The ship’s gear and royal dancing go back to the earliest coronation rites.<sup>86</sup> Khonsu is a grim and solemn figure: “The demon Khensu catches gods and men for the deceased king, that he may eat them. . . . Khensu is a demon, who devours people alive”<sup>87</sup>—and, indeed, the person towed to the lake of Khonsu is on his last journey. But he is not dead forever!

Paul Barguet designates Khonsu as “the moon-god, who dies and is reborn periodically; he is a nocturnal sun, an inanimate form, not manifest, a potential force”<sup>88</sup>—in which sense he is exactly like Sokar, “the dormant power of nature.” His crown, combining new moon and full moon, shows that he is the lunar “point mort,” as Sokar is the solar solstice; Khonsu, says Gertrud Thausing, is “Beginning and Ending!”<sup>89</sup> Significantly, there are no myths or tales recorded of Khonsu, who is found at home only in Thebes and there always and only as the third member of the family triad he makes with Amon and Nut.<sup>90</sup> He is the indispensable heir who makes succession possible.<sup>91</sup> Yet he dominates the only surviving Egyptian temple pylon, which happens to be devoted entirely to solar symbolism.<sup>92</sup> Finally, the pool of Khonsu, if it is to be a water of rebirth, is also a water

of purification, and in the temple of Ramses II it is Khonsu who purifies his father with natron.<sup>93</sup> Taking Khonsu's many functions and offices altogether, he may perhaps be best characterized as the great go-between, the intermediary, the officiant in the mysteries, sharing that essential character with Thoth as the moon-god.

**Lines 99–100:** “after he hath taken possession of his heart”

On the importance of the deceased's possessing his heart, which is identified with the *ka* itself “in the role of the protective genie of the deceased,” see Alexandre Piankoff;<sup>94</sup> for the psychology and physiology of the heart, see Adriaan de Buck;<sup>95</sup> and see Samuel Birch and Wilhelm Spiegelberg on the special heart formulas.<sup>96</sup> *Hf<sup>c</sup> hr* is the expression here rendered “take possession of”; *hf<sup>c</sup>* means “to grasp,” “to

seize by force” (as to take booty), or to take over complete control, usually with *m.* With *hr* as used here it means to take with both hands, lay hold of,<sup>97</sup> suggesting the peculiar and rather grim declaration that one’s heart is not going to get away from him this time!<sup>98</sup> Compare the well-known “spell for not permitting a man’s heart to be taken from him”:<sup>99</sup> “Ani’s heart is his; he has gained mastery over it. ... He is lord thereof, it is in his body, and it shall never fall away therefrom.”<sup>100</sup>

The Papyrus Louvre N. 3279 Book of Breathings sums up all objectives in the integrity of the heart: “O my heart, I am thy Lord; do not go far from me ever—by (written) command of Tatenen the great! Hearken to me, my heart, my own, being in my body; do not lean against me (in the scales).”<sup>101</sup> Heart, mind, breathing, and life are fused in a single word and symbol, the

well-known *nfr*, which represents “heart and windpipe” together and signifies good’ and related words,”<sup>102</sup> such as youthful, fresh, beautiful, perfect, renewed. Bruno Stricker has called attention to the relation of the heart and the pneuma in a single symbol †.<sup>103</sup> The Egyptians judged the condition of the heart of a sacrificial victim by smelling it.<sup>104</sup>

Parker and Baer respectively render this line “after his two arms are [fast]ened to his breast”<sup>105</sup> and “after his arms have been placed on his heart,”<sup>106</sup> both referring to the Joseph Smith version only. Here we follow the de Horrack text: *m-h̄t h̄f=f hr h̄t=f*, “after he has repossessed his heart (*lit.* after he has laid hold upon his heart).”

## **Symbolic Wrappings and Veils**

The short and cryptic section of instructions included in the Joseph Smith and de Horrack Breathings texts places great

emphasis on writing and wrapping, which seem to have a definite ritual significance. It would seem that from the earliest times, the act of wrapping a mummy imparted power and divinity to the body, the standard Egyptian symbol for divinity being “a staff with cloth strips wrapped around it,” denoting the word *ntr*, for which an archaic synonym was *wt*, meaning to wrap a mummy;<sup>107</sup> according to Hornung, the dead becomes *ntrw*, sanctified, in the sense of a “wrapped-up cloth fetish.”<sup>108</sup> In the Late Period as well, one was thought to impart divine power (*ntry*) to the mummy by “binding” or wrapping it.<sup>109</sup> The Book of Breathings must be written on cloth so that it can be wrapped, the writing and wrapping having the same protective purpose. “All cloth and all material on its [the mummy’s] head must be made from these strips (wrappings). Their condition and the

representations (drawn) on them must be examined by the One Who Is Over the Mysteries (Anubis) because it is beneficial to have the written characters properly authenticated.”<sup>110</sup> Such protective charms, written on strips of cloth and guaranteed to be effective “as proven useful millions of times,” were used by the living as well as the dead in Egypt.<sup>111</sup>

In the Setne story the last thing the hero Neneferkaptah does before falling into the waters of death, amidst universal lamentation, is described thus: “He caused to be brought unto him a strip of royal linen and made it as a bandage. He bound the book; he put it on his body and made it firm. And coming forth from under the awning of the pleasure-boat of Pharaoh, he fell into the river, he accomplished the will of Ra. All they who were on board uttered a cry, all saying, ‘Great woe! Grievous woe!’” etc.<sup>112</sup>

When the funeral ship reached Memphis, "They took him up, they saw the book on his body. And Pharaoh said, 'Let this book which is on his body be hidden away'" and ordered Neneferkaptah to be duly processed in the Good House with "wrapping of (?) thirty-five [days]."<sup>113</sup>

The seemingly incongruous association of the towing of the dead on the lake of Khonsu with a rite of mummy wrapping is confirmed elsewhere at several points. In this situation the candidate is Osiris-Sokar or Horus-Sokar on the Sokar-bark<sup>114</sup> and is represented by the archaic figure of a crouching hawk whose head alone emerges from a cloth covering or shroud. This covering is of supreme significance, for the navigation of Osiris on the night of the winter solstice was followed on the 23rd of December by the wrapping of the new image of Sokar, and on the following day "the old

Sokar and other images were ceremonially rewrapped for ultimate burial on the 30th," the last day of the year.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, one and the same symbol, a reversed oryx head, designated both the wraparound garment of the defunct king (identical with that of the Sokar-hawk) and the ship of Sokar, on which it always appears as a figurehead.<sup>116</sup> Ritual ship and royal garment meet us in the great year-rites of the Panathenaian, when the sail of the sacred ship, drawn overland to the temple, was made of the same stuff as the new mantle in which the image of Athena was enfolded,<sup>117</sup> Athena being the old Egyptian Neith. Egyptian and Greek motifs mingle in the story of how Isis, after making the infant Horus invulnerable by bathing him in fire (the Achilles motif), cut down the cedar pillar and wrapped it in linen, singing a dirge for the child,<sup>118</sup> the cedar log being the ship which bore the defunct Horus from

Egypt to Byblos.

The same all-enveloping, shroudlike covering was worn by the Sokar-hawk, by Osiris standing to receive the initiate in the capacity of king of the dead, and by the king at the *sed*-festival, the great renewal of kingship and cosmos. *Sed* means both “cloth”<sup>119</sup> and “tail,” referring to the skin garment of royal rebirth and rejuvenation.<sup>120</sup> In their vital protective function, the burial garments preserve and thereby impart the spark of life itself; in particular it is Khonsu, always represented as a well-wrapped mummy, who, in his capacity of *nfr*, clasps the breast of Amun “in the place of his heart” and, by so doing, endows him with all that is *nfr*: life, breath, heart, and the power of kingship.<sup>121</sup> This Khonsu did, in company with Maat, by a ritual embrace, represented sometimes by the pectoral, “which is upon the throat” of the god and represents the life-

giving embrace and divine proximity.<sup>122</sup> The statue of Khonsu was cunningly contrived with movable arms to perform such an office for the living.<sup>123</sup> Whether at the coronation or the funeral, the ritual garment enfolding the candidate “had to ‘clasp,’ ‘embrace’ the beneficiary in a close hug,” which was actually a ritual embrace.<sup>124</sup> By such an embrace the king was thought to become “Sokar on the arms of Horus”—Horus, the royal successor and upholder of his father, being equated with the sacred Sokar-bark (*hnw*) which bore the latter up to heaven.<sup>125</sup> So in Joseph Smith Papyrus XI 3/12, we read, “Horus the Behdetite has enfolded thy body to make (*or making*) divine thy *ba*.”

The solar imagery is important here; the sun at his rising receives a parting embrace in the arms of Osiris,<sup>126</sup> and the place of sunrise at Hermopolis was “the Island of Embracing.”<sup>127</sup> One of the commonest

representations of the embracing arms depicts them as lifting the sun up over the horizon, reminding us that the rising sun, the emergence of the king from the house of the morning, and the passage of the dead to the other world all take place between the arms of deity.<sup>128</sup> This same gesture of the upraised arms, the *ka* symbol, also represents the sacred embrace.<sup>129</sup>

In the pyramid of Unas, the passing of the mummy through a narrow passage from one chamber to another was described as a ship voyage but called “the embrace of Nut,”<sup>130</sup> while, as we have seen, the coffin itself was designed to represent the embracing arms of the same goddess. It is interesting that the most striking evidence for the concept of the coffin as “embracing” its occupant has been found in a heretofore ignored Book of Breathings, Papyrus Louvre N. 3148,<sup>131</sup> in which Nut addresses the one embraced as

“her eldest son,” thus making him an Osiris.<sup>132</sup> The towing of the ship between two banks in the underworld was also thought of as an “embrace.”<sup>133</sup> In a good sense, it was the uniting of the two banks by ritual embrace, “causing the god to *snsn* with his brother.”<sup>134</sup>

In the Egyptian rites, we are often confronted with the concept of enfolding, embracing, enclosing, fondling, incubation, and the like; in mythology, the idea is expressed by the nest, womb, cave, mountain, protecting arms, serpentine coils, etc., while the imagery is given concrete form in the coffin chamber, sarcophagus, pyramid, shrine, various passages, rooms, vessels, etc. The mummy wrapping represents both a life-giving embrace and a protective cocoon (fig. 135).<sup>135</sup> Seti I is represented in his temple, wrapping and unwrapping Amon-Re, Isis, Horus, etc., in a

white robe or sheath which can also take the form of mummy bands (see color plate 9).<sup>136</sup>

## Ritual Embraces

The normal sequence of ordinances as depicted in temple reliefs is, according to Barguet, washing, laying on of hands, leading by the hand, entering the gate, embracing, and crowning.<sup>137</sup> In Egyptian rites, gates or doorways are symbolic of passage and arrival, of the completion of one phase of the operation and the beginning of another; not only is the gate the normal place for the embrace of greeting and farewell, but, as the symbols and inscriptions engraved on the door frames of tombs and temples make clear, the portal itself typifies the performing of such an embrace.<sup>138</sup> A spontaneous and natural gesture, embracing is not only a sign of affection but also one of acceptance, recognition, and reception at every level,

from the formal and hypocritical embrace of the diplomat to the “mystic union” of the initiate. The ritual embrace is the “culminating rite of the initiation”;<sup>139</sup> it is “an initiatory gesture weighted with meaning . . . , the goal of all consecration.”<sup>140</sup> We have to deal with a variety of embraces,<sup>141</sup> all closely interrelated. Let us list the principal ones.



Figure 135. On this Ptolemaic cartonnage breastplate,

wrapping and embracing divinities mingle in profusion. At the lowest level the candidate appears as Osiris in his sheath; on the next level the four canopic figures all hold mummy wrappings, as does the priest in the next level. Instead of canopic jars beneath the bed, we see four bundles of clothing. The bird, the Two Ladies, the Maat-Nut figure, and the scarab above all have outspread arms. BM 6968 © Copyright The British Museum.

1. *Natal*: The most sincere and natural of embraces is that by which the newborn babe is received into the bosom of the family, a situation ritualized as part of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony, in which the candidate was first washed like a newborn child, then anointed, then fed milk and honey to start it nursing, “in the sense of giving it new life,” and then clasped in a fond welcoming embrace.<sup>142</sup> The “arm opening” is, in fact, the ritual sequel to the “mouth opening.”<sup>143</sup>

2. *Conjugal*: In the same spirit of warm family intimacy was “the festival of the

beautiful embrace," when Horus, in a bedizening succession of roles as, variously, father, brother, and son of the lady Hathor, also joins her as husband, the issue of their union being Harsotmus, who is none other than Horus himself!<sup>144</sup> Related to this as part of the festival was the ritual embracing of Shu and Tefnut, the first parents of the race, in the abaton at Philae.<sup>145</sup> There are many variations on the theme: "The Lady of Denderah fares upstream to celebrate the lovely embrace with this Horus."<sup>146</sup> The first part of Papyrus Bremner-Rhind is completely occupied with it: there it is the Two Ladies, Isis and Nephthys—mother and nurse respectively—who yearn for the companionship of the youthful god and ask to make him alive again by their embraces.<sup>147</sup> One thinks of the dead being received into the embrace of Nut, the coffin and the sky, there to receive new life.<sup>148</sup> "Thy Mother

Nut joins herself to thee, ... she embraces thee. ... Awake, awake in peace. ... Thy beloved one, the Lady of the Fruit-trees, brings to thee what thou desirest.”<sup>149</sup>

3. *Maternal*: It is characteristically Egyptian that the conjugal embrace should overlap with the maternal. The Book of Breathings was read aloud by a priest, just as the lid of the coffin was being closed—<sup>150</sup> that is, just as the dead was being received into the embrace of Nut, even into her womb, in order to be born again,<sup>151</sup> an idea clearly expressed in the third line of Papyrus Louvre N. 3284.<sup>152</sup> As Isis and Nephthys embrace the dead to restore life,<sup>153</sup> so “thy Mother Nut joins herself to thee ... she embraces thee ... awake in peace!”<sup>154</sup> So also the two ladies Nekhbet and Edjo embrace the king on his throne, putting their arms around him to preserve him “in life, stability, and

serenity.”<sup>155</sup> The royal pyramid, the passages and chambers in it, and the sarcophagus and coffin were each in turn thought of as representing the embrace of the goddess, giving rest, protection, and finally life itself to the mummy.<sup>156</sup> The basic idea is that of mother and nurse fondling and protecting the Horus-child.<sup>157</sup> So also, “Maāt … hath placed her arms around thee … and she hath made thee to come into being.”<sup>158</sup>

4. *Familial*: In some of the Coffin Texts, the whole family gets into the scene as in spell 146: “Behold, this NN (the initiate) has gone down to heaven, he has gone down to the earth, he has gone down to the water,” i.e., he has passed through all the stations; accordingly, “he embraces his family, he embraces (*or* moves in with) his father and mother, he embraces his brothers and sisters, he embraces his children, he embraces his household, he embraces his friends, he

embraces those who have entered a covenant with him (*sm3w=f*) and those attached to him who have done work for him on earth";<sup>159</sup> in the capacity of "Geb who created (begot) the Great Ones," he recognizes and embraces the wife of his bosom, "for this N has reunited his progeny and his wives."<sup>160</sup> "O Atum-Re! O Geb! Behold N in heaven, on earth, on the waters (he is on his way); N has embraced his family in heaven, on earth, in the waters; N is satisfied completely."<sup>161</sup> It will be recalled that the ultimate objective of the ordinance as set forth in the second line of our Book of Breathings was that the initiate might join or "fuse with" his father at the horizon. To be received into the arms of Re on the horizon was indeed the culmination of Egyptian initiation.<sup>162</sup>

5. *Social*: Closely related to the familial is the social embrace, when the initiate enters the company of the elect as a high-class

social gathering: “The gates of the hidden kingdom are opened to thee; the gatekeepers hold out their arms to thee, rejoicing in thine approach (and saying): Thou enterest in favor, thou goest forth as one beloved.”<sup>163</sup>

6. *Paternal*: But by far the most significant embrace is that of the *father* as he appears under various names in the Pyramid Texts. The rites of Unas reach their culmination when, at the center niche of the serdab on the far side of the “celestial room,” “the creator himself” embraces the candidate to represent “the fusion of the heaven-bound deceased with the sun-god Re.”<sup>164</sup> At the gates of the horizon Re will “[wind] his arms, around” the candidate and take him to his heart.<sup>165</sup> As the king passes to heaven, “Thy heralds come to ask thy father to receive thee back into his embrace,”<sup>166</sup> the embrace always marking a moment of passage in the pyramid rites.<sup>167</sup> More often the embracer is Atum,

the Ancient One with whom the genealogy of the race begins.<sup>168</sup> Even as one came into his earthly existence in the embrace of his mother, Nut, the High Lady of Heliopolis, so he passes “into a heavenly existence” through the embrace of his father.<sup>169</sup> When “the embrace of the coffin” suddenly becomes “the embrace of Atum, the dead now disappears to pass beyond to glory,” leaving the arms of the mother for those of the father.<sup>170</sup> “Come into being, go up on high, ... it will be pleasant for you in the embrace of your father, in the embrace of Atum. O Atum, raise this king up to you; enclose him within your embrace, for he is your son of your body for ever.”<sup>171</sup> A relief found at the entrance to Egyptian temples shows the god of the temple receiving the king into his arms and thus welcoming him to his endowment.<sup>172</sup> When “Atum opens his arms” to the candidate, the way of further

progress is opened up to him.[173](#)



Figure 136. (A) In this earliest known example of the royal embrace, Horus the god speaks to Horus the king. They stand nose to nose, exchanging the breath of life. Restored drawing of Qa-hedjet Stela, ca. 2650 B.C. Courtesy of Louvre Museum.

In the paternal embrace the father-son relationship is all-important.[174](#) In the exchange each receives power from the other, the father because he is called the wearied one, being dead: “I hold in my embrace this my father who has become weary,” says Horus. “May he become quite

strong again.”<sup>175</sup> There are other names for the father, as when Re, in his capacity of Khnum the creator, “giving life to all,” holds forth his arms, “creating men and gods”;<sup>176</sup> also, as Ptah the creator, he embraces the *sem*-priest, sending him forth as newly created man.<sup>177</sup> It is the clasping by Osiris of King Tutankhamun in the last scene of his funeral rites “which transfers vital power [his *ka*] from the god to the king.”<sup>178</sup> Or the king is “purified by Re and embraced by (*or* face to face with) Thoth, … not rejected by Ptah.”<sup>179</sup> Where Amon of Thebes is all-in-all, he, of course, is the embracer: “I am thine image, who came forth from thee, thine eldest son, who does what is well-pleasing to thee. … My arms are about thee as Horus. … I am he who opens the doors of heaven in Karnak.”<sup>180</sup> The main idea is always the same. The presence of the Father, says the *Gospel of Truth*, is represented by an

embrace.<sup>181</sup>

7. *Royal*: The climax and culmination of the coronation rites was a ritual embrace of father and son designated as *shn*, the word becoming a *terminus technicus* for the coronation itself (fig. 136).<sup>182</sup> While Alexandre Moret prefers to retain the basic meaning of “embracing,”<sup>183</sup> the plural form *shn.w* can be rendered as “enthronement,” “installation,” and even simply as “throne.” The *shn*-rite was taken over from the coronation into the funerary rites, but in either sphere it deals with the embracing of an otherworldly father.<sup>184</sup> The word *hp.t* also designates the ritual embrace, and in the Book of the Dead 17, we see it transferred from the realm of the coronation and other rites of renewal to the funerary sphere—the king, the god, and the dead all receiving the ritual *hp.t*-embrace at the moment of passing to their greatest glory, according to Moret.<sup>185</sup>

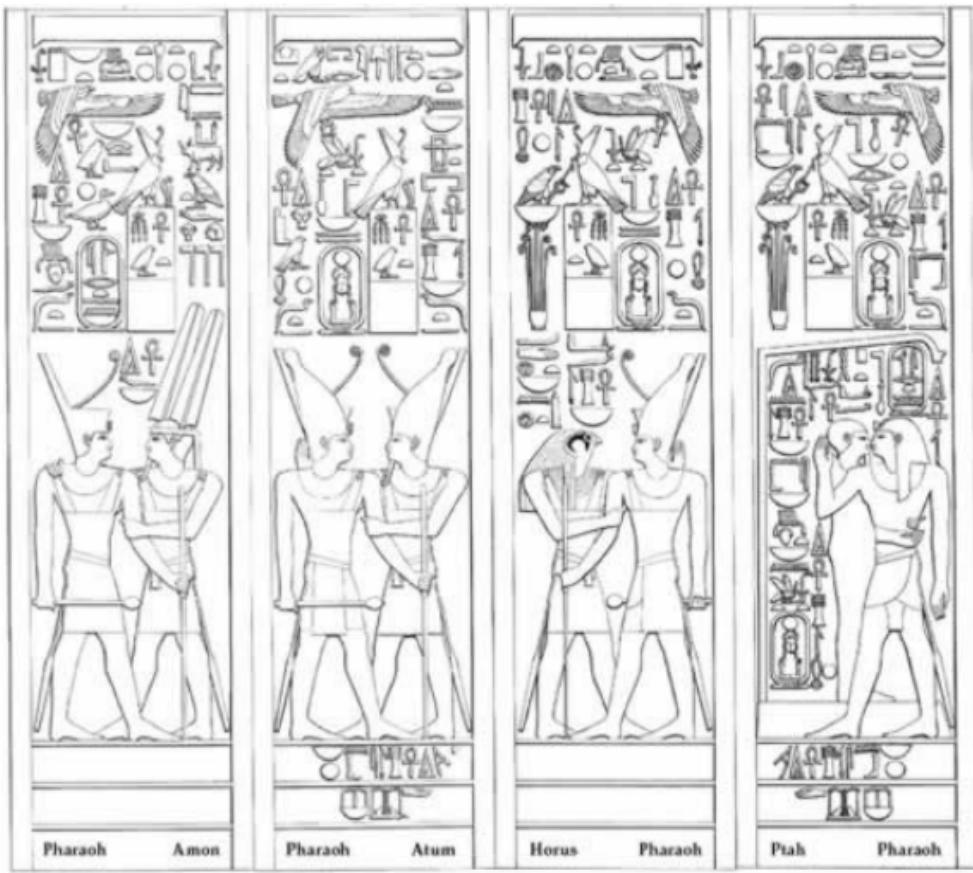


Figure 136. (B) The four sides of an eleven-foot pillar, one of eight from the jubilee chapel of Senwosret, show the pharaoh being embraced by four different gods in four different ways, just as the accompanying inscriptions are similar but never the same. Thus the divine family welcomes their son back home. Senwosret I pillar, ca. 1940 B.C. Courtesy of Cairo Museum.

In the tomb of Haremheb, a commoner

who became king, we read: “This noble god Horus of Hnēs, his heart desired to establish his son upon his eternal throne.” So he took him into his embrace and then conducted him “to Ipet-esut (*ip.t-sw.t*, secret compartment), in order to induct him into the presence of Amūn for the handing over to him of his office of king and for the making of his period (of life).”<sup>186</sup> This is called “the golden embrace of the king by the god” as Ptah-Sokar the creator.<sup>187</sup>

Adolf Rusch designated the embracing rite found in the Pyramid Texts as an *Anerkennungslitanei*, or rite of recognition, because, by being hugged in his arms, the new king was recognized by this predecessor, the old king (represented by a priest as proxy), as his son, while at the same time the new king recognized the other as his father.<sup>188</sup> The key to kingship is legitimacy, and this was the act by which it

was established and kingship was transmitted from one generation to another, from an Osiris to a Horus.<sup>189</sup> Originally, according to Eberhard Otto, the *sem*-priest representing the son recited: “I have come seeking (*shn*) for thee. . . . I am thy beloved son!”<sup>190</sup> The word for “seeking,” *m shn*, also means “embrace” and is a code word designating the search for Osiris,<sup>191</sup> but it also acquired the sense of “in thine embrace (*m shn=k*)”—that is, by the embrace the son is recognized as legitimate.<sup>192</sup> The rites of the Shabako stone conclude with a line declaring that the candidate to the throne has reached his great objective: “his son . . . appeared as king of Upper Egypt; he appeared as king of Lower Egypt, in the arms of his father Osiris, in the midst of the gods.”<sup>193</sup> Likewise, in the Opening of the Mouth rite the ritual embrace of father and son is the *final* scene.<sup>194</sup> “In the last picture

of the series” of Opening of the Mouth scenes in the tomb of Tutankhamun, “the dead king and the god Osiris embrace each other” (fig. 137).<sup>195</sup>

In the Pyramid Texts, the *father* is usually Atum: “Thou hast become (king), thou hast been exalted; it is agreeable to thee, it is cool in the embrace of thy father Atum, within his embrace. Atum, let NN [the candidate, at this early time always the king] enter into thine embrace, enfold him in thine arms, for he is the son of thy body even to eternity.”<sup>196</sup> Rusch collected many examples of the royal embracing rite, which was also a “recognition rite,” the “Horus ritual” by which the father recognized the son.<sup>197</sup> At the coronation of Ramses II, “we see the young king being led into the presence of Atum by Horus and another deity” and then “Ramesses standing, being embraced by Atum, who is enthroned.”<sup>198</sup> At the moment

of succession, “Horus appear[s] in the arms of his father Osiris,”<sup>199</sup> which is the climax of “the Mystery Play of the Succession.”<sup>200</sup>

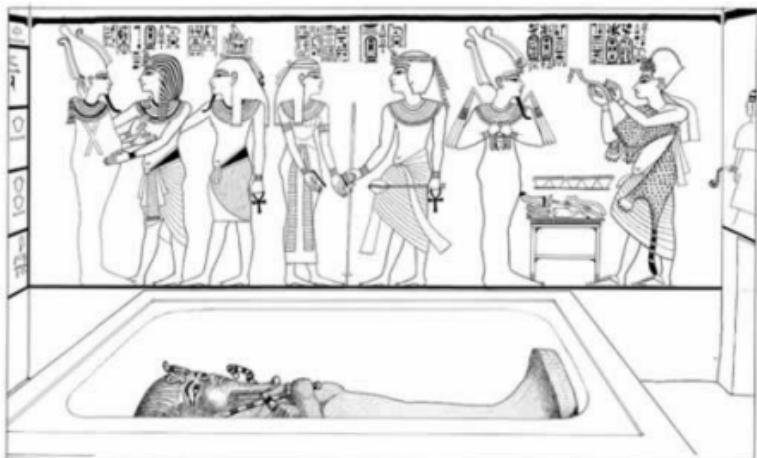


Figure 137. Starting on the right, Tutankhamun’s successor, Ay, is shown dressed in the panther skin robe of the *sem*-priest and opening the mouth of the deceased king with the ritual adze. The pharaoh is dressed as Osiris in a close-fitting white garment and holds the two flails of kingship. The middle scene shows the goddess Nut offering the *nyny*-gesture to the young king, who has his walking staff, ritual mace, and ankh. The final scene is the glorious culmination in which Tutankhamun is supported by his personified *ka*, who is crowned with the upraised arms. As Tutankhamun embraces Osiris, he receives the usual formula: “Given life for all time and eternity,” while Osiris reaches out to embrace his son through his

archaic white robe. Restored drawing from tomb of Tutankhamun, ca. 1320 B.C.

“The embracing (*shn*) of the king by the god is the definitive consecration” of the new king, who at that moment alone becomes fully consecrated, crowned, and sanctified, according to Moret.<sup>201</sup> Before becoming a king, however, he must first become a priest, and for that also he must be purified with divine water, receive a garment, be crowned, and be led into the sanctuary to receive “the embrace of the god, the head of the temple.”<sup>202</sup> In the final scene of the Opening of the Mouth, “the statue rests in the chapel as ... Horus in the arms of his father,” where “the statue is Horus, the chapel is Osiris,” and its door is the door of life.<sup>203</sup> The cosmic implications of the scene are recalled in the Coffin Texts: “He placed me upon his neck; he would not let me depart

from him. My name lives: Son of the Primordial God. I live in the members of my father Atum; I am the living one upon his neck, ... he sent me down to this earth even to the Isle of Flame when my name became Osiris, son of Geb....My father Atum embraced me (*sn wi*) when he came from the horizon of the East; his heart was pleased at seeing me.”<sup>204</sup>

One of the most puzzling episodes in the Bible has always been the story of Jacob’s wrestling with the Lord. When one considers that the word conventionally translated as “wrestled (*yē ’āvēq*)” can just as well mean “embrace” and that it was in this ritual embrace that Jacob received a new name and the bestowal of priestly and kingly power at sunrise (Genesis 32:24–30), the parallel to the Egyptian coronation embrace becomes at once apparent.

One retained his identity after the ritual

embrace, yet that embrace was nothing less than a *Wesensverschmelzung*, a fusing of identities, of mortal with immortal, of father with son, and, as such, marked “the high point of the whole mystery drama.”<sup>205</sup>

“Osiris came to Mendes,” says the important chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead, “and found there the soul of Re. Thereupon they embraced each other, and from that arose Harendotes and Horus”—meaning, as Hermann Grapow notes, that “out of the embracing of Mendes and Re a new being comes into existence,” though Grapow confesses himself at a loss to explain the meaning of the “saga.”<sup>206</sup> The ritual embrace, Henri Frankfort observes, was “no mere sign of affection, but a true fusion, a communion between two living spirits, *unio mystica*.<sup>207</sup> When Horus is embraced by his father, Osiris, he becomes a new being, a savior, that Re might look upon him as Wen-

nefer (the benefactor); “whereupon the two embrace each other.”<sup>208</sup> “Come to meet your father who is in me,” says a Coffin Text. “Give me your arms. . . . I am he who created you, as one created by your father Atum when I was resting above the pillars of heaven (*šw*).”<sup>209</sup> This is the familiar “recognition” motif with its frequent fusion of personalities: “I go to meet my image,” says the *Ginza*, “and my image goes to meet me. It fondles and embraces me, as if I had returned from captivity.”<sup>210</sup> The concept both encouraged and was encouraged by the use of images. When, for example, Horus the Behdetite wanted to visit one of his shrines, he would do so by embracing—fusing with—his image in that place and thereby identify himself with his visible presence in the temple for the length of his sojourn.<sup>211</sup>

Such an embrace, whether of a statue or a living substitute, was a symbol of

indissoluble togetherness, according to Otto,<sup>212</sup> signifying a direct and enduring relationship between god and man, the actual joining of the two.<sup>213</sup>

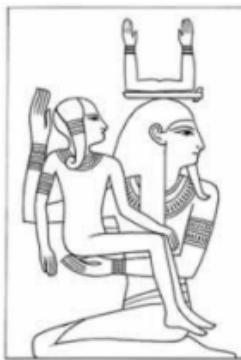


Figure 138. The *ka*-symbol personified as a protective paternal embrace holds the infant queen. Restored drawing from temple of Hatshepsut, Deir al-Bahri, ca. 1460 B.C.



Figure 139. The priest Sunur embraces his winged *ba*

on his chest while being embraced himself with a *ka*-gesture, ca. 1275 B.C. EA 65206 © Copyright The British Museum.

Its most impressive symbol is the *ka*-sign itself, whose upraised arms signify the act of calling upon God, of praising him in the rising sun, of receiving his protection, and of fusion with his being. “O Atum-Khoprer, ... you set your arms about them [the first parents of the human race] as the arms of a *ka*-symbol, that your essence might be in them [fig. 138]. O Atum, set your arms about the king ... and about this pyramid as the arms of a *ka*-symbol, that the king’s essence may be in it, enduring for ever.”<sup>214</sup> “O Atum, place thy two hands behind N, that his *ka* may live forever! O Atum, make the *dhn*-gesture for N, protect him,” where the *dhn* is really the holding out of the hands accompanying the formulas.<sup>215</sup> So also, “Maāt ... hath placed her arms around thee,

thy Ka is in her, ... and she hath made thee to come into being with the Ka of all the gods.”<sup>216</sup> It is the embrace “which transfers vital power,” his *ka*, “from the god to the king.”<sup>217</sup> The heavy collar and counterweight worn by all the shrouded figures is the symbol of a divine embrace, whereby the soul of the god (for example, Re or Atum) unites with that of the embraced one as a *ka* (fig. 139).<sup>218</sup> An Amarna inscription reads, “Let my eye see him, ... my ear hear his voice, while his *ka* is face to face with me (*m-b3h=i*) continually.” And again, addressing Ptah: “Place me before thee, with thy *ka* facing me and mine eyes beholding thy beauty.”<sup>219</sup> By the same means, the dead becomes reunited with his own *ka*, thus achieving eternal life: “O king, the arm of your *ka* is in front of you! O king, the arm of your *ka* is behind you! O king, the foot of your *ka* is in front of you! O king, the foot of

your *ka* is behind you!”<sup>220</sup>

## The Last Barrier: The Temple Veils

Though the embrace of greeting or farewell may mark any rite of passage, it is only to be expected that the most important embrace of all should take place at the last gate of all, the ultimate door, a door different from the others: “only the initiated free of guilt may pass through it,” for it leads to another world and a higher state of being.<sup>221</sup> In form it has neither panels nor hinges<sup>222</sup>—that is, it is not really a door or gate. Nagel designates it as “the last barrier,” where “he who grasps the mysteries” at last receives the crown.<sup>223</sup>

At the coronation of Haremheb, Amon “conducted his son in ‘the way (*tour*) behind the wall,’” first embracing him and then transferring to him everlasting dominion; after being thus “led behind the wall,” the

new king leaves “the great house” and so completes the whole complex of ordinances called “going up to the temple.”<sup>224</sup>

Haremheb was conducted to the *ip.t-swt*, that he might enter the presence of Amon, from whom he would receive his kingship.<sup>225</sup> An *ip.t-swt* is a secret part of a palace or temple shut off from the rest and made inaccessible (usually by curtains or hangings).<sup>226</sup> The purpose of temple veils was specifically to shut off more sacred areas from access by those not authorized to enter them.<sup>227</sup> When “the venerable Lady of Denderah”—Hathor in the role of the celestial Nut—united herself to her father Re at the New Year, the meeting and embrace took place in the topmost room or on the roof of the temple, where we find her standing under a heaven mounted on thin columns or stands, between which curtains were draped—perhaps the first mention of theatrical

curtains.<sup>228</sup> The same combination of images meets us in the Coffin Texts,<sup>229</sup> where in “the temples which Re has made, . . . the enclosing horizon is the numbering (*hsb.t*) of the columns. . . . Its beams are the arms of Nut, which make the wakening of Osiris. Its door (*tʒi.t*) is the *ht.t* of Ptah, which Tait herself has woven, where Re appears in the eastern part of the sky.”<sup>230</sup>

Tait’s fabric is the “motherly embrace” of protective, life-giving heat,<sup>231</sup> for Tait is the goddess of weaving, and “the excellent works of Tait” include not only the sacred partition but also the liturgical garments, bandelettes, and wrappings of the dead as well.<sup>232</sup> With appropriate ideograms, *tʒi.t* means “a door in the temple” or “the goddess of weaving”;<sup>233</sup> in the Coffin Texts the word means “a kind of curtain” and later “mummy bands.”<sup>234</sup> Even when the ritual

wrappings are provided by the Two Ladies (Isis and Nephthys), they are still “made by Tait.”<sup>235</sup> In the mysteries of many sects, wrapping in a holy garment is the equivalent of embracing,<sup>236</sup> and the close association of Tait with a ritual embrace appears in an Abydos text: “Amon-Re … takes his filet (bandage) with the bandelette *admait* [*idmi.t*] upon the two arms of Tait for his own flesh; the god reunites himself with the god, the god wraps the god in the embrace (bosom) called *admat*.”<sup>237</sup> In the Book of Caverns the emergence of the candidate through the last barrier is called “the coming out by this great god from the confining darkness(es) of the *qrr.t* (cavern) of Osiris, while Tait, who has done great things, offers her two arms.”<sup>238</sup> Bearing in mind that all the works of Tait are weaving, we proceed to the next phase: “Re speaks to the *qrr.t* of Tait: Thou, Tait, hast (*or* Tait has) received

me; thou, Tait, hast reached out thine arms toward me; behold I have passed by (‘*pi*, to pass on through), my *ba* following after.”<sup>239</sup> Finally the drama closes with the declaration, “Tait hath received me, thou hast given me thy two arms, … I am concerned with my posterity.”<sup>240</sup> There is a rich mixture of images in Coffin Text 44: “You don the holy garment (*w b.w*, swaddling clothes) in the tent of purification (*ibw*),<sup>241</sup> with one who lives in his Tait (*t3y.t*, wrapping or veil of some sort).<sup>242</sup> Encircled is this Osiris by Orion, Sothis, and the *duat*. They place thee in the enfolding (*hnw*) arms of thy mother; they protect thee from the wrath of the dead.”<sup>243</sup> The two arms do not represent a confining embrace, but a means of passage to the beyond, as in Book of the Dead chapter 26, a passage also found in the tomb of Tutankhamun: “The two arms of the temple are open. Geb, the Prince, throws wide his

limbs. He opens thy two eyes. . . . I have taken away thy veil over thee. . . . Lift thy head; . . . stand on thy feet.”<sup>244</sup> This refers to the rite of removing the veil, called “the opening of the face,” according to Moret, which is an abbreviated form of the Opening of the Mouth.<sup>245</sup>

If the earliest rites of the Egyptians, including the mysteries of Abydos, were performed in tents, as there is good reason to believe,<sup>246</sup> the importance of a woven partition at the holy of holies is not hard to understand. In the oldest known temples, veils shutting off the inner “priest’s room” were matting screens between wooden posts.<sup>247</sup> Here Jewish and Christian parallels, occasionally betraying Egyptian affinities as they do, may be of some help.

In Israel, “the ark and the tabernacle, the miniature temple and the tent, are analogous institutions.”<sup>248</sup> Since the stone temple was

built merely to shelter the original shrine, which was a tent containing the holy objects, the latter were always preserved at the holy center of the temple behind a woven partition. The church fathers were intrigued by the setup. According to Theophylactus, the first veil separated the court of the people and the bronze altar from the tent where only the priests could enter. Then there was another veil inside before the Holy of Holies. Through this veil the high priest could go once a year; it was called a “tent” because God tented there.<sup>249</sup> The Bible makes it clear, André Pelletier observes, that there were other veils in the temple which were simply repetitions of the one really important veil, that of the holy of holies.<sup>250</sup>

The significant thing about the veil of the temple, Pelletier finds, is what lies on the other side of it—namely, the *caeli secreta*, the secrets of the heavens, for the veil is the

last barrier to the infinite—what lies beyond is endless space (*adiakleiston*), “uninterrupted passage, devoid of all obstacles”; it opens out to “the immensity of the heavenly spaces,” which is why it is not a door but a veil, and a large theatrical one at that.<sup>251</sup>

Since the temple structure had a cosmic significance, the veil did too, as the Talmud makes clear.<sup>252</sup> Shutting off the *adyton*, or holy of holies, it would mark, of course, the boundary between the worlds. The ancient priests were called seers in the Old Testament (*hōzîm*) as among the Egyptians (*mȝ ȝ.w*); it was their custom “in their seeing to cover themselves or shut themselves off”; hence their epithet of *dhul khimār*, “men of the veil,” and hence also, according to Julius Wellhausen, the importance of the covering, tent, or booth to separate vulnerable mortals from the consuming glory of worlds beyond

when it was made accessible to the seer.<sup>253</sup> Josephus described the veil of the temple as a cosmic barrier, composed of the four elements: “the red silk represented fire, byssus (linen) the earth, the jewels the air, and the purple the sea, and thus they correspond to the four elements. Depicted thereon (on the veil) was the whole sky with all its appointments.”<sup>254</sup>

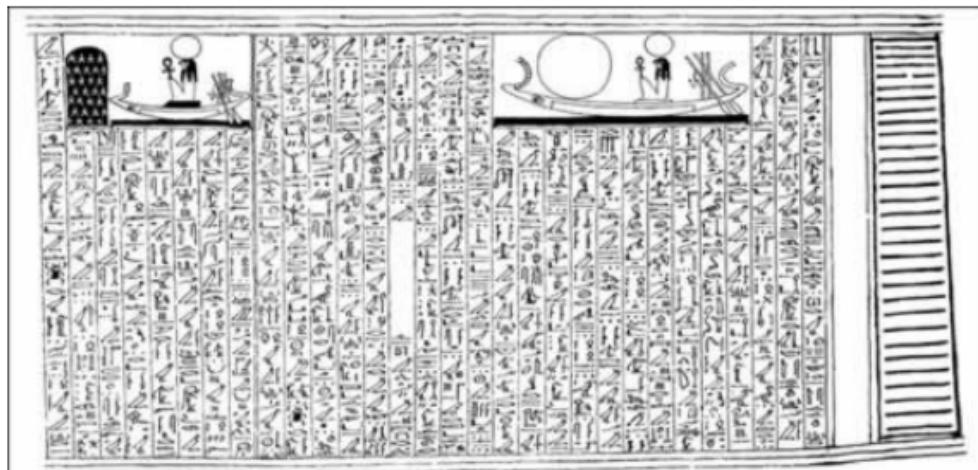


Figure 140. Re-Horakhty, shown here twice, is all wrapped up like Sokar and seated upon the Stone of Truth. He sails over the heavens right into a sea of bright golden stars on a dark background, seen through a mysterious aperture. Behind him is a door,

which depicts a barrier along the way to the temple.

P. Ani (BD 133, 134), ca. 1250 B.C. BM 10470

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For the Egyptians, too, infinity lies beyond the veil; in the culminating rites “it seemed that we had reached the end of the other world; but now we enter into a new region.” Osiris is there, and yet it is the sun-god who fills the place with light, and “the closing phrases are solar” as the triumphant imagery of the coronation takes over (fig. 140).[255](#) The *sem*-sleeper is separated by a veil from his father in the preexistence; he is called the one “whose face is veiled,” referring to his mummy wrappings.[256](#) The Coffin Texts refer to one’s defunct relatives as “they who are within his veil (*iwyw wnh.t*),” who are to be gathered together to one by sealing (*htm*).[257](#) Something like this seems to be suggested by the Zohar: “For the man who is privileged to have children in this world will through them

be worthy to enter ‘behind the partition’ in the world to come.”<sup>258</sup>

There is a persistent tendency to compare the veil of the temple and the ritual garment, if not actually to equate them.<sup>259</sup> Such a connection is found in the Ramesseum drama, which identifies the sacred garments both with their wearers and with the shrine: “The thigh of Seth (is) the four-ply weave, the white chapel. ... Seth (is) the six-ply weave, the beautiful house. Horus says to Osiris: My father must embrace me (*dmi ir*, ‘unite with,’ ‘used specifically of clothing’). Osiris (is) purple (*idmi*) cloth (i.e., both as king and contestant).<sup>260</sup> Horus says to Osiris: The panther [skin? cf. the panther-skin garment always worn by officiating priests] unites thy limbs, ... the eye (of Horus is) *ssf*-cloth,”<sup>261</sup> equivalent to the panther-goddess, here representing mummy wrappings, according to Sethe.<sup>262</sup> The Zohar tells us that

the rams' skins and badgers' skins of the tabernacle "are a garment which protects a garment," the inner garment being "the curtains (of the Tabernacle), ...

corresponding to the skin upon the flesh."<sup>263</sup>

Speaking of the rending of the veil of the temple, the Jewish-Christian *Testament of Levi* calls it "the garment (*endyma*) of the temple"<sup>264</sup> and thereby, Marc Philonenko observes, "introduces us into a world of quite mysterious speculation," for here "the

*veil* of the temple is considered the personified *garment* of the sanctuary."<sup>265</sup>

Marinus de Jonge says it "refers to the garment of the angel, or of the personified temple."<sup>266</sup> When Israel apostatized, the veil of the temple was rent—"so that it would no longer hide our iniquity," as Levi explains it.<sup>267</sup>

According to the important Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex, the holy garment of the initiate and the veil of the temple have

the same significance; they are both symbols of obedience, both representing that virtue which separates the initiate from the wicked world, even as it separates existence from nonexistence, the pure from the impure, the elect from all that contaminates and injures—and the two actually follow the same design.<sup>268</sup> The creation apocryphon from Egypt tells how in the preexistence it was provided that a veil should be placed between the true, timeless, preexistent worlds and this material world and universe which are modeled after them.<sup>269</sup> “There is a veil (*parapetasma*, lit, hanging, partition) which separates mankind from that which is above.”<sup>270</sup>

Since the Egyptian mysteries are a journey from the darkness into the light, it is to be expected that they end in something like a blaze of glory.<sup>271</sup> And indeed, the celebrants emerge from the temple, either at the highest

point or the main entrance, into the dazzling light of the sun.<sup>272</sup>

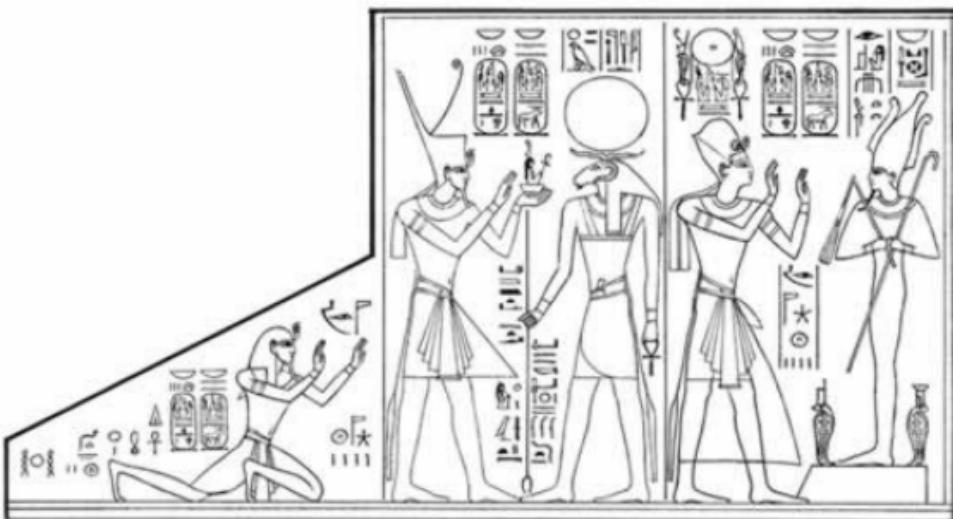


Figure 141. In the culminating scene—the top register on the east wall of the central hall of the cenotaph of Seti I—that monarch kneels as he is about to “see the god”; then he gives an accounting (presents an image of Maat) to the ram-headed figure which represents the highest glory (the noonday sun); finally he enters the presence of Osiris himself and, “seeing the god, gives praise four times.” Restored drawing of cenotaph of Seti I, 1290 B.C. After Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I*, 1: pl. 73.

## Seeing the God: The Culmination of the Mysteries

The commonly expressed goal and object of visiting the temple is “to see the god” (fig. 141). Thus the initiate prays to Amon-Re to embrace him and introduce him into celestial regions to look upon Aton.<sup>273</sup> The welcoming inscription on temple portals invites the worshipper (after being properly purified and clothed): “Come with me into the House of God and behold thy father of the variegated feathers” (the “speckled bird” is the embodiment of glory).<sup>274</sup> An inscription on a temple statue designated as an intermediary between god and man says: “Ye people of Karnak who would see Amon, come to me! For I am the go-between (*whm*, guide, herald, introducer) of that god!”<sup>275</sup> Among other examples given by Hermann Kees is an inscription of Piankhi, telling how that king was purified, was clothed, received his token of rebirth, and mounted the stairs of the temple of Re at Heliopolis on his way

“to behold the god.”<sup>276</sup>

The final glory naturally culminates in Heliopolis, the seat of the sun-worship, where it all began; the final approval of the initiate is that he has become a true Heliopolitan:<sup>277</sup> “His body is in the great company of the gods in the House of the Aged Prince in Heliopolis.”<sup>278</sup> Interestingly enough, the Heliopolitan motif carries over into Jewish and Christian mysteries, the outstretched hand of Jupiter Heliopolitanus —a usage “in the ceremonial of his mysteries”—being recognized by scholars as the source of the Latin benediction (fig. 142).<sup>279</sup> It is by this handclasp, wrote Henri Leclercq, “that the deceased is received into the celestial banquet”; and he traces both the Asia Minor and Syrian versions of the rites back to the synagogue.<sup>280</sup>



Figure 142. This late Roman bronze shows Jupiter Heliopolitanus with his uplifted right arm. Restored drawing of gilded bronze statue, fifteen inches high, ca. A.D. 150. After Louvre AO 19534. Courtesy of Louvre Museum.

Having fulfilled all requirements, the Egyptian initiate is free to take any form he

desires: “He minglest with the universe; he transforms himself into god<sup>281</sup> on his way of progress toward the ultimate perfection.”<sup>282</sup> “When the soul is on the way in its search for God,” wrote Gregor of Nyssen, “it progresses without ceasing, constantly being transformed into a form ever more glorious, and so it passes from glory to glory.”<sup>283</sup> He is commenting on 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord of spirits.”

Properly speaking, one did not go “through” the temple—in one door and out another—for one enters and leaves by the same door, but by moving in opposite directions, as Helck makes clear in a diagram.<sup>284</sup> The Two Ways of Light and Darkness are but one way after all, as the wise Heraclitus said: “The up-road and the

down-road are one”;<sup>285</sup> which one depends on the way we are facing.

The classic robe of the initiate throughout the East has always been and still is the pure white<sup>286</sup> wrap thrown over the shoulder, which also represents an embrace;<sup>287</sup> everything should be white.<sup>288</sup> The well-known shifting of garments from left to right in initiation ceremonies (e.g., of the tassel on the mortarboard at graduations) is a reminder, according to Saint Hippolytus of Rome, that “nature consists of opposites, good and bad, even as right and left—light and darkness, night and day, life and death.”<sup>289</sup>

The Coptic writings have a good deal to say about the curtains or veils that separate the various creations and universes, a concept found in our Pearl of Great Price: “millions of earths like this . . . would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations;

and thy curtains are stretched out still” (Moses 7:30). All things are set off by “veils,” and no one may go beyond the veil that marks the limit of his knowledge without dire consequences; it was because Pistis Sophia went beyond her “degree” and, becoming ambitious, “looked behind the veil” that she fell from glory,<sup>290</sup> and Adam after the fall could not see behind the veil.<sup>291</sup> Only Jesus passes through all the gates and all the veils from world to world at every level.<sup>292</sup> The rending of the veil of the temple marked the Lord’s passage between the upper and the lower worlds, according to the *Testament of Benjamin*—through the veil he mounted to his glory in heaven, and through the veil he descended to help the spirits in prison.<sup>293</sup> God sits behind a series (*taxis*) of veils, which are “drawn before the great king” and which can be approached only by passing tests at preliminary gates;<sup>294</sup>

hence the only way by which one can enter into the presence of the Father is “to pass through the veil,” which veil must be approached through three preliminary steps or doors. “If you want to go to the Father,” it says, “you must pass through the veil. . . . The watchers will yield to you when they see the seal of the Father,”<sup>295</sup> who sits veiled by light, according to another Coptic work.<sup>296</sup>

An early Jewish-Christian logion reports that when Joseph married Mary, he ministered to her “from behind the veil and conversed with her [in the temple] (*min wara ’a hijāb wa-yukallimuhā [fi-al-haikal]*).”<sup>297</sup> Gerardus van der Leeuw has noted that the antiphonal speeches in the early Jewish-Christian Apostolic Constitutions resemble very closely the questions and responses “at the veil in the heathen mysteries,” the latter being derived from Egypt.<sup>298</sup>

The *Gospel of Philip* depicts the rending of the veil not as the abolition of the temple ordinances, as the church fathers fondly supposed, but of the opening of those ordinances to all the righteous of Israel, “in order that we might enter into … the truth of it.” “The priesthood can still go within the veil with the high priest (i.e., the Lord).” We are allowed to see what is behind the veil, and “we enter into it in our weakness, through signs and tokens which the world despises.”<sup>299</sup> Though the church fathers insisted that the rending of the veil meant its abolition by spiritualizing the temple, the fact that Christian churches everywhere retained veils, which they thought of as continuing the veil of the temple, shows that Christians could never rid themselves of the age-old tradition.<sup>300</sup>

According to a very old Coptic Christian writing, when Christ took the twelve apart

on a mountain after the resurrection, he spoke to them in a strange tongue, and he spoke to his Father and “gave the twelve his right hand and sealed us”; and then he went within the tabernacle (tent, *skēnē*, veil) and prayed to the Father to give them a blessing for time and eternity.<sup>301</sup> In passing through the veil to the Father, according to *1 Jeu*, one must show certain seals and tokens to the guardian of the veil.<sup>302</sup> Those who do so in this world, the Pistis Sophia assures us again and again, will not have to do it in the next.<sup>303</sup> The *Gospel of Philip* glories that the Saints are now allowed to see what is behind the veil: “we enter into it in our weakness, through signs and tokens which the world despises.”<sup>304</sup> Almost the same statement is found in the important *Kephalaia*, where Jesus says, “These five things (ordinances) about which you asked me appear to the world to be silly and trivial

(*euo nthe nnetsabk euo nkoui*) and yet they are great and estimable. . . . These five tokens (*mmeine*) are the ordinances (*mystērion*) of the first man.”<sup>305</sup> It goes on to explain that the five tokens, which the first man originated among the Godhead, were brought by him when he came down to this earth and enable him to return to his home on high;<sup>306</sup> also, “they were brought to this world through the preaching of an apostle,” by which “men learned them and established them in their midst.”<sup>307</sup> These five things are the marks of his church and include the greeting of peace by which one becomes a son of peace, the grasp of the right hand which brings one into the church, followed by the embrace by which one becomes a son.<sup>308</sup> The whole Mandaean ritual complex with its endless washings, garments, ritual meals, embraces, grips, and crownings is reminiscent of the Egyptian endowment, and

Drower, the principal authority on the subject, long ago called attention to the common prehistoric origin of both.<sup>309</sup>



Figure 143. This sequence from a temple at Karnak shows how the royal initiation culminated in ritual embraces. In each scene the words of instruction are written over the heads of the speakers. First comes the washing or baptism, then the bestowal of crown and throne; then the candidate is conducted by ministers of “life, health, strength, and joy” to Thoth, the master of ceremonies, who introduces him at the last shrine where he receives the paternal embrace that confirms his appearing in glory “on the throne of his father Re.” Finally the maternal embrace of Amaunet, who says, “I nurse thee with my milk.” Thus the rites end in the intimate embrace of the primordial family. Restored drawing from photographs and drawings of barque shrine, Karnak, ca. 320 B.C.

## Description of the Embrace

From the very first, as Rusch points out, the text makes it clear that a real physical embrace took place.<sup>310</sup> At his coronation, the new king, following his purification, was led by the hand of two gods (priests in masks), one of whom was Atum, to his throne; from there he proceeded to the holy of holies “to behold his father,” who embraced him and crowned him (fig. 143).<sup>311</sup> It was a formal embrace with both parties standing.<sup>312</sup> The original meaning of both *hp.t* and *shn*, according to Moret, seems to be “to open out, to hold open,” and it refers “not only [to the position of] the arms … but to the legs as well, whether walking or standing.” *Shn*, he writes, means “to stand firmly with the legs apart,” “to take a posture with legs spread.”<sup>313</sup> In the murals we see the king awaiting his son in a position of anticipation:

“the king is in a standing position, his arms swung slightly outward (*ballants*), leaning slightly forward, as if preparing to take the statue (in this case) respectfully into his arms.”<sup>314</sup> In Papyrus Louvre N. 3292, the candidate stands “in a small white apron, which is covered by another longer, transparent apron, … before Osiris, his arms thrust forward (*ballants*)”; Osiris is represented as half a mummy, white below and green above, holding the crook and flail.<sup>315</sup>

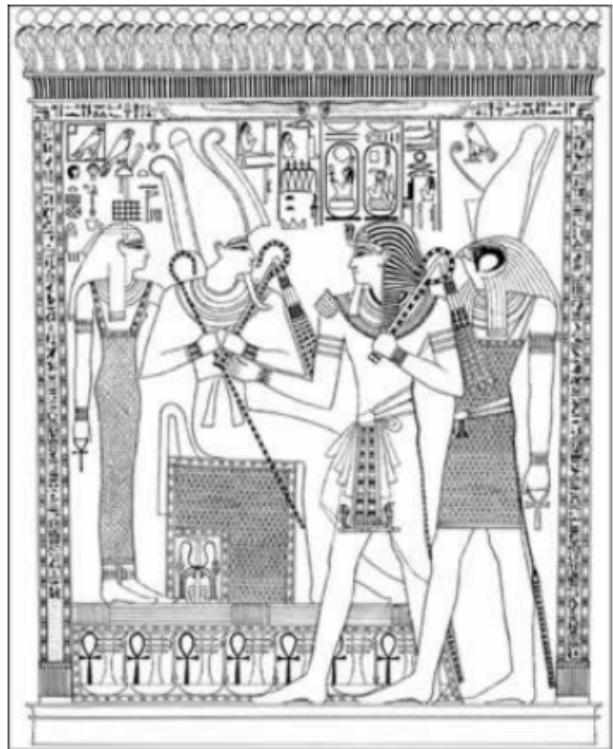


Figure 144. In this elaborate shrine, Seti I, embraced by Horus, takes the hand of Osiris on his throne, placed on the Stone of Truth decorated with '*nh*, *dd*, *wjs*. Reconstructed drawing, tomb of Seti I, ca. 1290 B.C.

In the tomb of Seti I, the god and the king embrace each other (fig. 144).<sup>316</sup> Like the embrace, “the rite of ‘giving the hand’ or ‘rite of the hand’ ... is the expression of familiarity, of equality, of sympathy, of love,

of protection. ... It is the expression of the attribution of kingly rank and vital power to the reborn king.”<sup>317</sup> The best-known handshake in the ancient world was the taking of the hand of the (image of) Marduk by the man who thereby became king; this seizing of the hand was an exchange of grips, according to Svend Pallis.<sup>318</sup> The Egyptian practice is indicated in the Amduat: “This great god (the pharaoh) says: ‘Noble One, put forth thy hand. ... Let thy voice come forth properly from thy throat. Living One, open thy enfolding! I have come to give light to one sitting in darkness.’”<sup>319</sup> Moret and Georges Legrain use identical words when describing how, in the coronation embrace, “the god has stretched forth his hands out through [a sort of] sheath (*or* covering) and clasps the king against his breast.”<sup>320</sup>



Figure 145. Horus leads Ani into the presence of Osiris. P. Ani, ca. 1250 B.C. BM 10470 © Copyright The British Museum.

In a rite designated as the *hp.t rsw qni=f*, we see how the pharaoh at his coronation, here called “the good god Sesostris (i.e., the father of the initiate), wearing the white *nemes* (linen) headdress, enters into the *naos* (inner shrine) of the god Ptah and embraces him. The god reaches out his hands from his covering and clasps the king to his breast.<sup>321</sup> In another coronation ceremony we see the king entering the shrine to be greeted by Atum, Ptah, Amon, and Osiris: “The god has

stretched his hands out through [a sort of] sheath (*or* covering) and clasps the king against his breast.”<sup>322</sup> This god, according to these ordinances (*shr.w*, rites, customs),” says the Book of Caverns, “shall then thrust his two arms through (*hr*, upon) his secret *db3.t*, which the gods do not know.”<sup>323</sup> What is the “secret *db3.t*”? Piankoff renders it as “mysterious envelope,” or “mysterious covering.”<sup>324</sup> The root meaning of the word is to “stop up” a way or passage, barricade (hence perhaps *db.t*, “brick”). With another determinative it means “pad,” or a “garment worn by a god”; hence *db3.t* is “a robing room” or “sarcophagus.” It also means a mat of leaves.<sup>325</sup>

A dramatic painting in the Papyrus of Ani shows Horus conducting an awed Ani into the presence of Osiris, who is seated on a *maat*-platform (sometimes with steps instead of a slope) under a baldachin representing a

green mound of earth (fig 145); in front of him hangs the *mshn.t*, the skin garment of resurrection which, as we have noted, has the same significance as the veil. Horus is leading the candidate by one hand while he raises the other in salutation, saying: “I have come into thy presence, Wennefer. I have brought to thee the Osiris Ani, his heart having been found faithful (*ib=f m3*’), having come forth from the testing (balance) devoid of offense to any god or goddess.”<sup>326</sup> The approach to the shrine is variously described; Moret even gives it the special title of “the royal ascent to the sanctuary,” which is the “final consecration: … the embrace of the god, master of the temple in which is the ‘chamber of adoration.’”<sup>327</sup> Even in the Ani picture, a short stairway or ramp leads up to the shrine, indicating the ascent.<sup>328</sup> In a relief showing the installation of Ramses II on the throne, “we see the

young king being led into the presence of Atum by Horus and another deity. ... Next we see Ramesses standing, being embraced by Atum, who is enthroned,”<sup>329</sup> Ramses being very much alive, hailed by a row of Anubis figures who give the *hnw*-sign, the acknowledgment of divinity, with one knee to the ground, one arm at the square, and the other held in a V-shape on the breast.<sup>330</sup> In Papyrus Louvre N. 3292, it is Anubis who conducts the initiate to the veil—or, rather, pushes him toward it, for the candidate is understandably afraid.<sup>331</sup> In early times, the initiate, having fulfilled all requirements, was introduced by “the Old One” to the doorkeeper of Osiris, called the inspector of records.<sup>332</sup> When the king enters the sanctuary for the first time, at the completion of the temple, he performs an act exactly resembling what is done at the door of the church at Easter in the Eastern Orthodox

rites—namely, he knocks three times on the door with his white mace (see p. 272, fig. 91), enters, illuminates the shrine with sacred fire, and performs a series of lustrations and circumambulations.<sup>333</sup>

In Book of the Dead 125, the principal source of our Breathings Book, the dead is told by the *htp.w*, or parts of the door, that they will not let him through until he names them; *htp.w* also means “embraces,” signs which the dead, apparently, must also identify. The embrace at this particular point is called the *q3b.t* (which means “enfolding,” “breast,” “knee”), which Osiris gave to Shu as a special endowment (*sa*).<sup>334</sup> “The name of the door (or embrace) is *q3b.t*, opening or parting (breast, knee) of Shu, which he gave in the embrace (*Schutz*) of Osiris.”<sup>335</sup>

During the embrace, the “outstretched hand” of the embracer is placed “along [the] neck or . . . back” of the other party.<sup>336</sup> To

explain this, Moret suggests that the hand is “execut[ing] magnetic passes the length of the neck and back,” with the idea of imparting “the fluid of life (*sa ankh*) and divine power.”<sup>337</sup> “The god who gave the *sa* (fluid) to the king took him in his arms and made his open hand pass along the neck and back of the pharaoh.”<sup>338</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge has the same idea: it was “passes” down the neck and back that transmitted the “vital power, or ‘fluid of life.’”<sup>339</sup> “Thou hast made passes which place life around the statue-image of the Osiris N. . . . Thy fluid of life is round about him.”<sup>340</sup>

Moret concluded that it must be a sort of “fluid of life” or “magnetic fluid” which the god imparted when he passed his hand over the back of the initiate;<sup>341</sup> only by that act was it possible “to make of a man, a dead person, or a god a living being endowed with the breath of life and with *sa* [the fluid

of life]” —that is, to impart physical and spiritual imperishability.<sup>342</sup> This is borne out in passages from the Pyramid Texts,<sup>343</sup> the fluid itself being identified with spirit, light, and *ka*.<sup>344</sup> What is imparted in the embrace of Shu is thus both the breath and the fluid of life.<sup>345</sup> It was “solar fluid, … the life power itself.”<sup>346</sup>

An important class of statues of seated officials—found, significantly, not in their tombs but in the temples—all sport a standard inscription placed vertically in a strip down the center of the back: “The city god of NN has placed behind him and before him (i.e., around him) his *ka*, being face-to-face with him (*m b3h=f*); … his [two legs] are not out of place, his heart does not fail him (*hsf*).”<sup>347</sup> The seated position of the figures may be an embryonic or fetal anticipation of rebirth.<sup>348</sup>

## Words Spoken at the End

The ritual embrace does not take place in silence. In the Pyramid Texts, as Horus and his father, Osiris, “hold fast to each other,” they exchange some short sentences which Rusch has called an *Umarmungslitanei*, or recitation accompanying the embrace, in which, strangely enough, the father and son exchange identical formulas, the short sentences being arranged facing each other and reading in opposite directions in the text.<sup>349</sup> “At the supreme moment of initiation,” according to van der Leeuw, there took place an exchange “of a Question and a Response ... probably spoken in an undertone both by the priest and the initiand, perhaps ... at the door of the Holiest.” This was “at the last admission,” and the words exchanged served “as liturgical passwords; they could serve as such by their character as ‘mysteries,’ ... as summaries of the life of

the god and its imitation,” through phases of which the candidate had just been introduced.<sup>350</sup> A variation is found on the stela of Piankhi where, at his coronation, the king enters the temple at Heliopolis as an ordinary citizen for “mysterious interviews between god and king”: he mounts the stairs, goes to the great naos entirely alone, pulls the bolts open, opens the shrine, and sees his father in the temple of the Benben, at the conclusion of the interview—and only then—“he receives from the god, his father, the diadem and [was-]sceptre.”<sup>351</sup>

The meeting takes place at the “barrier.” The candidate or his guide opens the interview with the request, “Glorious one, reach me thy hand, stretch forth thy hand from the *dph.* . . . Let thy voice come forth.”<sup>352</sup> From behind the partition, Osiris, conversing with the candidate, “puts his two arms upon his mysterious covering.”<sup>353</sup> The

final door is not solid because one must speak through it: “Ye who are without the veil (*i my tȝ wr.t*)! O guardians of the partition through which one speaks in your presence!”<sup>354</sup> The gate-determinative is not a door but an ornamental panel. What passes through is a series of questions and responses: “Behold, I shall be with Osiris, and my perfection shall be his perfection among the great gods. He shall speak unto me with the words (speech, voice) of men; I shall listen, and he shall repeat to me the words of the gods. I have come equipped (prepared, qualified). Thou makest to approach (thee) those who love thee. I am an *akh* who is better equipped than any *akh*.”<sup>355</sup> In another version: “I am with Osiris. I speak out loud what he says to me, and what I say he repeats. I arrive as a well-prepared *akh*, returning the truth back to him who loves it. I am the well-prepared deceased ... the word

of the dead Osiris is truth.”<sup>356</sup>

Plainly, the initiate had to undergo some sort of test. It was more than the mere password at the other gates: “the symbols are certainly not devised as pass- or watchwords. But as certainly they seem to have served as such.” They were used “at the supreme moment of initiation, just as in [the] christian cult. They are exchanged at the last admission. Exchanged, for … they must have consisted of a Question and a Response.”<sup>357</sup> This may have been the origin of those “What is that?” passages which introduce mythical explanations for forgotten or misunderstood ordinances—Eberhard Otto attests twenty-seven parallels between Coffin Text 335 and Book of the Dead chapter 17.<sup>358</sup> The importance of knowing the names of things and giving those names when challenged is more than the mere idea of the password; it is, according to Derchain,

nothing less than the logical source of “the entire mechanism of Egyptian mythology and liturgy”—namely, “the law which makes of the name a veritable attribute of the thing named.”<sup>359</sup> The exchange of code words is a means of conveying profound knowledge by both words and signs. As the god thrusts his arms through the “mysterious envelope,”<sup>360</sup> he conveys things to come (*yyw'.w*) or things which come through the partition as

responses, “things that come again.”<sup>361</sup> This is pretty confusing, and the Egyptian scribes have tried to supply an explanation: “The *db3.t* (partition) is of such a nature (*shrw*) that it conveys the greatest secret to be found in the ... *duat*.”<sup>362</sup> There is a Jewish tradition, repeated in the Christian Coptic *Gospel of Philip*, that it is behind the veil that the true secret of how this physical universe is run may be learned.<sup>363</sup> The most discussed of such partitions is the *kikkišu*,

the “reed hut” or “reed fence” or both, through which the Babylonian Noah in very ancient times “received instructions about which he seeks further light.”<sup>364</sup> To quote Lambert, “One may suspect that originally this mode of communication was nothing more than whispering through the reed hut in which Atra-hasis lived. In this way Ea himself did not betray the divine secret, for it was the reed wall which actually passed on the words to Atra-hasis.”

In the first Nineveh version, the flood hero is counseled to save himself through a law of consecration: “Reed house, reed house, wall, wall! Reed house listen, wall hear! Man from Shurippak, ... Construct a house, build a ship! Part with riches, seek the life, Abandon property and save the life! Bring living creatures of all kind into the ship!”<sup>365</sup> Frankfort has suggested that the Egyptian *qni* resembles “the reed capes and the reed

shelters” of prehistoric Egypt.<sup>366</sup>

“How do the demons and the ministering angels know what goes on in the universe?” asks the Talmudist, and he answers, “They hear it behind the (heavenly) veil, just as the ministering angels do.”<sup>367</sup> Rabbi Meir declared, “I have just heard (a voice) behind the (heavenly) veil calling out: ‘Repent, ye wayward sons!’”<sup>368</sup>—meaning that all Israel should repent. In this case, the rabbinical editors have supplied the word *heavenly* since they do not recognize the rites of the temple. Describing the great holy complex at Delphi, Heliodorus reports the most important feature of all, where “the Pythian speaks [from behind a veil] out of the holy of holies (*adyton*).”<sup>369</sup>

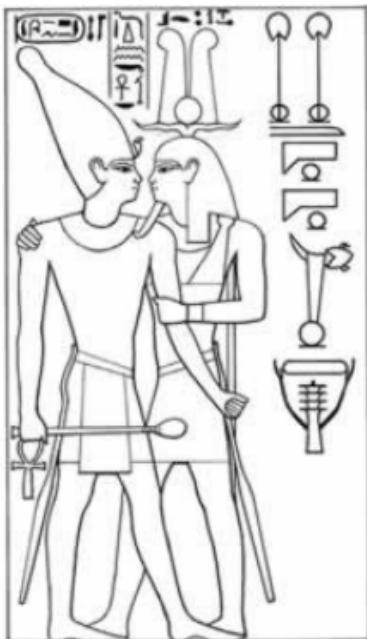


Figure 146. The last king of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty receives the royal embrace from Amon-Re, who says, “I give to thee all life and power.” The characters on the right are various symbols of embracing: The two fans flanked the king protectively when he went forth; the two parts of heaven, each with a seal, are followed by the Serqet emblem with its counterweight, which hangs on the breast to impart breath and life; the two open arms protrude from the *djed*-symbol of strength and endurance, thus completing the usual trio of ‘*nh*, *dd*, *wjs*. Restored drawing from the stela of Tantamani, Karnak, ca. 660 B.C. After Jéquier, “À propos d’une stèle éthiopienne,” 170.

## The ‘nh, Dd, and Wȝs Formula

The words spoken are most commonly designated in the reliefs by three enigmatic symbols: the *ankh*, the *was*-scepter, and the *djed*-column (fig. 146), showing the three virtues of the creative sun” : “life, power, and stability.”<sup>370</sup> Indeed, after the Nineteenth Dynasty, the word for “ritual embrace” was regularly followed by these three symbols in a set formula.<sup>371</sup> In the royal embrace at the coronation and *sed*-festival, the beloved one “gives all ‘nh, dd, wȝs, and health [every] day.”<sup>372</sup> There are variations on the theme. As Ptah the creator embraces Ramses III, he says to the new king, “I have received thee in an embrace of gold; I enfold thee with permanence, stability, and satisfaction; I endow thee with health and joy of heart; I immerse thee in rejoicing, joy, gladness of heart and delight forever.”<sup>373</sup> Another temple

relief shows Amon whispering into the new king's ear, as he embraces him, "I give thee all 'nh and wȝs."<sup>374</sup> And in another, as "the god reaches his hand out through the covering and clasps the king to his bosom," we see behind him, written on the wall, the "words to be spoken: The giving of all life, endurance, authority, health, joy (expansion of heart) to the king of the South and North Kheper-Ka-Ra."<sup>375</sup> In the crucial seventh hour of the Amduat, in reply to the request to receive his embrace, the "Glorious One" says: "Life belongs to thee. . . . Thou hast strength on earth. Mayest thou be exalted in thy posterity (*lit.* those who come after thee). To this the person addressed responds: "O my posterity! Living souls . . . who came out of me to take on the flesh of Atum!"<sup>376</sup>

In all these last examples, we are told at least some of the actual words spoken through the partition. Though sometimes

appearing in combination with other things, the three symbols—*'nh*, *dd*, and *wʒs*—are the normal combination in this context. They express, according to Hellmut Brunner, “all life, all endurance, and all power” and, taken together, represent “the total fulness of divine gifts” thought to describe the pharaoh in earlier times, but represented as the object of his search and the purpose of the ceremonies in Ptolemaic times.<sup>377</sup> Forming a unit, they are accompanied by “all health like Re.”<sup>378</sup> The situation is depicted in a number of reliefs showing Ptah as the Most High God, sitting or standing within a shrine but facing an open door, showing that in these Osiris shrines the god really stands behind a partition; he is shown completely covered by the long white “Sokar”-covering, from which, however, his hands protrude, holding the symbols of *'nh*, *dd*, and *wʒs*.<sup>379</sup> Sethe has noted that the combination of door and arm

can only mean “holding one’s arm open to receive another.”<sup>380</sup>

What is common to all the bestowal formulas is, surprisingly enough, not a spiritual endowment, as we would expect, or lofty, abstract, and mysterious phrases, but the simple declarative or optative sentence promising or endowing the initiate with the earthly gifts of physical strength and enduring vigor and posterity. The words are not written out but are represented by the three symbols, which in this context may well have a special significance.

First, there is the *ankh*, or life sign, the best-known Egyptian symbol. The *sʒ*-symbol, which Moret identifies with the giving of the “vital fluid,” always implies a gift of life, according to him, and is in fact usually accompanied by the *ankh*-symbol.<sup>381</sup> “The God embrace[s] him and transmit[s] to him the divine fluid. . . . This exchange . . .

[is] given ... reciprocally, is the very foundation of the Egyptian cult: ceaselessly the king offers to the god and receives from him the gift of life in all the rites of the sacred service.”<sup>382</sup> Moret wonders, indeed, whether the *ankh*-symbol and the *sȝ*-symbol, which look a good deal alike, may not be the same thing.<sup>383</sup> The nature of the *sȝ* as a reed hut or partition is pretty well established; it is the *ankh* that makes the trouble. “Is it a crude human silhouette ... ?” Moret asks, “a mirror ... ?” A Punic sun-figure depicting “sun, sky, and triangular rays?”<sup>384</sup> Heinrich Schäfer, who has studied it most thoroughly, concludes that its nature is still unexplained; he rejects the usual explanation that it represents a shoestring and suggests that it is perhaps a knot in a sash, with ends hanging down, like the “blood-of-Isis” symbol which it closely resembles.<sup>385</sup> Schäfer concludes that the “blood-of-Isis” symbol was, in fact,

a derivation from the older *ankh*-sign, both signifying simply “life,” though why they mean that and what they originally represented he is at a loss to explain.<sup>386</sup> In an earlier work, however, Alfred Wiedemann gives a possible clue when he points out that as soon as an Egyptian baby was born, the gods presented him first of all with the sign of “life” (the *ankh*) and “divine protection” (the *sʒ*), the former representing a knotted belly-band (Gürtelband), the latter a bound-up mat.<sup>387</sup> Like the placenta (*hn sw*), which had to be preserved most carefully if one expected to be born again,<sup>388</sup> this *ankh*-symbol was inseparable from a person throughout his lifetime and was always worn as an amulet. It was attached to or over the navel of both male and female babies as the sign of life.<sup>389</sup> This would suggest that the mysterious *ankh*, by all accounts a knotted cord, was the navel string. It is interesting

that *ankh* also means “oath,” the idea being, as Jan Bergman suggests, that one swears by one’s life, so that if the oath is broken, so likewise “the cord of life”—the umbilical cord—is broken.<sup>390</sup>



Figure 147. Horus and Anubis support Osiris as a *djed*-pillar, having wrapped him with linen bandlets.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The *djed*-symbol of durability was commonly believed to represent the backbone of Osiris,<sup>391</sup> yet it is so closely associated with the *ankh* and “blood of Isis” amulets as to be identified with them<sup>392</sup> as

just another form of the *ankh*.<sup>393</sup> Schäfer rejects various explanations, concluding that in the end it too, like the *ankh*-sign, is “full of every kind of riddle.”<sup>394</sup> Like the “blood of Isis” and *s3*-tokens with which it often occurs, it stands for “protection,”<sup>395</sup> while both symbols represent “life.”<sup>396</sup> How they became identified with Isis or Nut remains as great a mystery as how the *djed*-column became identified with Osiris (fig. 147), according to Schäfer.<sup>397</sup> All of which does not prevent it from being the sacred relic, the backbone of Osiris,<sup>398</sup> and, as such, the symbol of strength and endurance which it always remained. As early as Pyramid Text 357 §§585, 589, we read: “You have folded your arms around [Horus] so that his bones expand (with life); ... Horus recognizes his father in you,” where the embrace puts life in the bones.<sup>399</sup>

In royal heraldry, the *djed*-symbol was regularly paired with the *was*-scepter at least from the Second Dynasty on. Schäfer equates the latter symbol with “luck,”<sup>400</sup> but it is usually regarded as a sign of power, “dominion, lordship.”<sup>401</sup> Equally common is the pairing of the *was*-scepter with the *ankh*-sign in the set formula “life and rule,” which, Bergman notes, is the king’s “permanent epithet as the guarantee of his divine nature.”<sup>402</sup> The *wʒs*-sign denotes “dominion, lordship, only in fixed expressions like ‘*nh, ddt, wʒs* life, stability, dominion,’” according to Alan Gardiner.<sup>403</sup> Brunner interprets the same formula, “all life, all endurance, all power,”<sup>404</sup> and duly notes that the *wʒs*-sign “has until now been only loosely grasped by the experts,” the real explanation being given at last by Erich Winter, who shows it to be “the sign of the power charisma of the king”—his divine power.<sup>405</sup> Gardiner suggests

this when he writes of the *wjs*-symbol that “it seems probable that it signifies ‘divine power,’ and I propose the translation ‘dominion.’” When the *wjs*-signs are poured over the king with the little ‘*nh*-signs at his baptism, “it would appear, accordingly, that the rite was intended to transfer to Pharaoh a goodly portion of the power of the divinities who presided over the four quarters of the globe.”<sup>406</sup> Moret suggests that the *was*-scepter represented lightning transmitting life from heaven to earth while demonstrating that “the ‘power’ of Pharaoh is manifest in the light of the lightning flash”;<sup>407</sup> Bergman also notes that the double symbol of *ankh* and *was* is sometimes accompanied by a milk jug, emphasizing that the rites, as a bestowal of both physical and spiritual life and strength, are a ceremonial rebirth.<sup>408</sup> All the symbols mentioned here are basically protective in nature<sup>409</sup> and, hence, of special

value during childbirth, which would have been the one occasion on which Isis (never wounded or suffering by any account) would shed her blood. The birth motif is never far away in the ritual embrace since the Egyptians believed that the first embrace of all was the “one-sided act in which Atum pours life into the gods Shu and Tennut (the first male and female beings) whom he had created”<sup>410</sup>—it was the moment of passing through the veil from one life and one world to another.



Figure 148. This ancient Christian relief combines resurrection and ascension motifs in a way that recalls Egyptian parallels. Note especially the stretched-forth hand that receives the ascending One and the document that he holds. Such details are not described in biblical accounts; what is their source? Ivory panel from a diptych, ca. A.D. 400. Courtesy of Bayerisches National Museum.

Thus taken together, the three signs that appear in combination as the words of bestowal at the ritual embrace—‘*nh*, *dd*, *wʒs*

—originally stood for the navel string, the backbone of Osiris, and his priestly power, and with the accompanying inscriptions—which invariably promise health and strength to the candidate—bring to mind the verses of Proverbs 3:1–3, 8, strongly reminiscent of the Egyptian Wisdom literature, and opening with the typically Egyptian embrace of the Two Maats.

The final and concluding rite of the ancient initiation was the subject of a study by van der Leeuw, who discovered that the non-Christian and early Christian practices were virtually identical.<sup>411</sup> In every case, the final rites, coming when “the initiand … is about to enter the interior parts of the temple,”<sup>412</sup> consist of a summary of what has gone before, taking the form of an exchange of formulas which are “at the same time” a statement of “creeds, liturgical formulas, and passwords,” all befitting an ultimate *rite de*

*passage.*<sup>413</sup> It was an exchange of “symbols,” a “Question and a Response ... probably spoken in an undertone both by the priest and the initiand, perhaps ... at the door of the Holiest.”<sup>414</sup> Van der Leeuw’s object was to discover, from matching all the texts, just what the ancients understood by a “symbol,” and he concluded that it can be an “emblem, ... sign, device, watch-word, token, mark, ticket (*tessera*), contribution, creed,” all these having one single idea in common—that of “agreement,” of covenant.<sup>415</sup> The symbols are exchanged in the concluding rite of the mysteries as a means of identification—not as between members meeting in the street, but the means by which the initiate identified himself “as someone whose life had been united to that of the god” (fig. 148).<sup>416</sup>

Thus our Book of Breathings stays in the game right to the end.

# Notes

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202. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 218–21, quotation on 221.
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212. Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue,” 450.
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216. Budge, *Book of Opening the Mouth*, 1:215.
217. Bjerke, “Remarks on the Egyptian Ritual of ‘Opening the Mouth,’” 215.
218. Budge, *Book of Opening the Mouth*, 1:102–4.
219. Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue,” 452.
220. PT 25 §18, in Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue,” 450.
221. P. Louvre N. 3292, in Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 81–84. [In his article, Nagel claims that this last door is no different than the other doors even though it is depicted differently in the papyrus. Nibley seems correct here—eds.]
222. Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 81.
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225. Gardiner, “Coronation of King Haremhab,” 15.
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227. André Pelletier, “Le grand rideau du vestibule du temple de Jérusalem,” *Syria* 35 (1958): 218–26.
228. François Daumas, “Sur trois représentations de Nout à

Dendara," *ASAE* 51 (1951): 385–87, 393.

229. CT 60, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:253.

230. Jacques J. Clère, "Un passage de la stèle du général Antef," *BIFAO* 30 (1931): 441–42.

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232. Daumas, "Sur trois représentations de Nout à Dendara," 381; Nagel, "Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire," 47, 49.

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241. See Bernhard Grdseloff, "Nouvelles données concernant la tente de purification," *ASAE* 51 (1951): 129–40.

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243. CT 44, in de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:188.

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245. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte*, 52.
246. Wolfgang Helck, “Die Herkunft des abydenischen Osirisrituals,” *ArOr* 20 (1952): 80; Grdseloff, “Nouvelles données concernant la tente de purification,” 134, 138–39; Émile Massoulard, *Préhistoire et protohistoire d’Égypte* (Paris: Institut d’Ethnologie, 1949), 446.
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248. Herbert G. May, “The Ark—A Miniature Temple,” *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 52 (1936): 234.
249. Theophylactus, *Expositio in epistolam ad Hebraeos* (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*) 9.2–3, in PG 125:297.
250. Pelletier, “Grand rideau du vestibule du temple de Jérusalem,” 222; cf. TB *Ketubbot* 106a (XIII, 1), in Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Der babylonische Talmud* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1933–35), 4:811.
251. Pelletier, “Grand rideau du vestibule du temple de Jérusalem,” 223, 225–26, quotations on latter two pages.
252. TB *Ketubbot* 106a (XIII, 1), in Goldschmidt, *Der babylonische Talmud*, 4:811.
253. Julius Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums: Gesammelt und Erläutert* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1961),

254. Robert Eisler, *Iēsous basileus ou basileusas* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1929–30), 1:459.
255. Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 84.
256. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l’Égypte ancienne*, 220.
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266. Marinus de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve*

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268. Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex, 34, in *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus*, ed. Carl Schmidt (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1892), 251.
269. *On the Origin of the World* 98, 20–23.
270. *On the Origin of the World* 98, 21–23.
271. Thausing, *Sein und Werden*, 151; cf. the *eopoeia* of the Greek mysteries.
272. Daumas, “Sur trois représentations de Nout à Dendara,” 373–400; Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 84.
273. Budge, *Book of Opening the Mouth*, 1:208–9.
274. Kees, “‘Pr-dwȝt’ und ‘dbȝ.t.’” 13.
275. Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue,” 461–62, quotation on 462.
276. Kees, “‘Pr-dwȝt’ und ‘dbȝ.t.’” 5–6, quotation on 6.
277. Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue,” 450; Rudolf Anthes, “Der Berliner Hocker des Petamenophis,” *ZÄS* 73 (1937): 26–27.
278. Budge, *Book of Opening the Mouth*, 1:185–86.
279. See Hugh Nibley, “Victoriosa Loquacitas,” reprinted in *The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled*, CWHN 10:262 fig. 17.
280. Henri Leclercq, “Main,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie*

*chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907–53), 10:1207.

281. BD 80.

282. Max Guilmot, “La signification des métamorphoses du défunt en Égypte ancienne,” *RHR* 175 (1969): 13–14, sees in this a natural human impulse and quotes André Malraux: “Every man dreams of being God.”

283. Cited in Marguerite Harl, “From Glory to Glory,” in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef A. Jungmann (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), 2:730–35, citation on 730.

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285. Heraclitus, in Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951), 1:164.

286. Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris* 77.

287. For sources, see Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations de l'Égypte ancienne*, 404–5, 425.

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290. *Pistis Sophia* 1.29–30, in Carl Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia*, trans. Violet MacDermot (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 41–45.

291. *Apocryphon of John* BG 57:7–60:19 = II 22:6–23:26 =

III 28:13–30:17 = IV 34:15–36:21.

292. *Apocryphon of John* BG 23:3–21 = II 2:33–3:12 = IV 4:3–21.
293. *Testament of Benjamin* 9:3–5, in *APOT*, 2:358–59; *OTP*, 1:827 and n. 9c.
294. 2 *Jeu* chap. 50, p. 73, in *Gnostische Schriften*, ed. Schmidt, 122.
295. 1 *Jeu* chaps. 37–38, pp. 41–43, in *Gnostische Schriften*, ed. Schmidt, 86–87.
296. *Gospel of Thomas* II, 47, 19–24 (logion 83).
297. Michael Asin and Palaccios, *Logia et agrapha Domini Jesu*, in PO 19:580, logion #187.
298. Gerardus van der Leeuw, “The SUMBOLA [*Symbola*] in Firmicus Maternus,” *Egyptian Religion* 1/2 (1933): 72.
299. *Gospel of Philip* II, 85, 1–15.
300. Hugh W. Nibley, “Christian Envy of the Temple,” *JQR*, n.s., 50 (1959–60): 231–32, reprinted in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, CWHN 4:409.
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303. For example, *Pistis Sophia* 2.98–99, 109, in Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia*, 242–46, 277–78.
304. *Gospel of Philip* II, 85, 1–15.

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306. *Kephalaia* 38 (ch. 9) lines 9–19; 40 lines 19–22, in *Kephalaia*, 38, 40.
307. *Kephalaia* 40 (ch. 9) lines 19–22, in *Kephalaia*, 40.
308. *Kephalaia* 38 (ch. 9) line 13 through 39 line 9, in *Kephalaia*, 38–39.
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311. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte*, 23, 64, quotation on 23.
312. Moret, *Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 80–81, 101–2, 160–62; Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 32, 66–67, 133–36.
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314. Moret, “Varia: Sur le rite de l’embrassement,” 31.
315. Nagel, “Papyrus funéraire de la fin du Nouvel Empire,” 86.
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317. Mayassis, *Mystères et initiations dans la préhistoire et protohistoire*, 49–50.
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321. Legrain, “Second rapport sur les travaux exécutés à Karnak,” 13.
322. Moret, “Varia: Sur le rite de l’embrassement,” 27–28.
323. Piankoff, “Livre des Quererts,” pl. LXXI.
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330. Shorter, “Reliefs Showing the Coronation of Ramesses II,” pl. III.3.
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338. Moret, *Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 47; see Moret, *Rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte*, 99–101.
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347. Cited in Otto, “Zur Bedeutung der ägyptischen Tempelstatue,” 451, 449; Anthes, “Der Berliner Hocker

des Petamenophis,” 26–27, quotation on 27 and n. 1.

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370. Moret, *Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 41; Moret, *Rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte*, 23.
371. *Wb* 3:71.
372. Legrain, “Second rapport sur les travaux exécutés à Karnak,” 13.
373. [We were unable to locate the source for this quotation; the writings of Ramses III are voluminous and not completely published. The quotation appears to be a typical formulaic Egyptian expression. We have no reason to doubt its authenticity—eds.]
374. Jéquier, “À propos d’une stèle éthiopienne,” 170.
375. Legrain, “Second rapport sur les travaux exécutés à Karnak,” 13; cf. the same blessings in PT 442 §§819–

22, in which the dead king becomes a star.

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389. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, 78–79.
390. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, 196 n. 3.
391. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, 150–51.
392. Schäfer, “Das sogenannte ‘Blut der Isis’” 108–10.
393. Schäfer, “Djed-Pfeiler, Lebenszeichen, Osiris, Isis,” 424.
394. Schäfer, “Djed-Pfeiler, Lebenszeichen, Osiris, Isis,” 425.
395. Schäfer, “Djed-Pfeiler, Lebenszeichen, Osiris, Isis,” 430.
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397. Schäfer, “Das sogenannte ‘Blut der Isis’” 110.
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407. Moret, *Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 42–43.
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410. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 134–35.
411. Van der Leeuw, “*Symbola in Firmicus Maternus*,” 65–72.
412. Van der Leeuw, “*Symbola in Firmicus Maternus*,” 67.
413. Van der Leeuw, “*Symbola in Firmicus Maternus*,” 69–70.
414. Van der Leeuw, “*Symbola in Firmicus Maternus*,” 71.
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416. Van der Leeuw, “*Symbola in Firmicus Maternus*,” 71.

# **Introduction to the Appendixes**

As in a hall of mirrors, the Book of Breathings seems to be reflected in an endless procession of documents that fade out of sight in either direction. Extending behind it into the past lie the Egyptian funerary and temple texts that go back to the beginning, and after it comes an equally impressive succession of early Christian and Jewish writings that move on down through the patristic literature to our own day. The half dozen pieces that follow are to balance the picture and should help the Latter-day Saint reader to feel at home, if not to orient himself, in the strange world the Prophet Joseph opened up to the view of a scornful

and incredulous humanity.

## Appendix 1

# From the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS)

### Description of the Rule of the Community

The *Rule of the Community* (1QS), from the Dead Sea Scrolls, sets forth the beliefs and activities of a community of pious sectaries at Qumran in the desert just before the Christian era—what Professor Frank Cross has called a sect (church) of “anticipation.”<sup>1</sup> Everything is by way of preparation “for the eternal planting of a holy temple for Israel, and the mysteries (secret ordinances) of a holy of holies for Aaron” (1QS VIII, 5–6). Preparation is the theme; hence, it is not surprising that the specific ordinances referred to are the

*initiatory* rites. But at the same time the scroll makes clear the ultimate objective of its whole operation—exaltation and eternal lives for the members—while plainly indicating the general nature of the temple activities to which it looks forward with such eager anticipation.

The whole theme of religion is eternal life. But beings who would live forever must be prepared to do so—they must be perfect. Nothing but perfection will do for an order of existence that is to last forever and ever. The striving for perfection is the theme of the *Rule of the Community*. The sectaries of Qumran knew that the greatest of all prizes was not to be cheaply bought, that there could be no cheating or cutting of corners; to prepare for eternity, one must be willing to go all the way. Whatever may have been their human failings, these people, as the Roman Catholic scholar Georg Molin

observed, must be taken seriously and viewed with great respect. The proper title for them, the name they gave themselves, he maintains, is “Latter-day Saints”—and he deplores the preemption of that name at the present time by a “so-called Christian sect.”

<sup>2</sup> A careful reading of the *Rule of the Community* will show that it has a great deal in common with the Book of Breathings.

Roman numerals indicate columns in the original text; numbers following indicate the lines. Passages in brackets are my summaries or paraphrases. Following is a translation from Eduard Lohse’s German text.<sup>3</sup> Not all lines are included in each section.

## Return to the Ancient Order

The whole first section of the text (I, 1–9) closely resembles the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants and also the

prologue to the New Testament in Luke 1. Thus, in Luke 1:6: “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,” the expressions “righteous before God,” “*walking* in all the commandments,” and “blameless (perfect) in all,” as well as the pleonasm “commandments and ordinances,” though all quite un-Greek, are strictly in the idiom of the Qumran sectaries, among whom (or among whose neighbors) the parents of John the Baptist may very well have mingled.

- I, 2. [to] do what is good and proper (upright) in his [God’s] sight (before him) even as
3. he has commanded by the hand of Moses and by the hand of all his servants the prophets ...
6. and never to walk again (any more) in the ways of a guilty heart and lustful eyes.

7. To love all who take upon themselves to keep the laws of God
8. by covenant in righteousness (*or* in the covenant of grace); to enter into (*lit.* be made one with) the deliberations (*lit.* counsel; *Eduard Lohse translates this as Ratsversammlung*)<sup>4</sup> of God; and to walk before him perfect (in) all
9. that has been revealed regarding the performance [in proper time and place] of their appointed duties (*or* ordinances).

## **Complete Commitment Required**

Here (I, 9–18) and in line 8, the candidates take on themselves by covenant the law of God to keep all his commandments even at the peril of their lives. With this goes a law of consecration. The society calls itself a *yahad*, meaning oneness or unity, thereby identifying itself with the model church, the Zion of Enoch

(the oldest known fragments of any book of Enoch have been discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls), who were “*of one* heart and *one* mind” in both spiritual and temporal things (Moses 7:18; cf. John 17:11, 21–24; D&C 38:25–39).<sup>5</sup>

I, 11. [All candidates] shall bring with them all their understanding (*or* education, including both knowledge and intelligence) and physical strength

12–13. and earthly possessions into the church of God. [These three things are now put on a higher level: Their minds are purified by a true understanding of God’s laws, their bodily strength is put to the test and refined like pure gold in ways prescribed by God, and their property is administered according to his just and holy principles.]

14. [They are to be neither impatient for advancement (*or* the fulfilling of God’s

promised times) nor apathetic to such.]

16. And all who enter into the order of the church shall do so (*lit.* go over) by covenant before God to do
17. all which he has commanded and not to depart (*lit.* return) from his way (*lit.* from after him) out of any fear or dread of the burning
18. in the dominion of Belial.

## Preliminary Meeting

At a preliminary meeting, the candidates formally renounce the world and declare their willingness to enter into the order (I, 18-II, 10). The first step is repentance:

- I, 21. And the priests shall read the righteous dealing of God ...
22. and cause them to hear all the merciful deeds of kindness upon Israel. And the Levites shall read (of)
23. the iniquities of the children of Israel,

and all their guilty transgressions....

24. The candidates shall confess after them,  
saying: We have sinned,

25. [...] we and our [fathers] before us

II, 10. And all entering the covenant shall say  
after both the blessers and the cursers,  
Amen! Amen!

With every blessing goes a cursing—a  
*penalty* clause with every oath and covenant.

## **Conditions of Admission**

All who have mental reservations or who  
backslide or fail to live up to every covenant  
will be delivered over to the power of  
Satan, for God is not deceived (II, 11–18).

II, 13. [whoever] when he hears the words of  
this covenant assures (*lit. blesses*) himself  
in his heart, saying: I will have peace,  
14. and in the way of mine own heart I will  
walk...;

15. the wrath of God and the recompense (zeal, fulness) of his judgments shall burn him in eternal destruction, and to him shall cling all
16. the curses of this covenant. And God shall set him apart for evil;
17. his portion (lot) shall be among those who are forever accursed.
18. And all who come into the covenant shall answer and say after them, Amen! Amen!

## **Going Over to the Next Phase**

After the preliminary meeting, the entire company is described as “going over” from one state to another (II, 19–25).

- II, 19. Thus shall they do year by year all the days of the rule of Belial. The priests shall pass over (*ya ‘avôrû*, pass on or through, proceed, “pass in review” ?)
20. first of all, in order according to their spiritual standing one after the other, and

the Levites shall pass over after them.

21. And all the people shall pass over in  
third place one after the other,

22. that each man of Israel may be  
distinguished by his proper thousand,  
hundred, fifty, and ten....

24. But in the true church the entire  
membership shall (must) be of proper  
(good) humility, charity loving  
(forbearing), and fair judging (righteous in  
reckoning).

The verb *ya 'avôrû*, “they go over,”  
appears in lines 19, 20, and 21 and must  
signify more than to “enter” the society or  
join the church, for up to this point and as  
recently as line 18, the latter idea is  
expressed by another verb. The “passing  
over” is a repeated occurrence, whereas the  
oaths and covenants are taken once for all,  
the refrain at the swearing-in meeting being  
“forever and ever.” There can be no thought

of an annual renewal of initiation rites, though such rites might have been held yearly like the early Christian baptism, which could take place properly only at Easter. After the priests pass along “one by one” (line 20), all the congregation follow, also “one by one” (line 21). But the Amen! Amen! of the swearing-in was taken by the entire body in unison. In the “passing along,” emphasis is laid on putting each in his proper place or position, citing the example of the hosts of ancient Israel (there could hardly have been “thousands” at an initiation session at Qumran); at the same time there must be no sense of rank or superiority (line 24). All of this suggests that we are dealing here not with positions in the church, but the actual progression of the company from one place to another. Throughout 1QS everyone is constantly referred to as “walking” and being “on the way” or “road” (*derek*). This

is the familiar imagery of the initiation. It is not too much to see in the verb ‘*āvar*’ an idea of passage from one state to another as well as from one place to another. The peculiar allure of the language of the Dead Sea Scrolls is that partial effacing of boundaries of time, place, and even personality in which all things fuse into one, along with a sense of constant motion and activity.

## **Admonition against Backsliding**

Again appears the admonition that they who do not have the proper spirit cannot be benefited by the ordinances, the exalted nature of which is here pointed out (II, 25–III, 14).

- III, 3. And he beholds only darkness in the ways of light. In the eye of the perfect ones [initiates]
4. he is not held worthy. He shall not be cleansed by the atoning rites nor shall he

be purified by the waters of *niddāh*, nor sanctified by any waters

5. or streams, nor made clean by any waters of washing. Unclean, unclean shall he be as long as he rejects the statutes (*mishpatîm*, ordinances, judgments)
6. of God!...For in the spirit of the true counsel of God are the ways of a man whose sins have all been atoned for,
7. to see clearly by light of life and by the Holy Ghost (which leads) the church (*lit.* is for the church) in his (*or* its) truth. He is cleared of (*lit.* cleansed from) all
8. his transgressions, and by an upright and humble spirit the price of his sins is paid. And by the submission of his soul to all the ordinances (*or* laws, commandments, *huqqîm*) of God,
9. his flesh is purified for (*or* preparatory to) being sprinkled with the waters of *niddāh* and sanctified in the waters of his *dôkh*.

And he shall direct his steps to walk perfectly

10. in all the ways of God.... .
11. Then will he be qualified (pleasing)...  
for the covenant
12. of the church eternal.

The unworthy who fails to make the grade is contrasted with the “perfect ones” *tāmîm*, the equivalent of the *teleioi* of the Christian and Greek mysteries, a “perfect one” being one who has learned all that is required in any phase of initiation and passed the tests.

*Niddāh* can mean an impurity or the removal of impurity; it has a moral sense of payment for sin—as water, it is a removal of pollution (Numbers 19:21). *Dōk* means to tread or stamp on, to crush or pound—i.e., to push down on; it can also mean to extinguish a fire and to set apart.<sup>6</sup> Why is this peculiar word used here? Irresistibly the German sect of Dunkers comes to mind: their terms

*tunken*, *tauchen*, and *dunk* all convey the idea of immersion. The Arabic root is rich in expressions. Whenever the water rites are mentioned, a plurality of ordinances is evident, for the waterwork appointments (facilities) at Qumran plainly show that there is more than one rite of cleansing by water.

## **Instructions to the Guide: The Creation Motif**

Next come directions for the instructor or leader of the group to introduce them to the creation theme. This is the clearest indication that 1QS is meant not only as a book of rules and table of organization but primarily as a guide to initiatory ordinances (III, 13–IV, 1).

III, 13. To the instructor, for demonstrating (making plain) and for teaching all the Sons of Light concerning the origin (*tôlədôt*, birth, fundamental nature, family

history) of mankind (the sons of man);

14. for (knowing) every type of their spirits by their tokens, and of their deeds by their history (generations).

15. From God is the knowledge of all that exists and that will (yet) be brought into existence. And before they existed he prepared their whole plan,

16. and when they exist according to schedule (*lit.* their appointment) they are to carry out (fill) all their activities according to his glorious plan without any changes.

17. All decisions rest with him (*lit.* in his hand), but he will sustain them in all their righteous desires. For he created man to have dominion (to rule, govern) over

18. this earth. And he appointed (*lit.* placed) for him two spirits by which he should walk until the time of his visitation (*or* judgment). They are the spirits

19. of truth and of twisting (‘āwēl, perversity), a fountain (*ma ‘yan*) of light, ...and a wellspring (*māqōr*) of darkness.
20. In the hand of the Prince of Lights is the rule of all the Sons of Righteousness; upon the ways of light they walk. But in the hand of the Angel
21. of Darkness is the rule of Sons of Deception (‘āwēl)....And by (because of, in) the Angel of Darkness
22. all the Sons of Righteousness went astray, so that all their sins and transgressions and guilt and the trespasses of their ways are in his power,
23. according to the deep designs of God, until his appointed end.... .
24. And all the spirits that follow him (of his lot or portion) attempt to overthrow (cause to stumble) the Sons of Light, while the God of Israel and his faithful angel (the angel of his truth) assist all

25. the Sons of Light. It was he who created the spirits of light and darkness; and upon them is founded the whole operation

26. [...] all work, and upon their ways [...]

The creation story is here summarized in a few lines, but all the main elements are present: first the plan laid down in heaven before the foundations of the earth (III, 15–16); then the creation of man (III, 17–18); and finally an introduction of the evil one into the scene (III, 19–21), by whom the human race is led astray (III, 21–23) in order to be tested by the law of opposition in all things (III, 23–25).

## **The Way Back: A Rigorous and Dangerous Passage**

What follows is man's way on earth, specifically his way back to the presence of God. The road is dangerous, and the candidates are charged to avoid all frivolity

and improper and lascivious behavior and to be most discreet in guarding the secrets. The ultimate objectives of the whole discipline, both here and hereafter, are set forth (IV, 2–26).

IV, 2. And these are their ways upon the earth...,

4. a spirit of understanding in the planning of every undertaking, anxious to judge rightly and act
5. in holiness constantly (firmly), active (creative), with increase of charity to all the Sons of Truth; and perfect (glorious) purity, loathing all the impure idols, with modest deportment (gait, going)
6. being discreet in all things while hiding the truth of (concealing faithfully) the secret teachings (*or* secrets of knowledge). These are the confidential instructions (*or* secrets) of the Spirit for the Sons of Truth [while on] earth....For

healing

7. and increase of peace in length of days, to be fruitful and multiply (*lit.* fertility of seed), with all the blessings of eternity and everlasting joy (joy of the eternities), in eternal live(s) [*can also be read nētzah*, victorious, brilliant, triumphant], with a crown of glory
8. along with a garment of splendor in eternal light.
- 9–14. [The fate of the unworthy is described.]
- 13–14. weeping,...dark confusion,... destruction.
- 15–20. [Everything is determined in the plan of God according to set periods, to give each a time of probation.]
15. Such are the generations of the children of men and in their proper divisions each of their groups receives its inheritance according to their generations ... ,

16. each individual receiving his inheritance whether great or small.... .
18. And God in his deep designs and glorious wisdom has placed a limit to the existence of wrongdoing ...
20. (until) the time set for the judgment . . . , at which time God will make clear by his truth all the deeds of mankind and purify for himself certain ones of the children of men, abolishing every spirit of iniquity from among them (him), removing every spirit of iniquity that besets
21. his flesh, and purify him by the Holy Ghost from all his iniquities. And he will pour out upon him a spirit of truth like water, purging away all abominable falsehood ...
22. to make known (*or* instruct) the righteous by the knowledge of the Most High ('Elyôn) and by (*or* in) the wisdom of the Sons of Heaven, for the enlightenment (*lit.*

making intelligent) of those who are perfect in the way. For with them God has chosen to make an eternal covenant.

23. And to them is all the glory of Adam....
25. For God has placed them (good and evil) in equal portions (side by side) until the time is up and there is a new creation.
26. [...] and he causes the children of men to inherit, having a knowledge of good and [evil], each [receiving] his portion (lot) according to his spirit....

The insistence on a fixed order for everything is characteristic of the Qumran community and is in direct opposition to that totally unstructured Church of the Spirit which was long held to be the essence of early Christianity. The ultimate goal is described in terms of the millennium and of the heavenly Zion of Enoch. Until then, the rule of the Two Ways was to hold sway. The doctrine of the Two Ways, which

predominates in the earliest Christian writings, admonishes every individual that he must choose between the Way of Light and the Way of Darkness every day of his life as long as he is in the flesh. Here it is presented as the doctrine of the Two Spirits.

## **The Priesthood in Charge**

The organization of the society exists only to implement its main purpose, which is the exaltation of the individual. The church is not a service club, fraternal or benevolent society, lodge, or social organization. All activities are under the direction and authority of the priesthood—"the priests... keep the covenant" and are hence qualified to serve in the temple when it shall be restored in its purity (V, 1—VI, 14).

VI, 2. and they shall eat together,  
3. and pray together, and take counsel  
together. And in whatever place ten men of

the church organization (council) are met together, a priest shall not be lacking among them;

4. and they shall sit each man according to his proper place (*or* rank, quality)....And when they set the table to eat or drink of the new wine (*tîrôsh*, unfermented grape juice)
5. the priest shall put forth his hand first of all to pronounce the blessing of the firstfruits of the bread or wine [as the case may be].

## A Sacramental Meal

The separate blessing suggests a sacramental meal, and at the end of the so-called appendix to the 1QS the instructions are more specific (1QSa II, 17–21).

II, 17. And if they meet (by appointment) for the table of the church or to drink the new wine, the table

18. of the church (congregation) being prepared and the wine [prepared] for drinking, no man shall [put forth] his hand for the first of (*or* to begin)
19. the bread and [the wine,] until the priest; for [it is he who] blesses the firstfruits of the bread
20. and the new wine, and he shall [reach forth] his hand for the bread before the others, and after that the Messiah of Israel shall put forth his hand
21. to the bread [...] they shall bless (?) all the meeting of the church [...] according to his office (dignity, greatness). And according to this rule shall they do [...] as many as ten men meet together.

The mention of firstfruits of the bread and wine implies that the priest speaks a formal set blessing over the bread and wine separately, regardless of the time of year—whenever the meeting takes place. The

almost casual mention of the presence of the Messiah is significant since the sacramental meal looks both backward and forward to the visits of the Messiah: “Take, eat...in remembrance of me....This cup is the new testament (covenant) in my blood....drink in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24–25). “This is my blood of the new testament. ...I will...drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:28–29).

Today one purpose of the sacramental meal in the church is “that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79).

Participation in any rites and activities requires a “recommend” from the “bishop” (1QS VI, 13–27).

VI, 13. And all candidates from Israel  
14. shall be examined by the *paqid* (visiting overseer, inspector, having the same meaning as Greek *episkopos*, from which

comes our term *bishop*) as to his qualifications and past life....

16–23. [He must undergo periods of probation before earning complete membership.]

## **Rules of Behavior**

The candidate is again charged to observe strict rules of behavior, the violations of which incur set penalties (VI, 24–VII, 1–25).

VI, 24–27. And these are the rules...with regard to their (temporal) affairs....The most serious offenses are

VII, 1–9. If he curses or uses strong language [the offender will be punished.]

5–9. [Dishonesty and deceit are not to be tolerated.] ...

12. [any impure practice]...who goes naked before his neighbor

13. who spits during a meeting...who puts forth his hand from his garment

14. showing his nakedness....who laughs foolishly and loudly.
  15. Who gossips about his neighbor
  16. shall be ostracized for one year; but who speaks evilly of others in a meeting of the church shall be banished from among them
  17. and never return again. And who murmurs against the leadership of the community shall be permanently excommunicated.
- 18–25. [Going against the leadership of the church entails the severest penalty of all.]

## **Preparation for a True Temple**

The highest authority resides in a priestly body whose primary qualification is humility and whose real objective is to prepare for the establishment of a temple in its completeness (VIII, 1–21).

VIII, 1. There shall be in the council of the church twelve men and three priests,

perfect in all that is revealed from all

2. the scriptures (Torah), to do truth and righteousness and judgment and love of mercy, each walking humbly with his neighbor....
5. To establish the true order of government in the church, for the eternal planting of a holy temple for Israel, and the (secret) ordinances of a holy
6. of holies for Aaron, (to be) true witnesses, for judgment and chosen ones of [God's] pleasure, for the redemption of the earth (land) and for a recompense
7. to the wicked of their deserts. There will be the tested wall (*or* wall or partition of testing), the precious cornerstone [Isaiah 28:16].
8. Its foundations shall not shake nor be moved from their place. A house (*mē'ōn*, dwelling place, habitation) of the holy of holies

9. for Aaron, for the instruction of all of them in (for) the covenant of judgment (righteousness), and for the bringing of an acceptable offering (*lit.* and for the offering of an agreeable odor), and for a perfect and true temple in Israel.
10. To establish a covenant in accordance with his everlasting principles (laws, commandments).... When these have walked perfectly in the way of the church for two years,
11. they shall be set apart and sanctified [*i.e.*, to prepare all the others], nothing being hidden from them
13. (then) according to these arrangements they shall be removed from the dwelling of the men of iniquity to go in the desert, to prepare there the road of “He Who Is” [Isaiah 40:3 has the Tetragrammaton YHWH here, which the writer of the scroll avoids by using a substitute].

# The Temple Represents the Eternal Order

All look forward to the temple (VIII, 15–IX, 26).

- IX, 3. And when these things shall be in Israel according to all these provisions, for a foundation for the Holy Ghost in truth
4. eternal to atone for the guilt of transgression and sinful action(s), as a greater blessing for the earth than the flesh of burnt offerings, the fattening (of beasts) for slaughter; (rather) a heavenly offering
  5. of the lips as prescribed (is)...as a free-will offering, pleasing and acceptable. At that time shall the men of the church be set apart (separated),
  6. a holy temple for Aaron, to be united in a holy of holies and a single (common) temple (house) for Israel such as walk perfectly.

7. But the Sons of Aaron alone shall rule in matters of law (judgment) and property, and upon them (upon their face) the administration and the portion of the entire government of the members of the church,

...

11. until there shall come a Prophet and the Messiah of Aaron and Israel.

12. These are the statutes by which the prudent ones walk, the whole rule of life by which they identify themselves in each dispensation (*lit.* time by time), and by which they are judged (weighed) man by man (on an individual basis)....[The themes of individuality and discretion are developed in the lines that follow.]

17. [The whole operation is to be kept secret from the world.] ...

19. That is the time (the time has come) to prepare the way

20. in the wilderness and to prepare their

minds for all that awaits doing . . . ,

21. and these are the guidelines (rules of the road) for the instructor in those circumstances (times) regarding both love and hate. . . .

The new temple is contrasted with the old one. For a decade the world has been awaiting the publication (mere photographs would do) of the great *Temple Scroll*,<sup>7</sup> pending which it is enough to note that the expected temple was no mere abstract edifice of spirit and allegory, as the later Christians would have it.<sup>8</sup>

## The Preexistent Plan

Though by now it is quite obvious that the *Rule of the Community* is no product of rabbinic, halakhic, or “normative” Judaism, it is the last two columns of the text that transport us far beyond the familiar scope of conventional Judaism and Christianity. First

we are shown the vast sweep of the plan from its background in the preexistent realm, in which the temple by its appointments and ordinances is seen to represent the eternal and celestial order (X, 1-7).

- X, 1. During the periods (*or* in the regions; *qētz* is a marked-off extent of either time or space) in which [God] was establishing the dominion of light with its cycles, and when he gathered together at his appointed place, at the beginning
2. of the initiation of the supervising bodies (*lit.* night watch) of the darkness (*i.e.*, lights in the firmament); as he opened his treasury and poured its contents upon the earth, and as he cycled them and condensed (gathered) them by virtue of the light, even in the radiance
3. of the illuminators of the holy dwelling, along with those he had assembled to the abode of glory; when the set times

emerged according to the days of the month, coordinated (united) in their revolutions (cycles) with

4. the passing of one into the other as they renew themselves, the great M (*i.e.*, the great day, New Year's Day) stands for the holy of holies and the symbol N for the key of his eternal mercies, for opening (*or* at the beginnings)
5. of the established seasons (*or* festivals) in each period....[More follows on the observance of seasonal festivals—the year-rites.]

Talk of the treasury and the cycles exactly matches those descriptions of the creation found in a number of Coptic Christian texts.<sup>9</sup> The code writing of the M and the N is intentional, to judge by the Christian parallels.

*Hymn of Creation*

The text now shifts to the first person in a triumphant conclusion that echoes the *Thanksgiving Hymn* of Qumran and the ancient *Hymn of Creation*. The individual here orients himself in all the dispensations of the world, as well as in the glories of the preexistence and the eternities to come (X, 8–18):

- X, 8. And as long as I live, the law of liberty is on my tongue as fruits of praise and the offering of my lips;
9. I shall sing with understanding, and all my music (is) for the glory of God, and the strings of my harp are for declaring (describing, setting forth) his holiness, and the flute of my lips shall exalt his never-ending skill and judgment.
10. At the coming of day and night (*or* the passing of day into night), I shall enter into the covenant of 'El, and with the coming of (*or* at the gates of, as in Psalm 65:9)

evening and morning I shall recite his laws. And where they are I shall place

11. my own boundaries, from which I shall not depart....

13. At the beginning (at the creation), stretching forth hands and feet, I praise his name; at the first coming and going,

14. sitting and standing (rising), and lying upon my bed, I sing unto him...after the manner of men.

15. And before I lift my hand to cultivate [*lit.* fatten] the delights of the fruits of the earth (*or* before I fatten myself with the pleasures of the earth's bounty); and at the onset of fear and dread in the place of distress and loneliness (*būqāh*, emptiness)

16. I will call upon (root \*BRK; kneel to, supplicate; *or* bless, praise) him in his manifest wonders and prostrate myself (*or* humble myself; *šahah*) for his mighty deeds; and upon his mercies will I lean

continually (all the day). And I know that  
in his hand is the judging of

17. all that lives, and all his works are true.

...I shall not return to any man a  
recompense

18. of evil. With good I shall pursue  
mankind, for with God is the judgment of  
all living, and he will repay to man his  
deserts.

## **The Initiate as Adam**

The identification of the individual with  
the man Adam is unmistakable. From the  
creation hymn we move to the creation of  
man; his cultivating the garden and partaking  
of the fruit are both conveyed in a single  
sentence in line X, 15, the key to which is the  
word for “pleasures,” using the root of  
“Eden.” This is confirmed by the surprising  
second half of the line, which abruptly turns  
off the light and finds the singer “in a place

of sorrow and emptiness” —a dreary and lone world—but still calling upon God and receiving his support. Recognizing God’s mercy, forbearance, and sole right to judge, he vows to forgive all beings their trespasses against him.

## **Combat and Tribulation: A Dreary World**

The theme of the lines that follow is combat and trial in a dark and dangerous world—a psalm of tribulation, with the imagery of the courtroom and a Negative Confession (X, 18–XI, 2).

X, 20. I do not flinch (turn aside) before men of deceit (twisting, false witnesses) and am not satisfied until he has passed judgment . . .

22. Foolishness, falsehood, iniquity, deceit, and lies will not be found on my lips, but fruits of holiness on my tongue, and

abominations

23. shall not be found there....

XI, 2. But as for me, God will judge me, and in his hand is the perfection (correctness) of my way and the uprightness of my heart.

## Divine Guidance to a Glorious Goal

The conclusion that follows is on an entirely positive note, the singer ending his dangerous journey amidst the glorious company in the presence of God (XI, 2–22).

XI, 2. [God is the guide whose hand leads him safely along the way]

3. and by his righteous (provisions, pl.) he will wipe out my transgression. For from the fountain of his knowledge he has brought forth (opened) his light. And he has caused my eye(s) to behold his marvelous works, and my mind has been enlightened by performance of his mystery (ordinance).<sup>10</sup>

4. For the Eternal Being (*or* eternal existence) is the support of my right hand. On a mighty rock is the way of my steps, which nothing can cause to shake. For the truth of God is
5. the rock of my footsteps, and his strength is the support of my right hand; and from the fountain of his righteousness is my judgment. His marvelous mysteries are a light to my mind (heart);
6. my eye has beheld the things of the eternities (*or* by the Eternal One my eye has discerned); special knowledge (*tūshiyāh*, knowledge conveyed in confidence, as in Job 11:6) which is hidden from men of learning, treasures of wisdom hidden from the children of men, a fountain of righteousness and a vessel
7. of power; also a place of glory for the assembly in the flesh of those whom God has chosen. He has established them as an

eternal treasure and caused them to be heirs in the portion (lot)

8. of the saints, and with the Sons of Heaven he has associated their society, for the council of the church and the assembly of the holy habitation for an eternal planting along with all past ages (dispensations).

As in the Book of Breathings, the Stone of Truth is here closely associated with the purification in water, and this opens the way to further light and knowledge culminating in the blessed assembly of the saints, which like the Zion of Enoch is a heavenly community duplicated (planted is the technical word) on earth, becoming united in the end with all other such bodies: “and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made” (Moses 7:64).

**Glorified in the Presence of God**

Now comes the great and marvelous paradox that staggers the imagination and baffles credulity. The problem is how God and man can not only share the same universe of discourse but live together forever on terms of intimacy amounting to identity (XI, 9–22):

XI, 9. And as for me, I am a man (Adam) of evil after the dictates of the wanton flesh; my iniquities, transgression, and sins, along with all the corruption of my mind (heart)

10. belong to the brotherhood (secret society) of the worm and to the ways of darkness. For a man (Adam) goes his way, but no man (Enosh) really determines his steps, for the decision (judgment) is God's, and from his hand is (*i.e.*, he determines, prescribes)

11. the perfect way, for it is his knowledge that brought all into existence and his

plans that guide all things, and nothing happens without him. And even though I

12. trip, the mercies of God will always be there to help me. And even though I stumble in the perversity of the flesh, my judging rests with God's justice, an assurance forever.

13. And if he allows (opens) troubles for me, yet from the pit will he rescue (pull up) my soul and guide my footsteps on the road. By his acts of mercy he will cause me to arrive, and by his loving kindnesses provide (bring)

14. my reward (judgment). And with his true judgment he has judged me, and in his exceeding goodness has forgiven (atoned for) even all of my iniquities. And by his righteous provisions he purifies me from the uncleanness

15. of men and from the sins of the children of Adam, to praise the justice of God,

even the splendor of the Most High God.  
Blessed art thou, my God, who openest the  
[way of] knowledge

16. to thy servant. Guide all his works in  
righteousness, and raise (him) up for a son  
of thy truth (accept him as a true son)  
according as thou art well pleased with  
the chosen ones of Adam, that they may  
dwell
17. in thy presence for all eternity. For  
without thee there is no proper guidance,  
and nothing is done without thine  
approval. It is thou who showest forth
18. all knowledge, and all existence depends  
upon thy good pleasure. And there is none  
next in order beside thee to challenge  
(reply to) thy suggestions (counsel) or to  
give advice (enlighten)
19. in any matter on which thy holiness has  
decided, or to penetrate into the depths of  
thy mysteries, or to comprehend all thy

wondrous (doings), by thy power

20. of thy might. For who can contain  
(measure) thy glory? And what also is the  
son of man (Adam) amid thy marvelous  
(works)?

21. And he that is born of woman to sit down  
in thy presence? He being formed of dust;  
...and he is made (formed) only

22. of clay of the destroyer (trashman, one  
who sweeps aside), and towards dust is  
his yearning. How does the clay sit down  
with the potter (hand former), and for  
counsel how does it qualify (what does it  
discern)?

## Notes

1. Frank Moore Cross Jr., “The Scrolls and the New Testament,” *Christian Century* 72 (1955): 969–70.
2. Georg Molin, *Die Söhne des Lichtes* (Vienna: Herold, 1954), 146.
3. Eduard Lohse, ed., *Die Texte aus Qumran* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964).
4. Lohse, *Die Texte aus Qumran*, 5.

5. On Qumran as a society of Enoch, see Cent Pieter van Andel, *De Structuur van de Henoch-Traditie in het Nieuwe Testament* (Utrecht: Kemink, 1955), 51–66.
6. See Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes, 1950), 1:285.
7. [After the original publication of this book, the Temple Scroll was published in Hebrew as Yigael Yadin, ed., *Megillat-Hammiqdāš* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1977); and in English as Yigael Yadin, ed., *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983)—eds.]
8. See Hugh W. Nibley, “Christian Envy of the Temple,” *JQR* 50 (1959–60): 99–106, reprinted in *When the Lights Went Out: Three Studies on the Ancient Apostasy* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 93–98, and in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, CWHN 4:392–97.
9. See Hugh W. Nibley, “Treasures in the Heavens: Some Early Christian Insights into the Organizing of Worlds,” *Dialogue* 8/3–4 (1973): 79–80, 84, reprinted in *Old Testament and Related Studies*, CWHN 1:177–79, 185–86.
10. Zadokite Fragment (CD) III, 18; XVI, 2.

## Appendix 2

# From the Odes of Solomon

### Description of the Text

At the beginning of the century, J. Rendel Harris of Cambridge discovered the *Odes of Solomon* in a Syriac text “written on paper, which came from the neighborhood of the Tigris.”<sup>1</sup> In spite of its Eastern and Christian origin (disputed by some scholars), the work shows undoubted affinities with the Dead Sea Scrolls; a Jewish statement classifies it “in a loose literary genre” with the Thanksgiving Psalms from Qumran, noting that while “the doctrinal type of the Christianity expressed by the *Odes* is not easy to classify, … it is certainly early and, therefore, the possibility that the *Odes*

represent some group of Christians which was influenced by the Dead Sea sect (or some similar Jewish sect) cannot be denied.”<sup>2</sup>

A key to the dating of the *Odes* is the Fourth Ode, which Harris places either “soon after A.D. 70” or (less possibly) “soon after A.D. 135.”<sup>3</sup> It deals with the temple, but since the language of the ode implies, for Harris, that the temple at Jerusalem was no longer standing, he refers it to one of the two Jewish temples in Egypt, namely, “the temple of Onias at Leontopolis,” which was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 73.<sup>4</sup> That the rites of the temple are, in fact, the theme of the *Odes* becomes increasingly apparent in comparing them with other texts. In particular, Harris has discussed their close affinity with the *Pistis Sophia* (see appendix 3), which occasionally quotes directly from the *Odes*,

and notes that these two works “are as Gnostic as the New Testament, no more and no less.”<sup>5</sup>

The Syriac text is supplied by Harris, from whose translation the following selections are taken.<sup>6</sup> Harris’s original brackets are found here in parentheses, to distinguish his notes from my bracketed additions and comments. There is a more recent translation by Walter Bauer.<sup>7</sup>

Being, as the title indicates, a collection of lyric poems, the *Odes* do not follow any particular ritual order.

## Nature and Purpose of the Book

Ode 23:5. [The teachings of this book are]

like a letter ...

6. and many hands rushed to the letter to seize it ... and read it:
7. and it escaped their fingers and they were affrighted at it and the seal that was upon

it.

8. Because it was not permitted to them to  
loose its seal ...

11. and there was with it a sign of the  
Kingdom and of the Government.

15. The letter was one of command. ...

19. And the letter was ... wholly written by  
the finger of God.

Ode 9:12–13. All those who have conquered  
shall be written in His book. For their  
book is victory which is yours.

Ode 8:11. Keep my secret, ye who are kept  
by it [a famous saying, quoted by the early  
fathers].

## Purification Rites

Ode 6:7–8. For there went forth a stream ...  
and it brought (water) to the Temple.

11. From the Most High the draught [of life]  
was given.

12. Blessed then are the ministers of that

draught who are entrusted with that water of His.

14. Souls that were near to departing they have caught back from death:

15. and limbs that had fallen they straightened and set up ...

17. and they lived by the water of life for ever [purification as resurrection].

Ode 11:5. And I was established upon the rock of truth [*šu 'a da-šrara*, meaning a firm or true foundation], where He had set me up:

6. and speaking waters touched my lips from the fountain of the Lord.

Ode 9:8. An everlasting crown for ever is Truth ...

9. a stone [*ki 'fa*] of great price it is.

Ode 11:9. I forsook the folly which is diffused over the earth; and I stripped it off and cast it from me:

10. and the Lord renewed me in His raiment,

and possessed me by His light.

Ode 21:2. And I put off darkness and clothed myself with light, and my soul acquired a body.

Ode 25:8. And I was clothed with the covering of thy Spirit, and thou didst remove from me my raiment of skin.

Ode 4:8. For thy seal is known: and thy creatures know it: and thy (heavenly) hosts possess it: and the elect archangels are clad with it.

Ode 23:1. Joy is of the saints! and who shall put it on, but they alone?

Ode 24. [Harris sees in this ode a connection between baptism, anointing, and the deliverance of the dead, the common theme being resurrection. He notes that "in the earliest times the Baptism of Christ was the occasion of His triumph over Hades. We find suspicious hints of this in ... a statement made by Seth concerning

his father Adam that he will receive the oil of healing from Paradise in the last days.”]<sup>8</sup>

## The Creation Motif

Ode 16 is a creation hymn:

- Ode 16:11. He spread out the earth and He settled the waters in the sea:
12. He measured the heavens and fixed the stars: and He established the creation and set it up:
13. and He rested from His works ...
16. and the worlds [plural!] were made by His word, and by the thought of His heart [cf. Ode 7:19–27].
- Ode 7:28. For He hath given a mouth to His creation, to open the voice of the mouth towards Him, to praise Him:
29. confess ye His power.
- Ode 8:21. I willed and fashioned mind and heart: and they are mine, and by my own

right hand have I set my elect ones.

Ode 8:16. For I know them, and before they came into being I took knowledge of them, and on their faces I set my seal:

17. I fashioned their members: my own breasts I prepared for them that they might drink my holy milk and live thereby. ...

19. For my workmanship are they and the strength of my thoughts.

Ode 7:10. He who created wisdom [*hekmta, sophia*] is wiser than His works:

11. and He who created me when yet I was not knew what I should do.

Ode 11:12. [Like the Book of Breathings, this describes the creation of man as an awakening, *i.e.*, resurrection, by the rays of the rising sun:] And the Lord was like the Sun shining on the face of the land;

13. He lightened my eyes, and my face received the dew; and my nostrils enjoyed the pleasant odour of the Lord [the *snsn*

motif].

- Ode 15:1. As the sun is the joy to them that seek for its daybreak, so is my joy in the Lord;
2. because He is my Sun and His rays have lifted me up; and His light hath dispelled all darkness from my face.
  3. In Him I have acquired eyes and have seen His holy day:
  4. ears have become mine [the Opening of the Mouth motif]. ...
  7. According to His excellent beauty He hath made me.
  8. I have put on incorruption ... and have put off corruption. ...
  9. Death hath been destroyed before my face [throughout, creation is equated to resurrection].

## **The Garden Drama**

Ode 11:10. [Newly created man is placed in

the garden], and the Lord renewed me in His raiment, and possessed me by His light, and from above He gave me rest in incorruption;

11. and I became like the land which blossoms and rejoices in its fruits.
  13. He lightened my eyes and my face received the dew; and my nostrils enjoyed the pleasant odour of the Lord;
  14. and He carried me to His Paradise; where is the abundance of the pleasure of the Lord. ...
  15. And I said, Blessed, O Lord, are they who are planted in thy land! and those who have place in thy Paradise;
  16. and they grow by the fruits of thy trees.
- Ode 12:2. And like the flow of waters flows truth from my mouth, and my lips show forth His fruit.
- Ode 8:3. To bring forth fruit to the Lord, living, ... holy fruit; and to converse with

care in His light.<sup>9</sup>

4. Rise up, and stand erect. ...

9. Hear the word of truth, and receive the knowledge of the Most High.

Ode 20:7. But put on the grace of the Lord ... and come into His Paradise and make thee a garland from its tree,

8. and ... recline on His rest.

Ode 38:18. For He set the root and watered it and fixed it and blessed it; and its fruits are for ever.

20. And the Lord alone was glorified in His planting and His husbandry ...

21. by the beautiful planting of His right-hand: and by the discovery of His planting, and by the thought of His mind. Hallelujah.

## The Way Back

Ode 7:11. [The way back has been provided from the first.] He who created me ... knew what I should do when I came into

being:

12. wherefore He pitied me in His abundant grace: and granted me to ask from Him and to receive from His sacrifice [the atoning sacrifice prepared from the foundation of the world].

Ode 15:6. The way of error I have left, and have walked toward Him, and have received salvation from Him, without grudging.

Ode 33:11. My chosen ones walk in me, and my ways I will make known to them that seek me, and I will make them trust in my name. Hallelujah.

Ode 24:10. For the Lord disclosed His way, and spread abroad His grace: and those who understood it, know His holiness. Hallelujah.

Ode 38:1. I went up to the light of truth as if into a chariot [*markabta*; can also mean ship]:

2. and the Truth took me and led me ... and from the rocks and the waves it preserved me [plainly a water journey].

Ode 11:3. And I ran in His way ... even in the way of truth:

4. from the beginning and even to the end I acquired His knowledge.

Ode 38:4. [The *guide* is important.] [Truth] went with me and made me rest, and suffered me not to wander ...

5. and I ran no risk, because I walked with Him;

6. and I did not make an error in anything because I obeyed the Truth.

7. For ... Truth proceeds in the right path, and

8. whatever I did not know, it made clear to me. ...

15. And I was made wise so as not to fall into the hands of the Deceiver; and I rejoiced in myself because the Truth went

with me,

16. and I was established and lived and was redeemed.

Ode 17:4. I received the face and fashion of a new person: and I walked in it and was saved;

5. and the thought of truth led me on. And I walked after it and did not wander.

Ode 8:7. For the right hand of the Lord is with you: and He is your helper.

## **Tried and Tested**

Ode 39:1. [The initiate passes through great dangers.] Great rivers ...

2. carry headlong those who despise Him: and entangle their paths:

3. and catch their bodies and destroy their lives. ...

5. [But] those who walk on them without blemish shall not be afraid.

6. For the sign in them is the Lord; and the

sign is the way of those who cross in the name of the Lord.

10. And the waves are lifted up on this side and that, but the footsteps of our Lord Messiah stand firm. . .

11. And a way has been appointed for those who cross after Him.

Ode 11:1. [On the symbolic sacrifice:] My heart was cloven [Harris's note: *or circumcised, ethgzar, cut painfully*<sup>10</sup>] . . . and grace sprang up in it

2. for the Most High clave me [Harris's note: *or circumcised me; 11 lit. inflicted a cut upon me*], by His Holy Spirit and searched my affection toward him [Harris's note: *lit. “revealed my reins”*; cf. Psalm 7:9, Revelation 2:23].<sup>12</sup>

3. And His opening [*lit. cutting*] of me became my Salvation.

Ode 28:5. The sword shall not divide me from Him, nor the scimitar;

6. for I am ready before destruction comes  
...  
9. and my oppression became my salvation  
...  
16. and vainly did they make attack upon me  
[Harris's note: "Perhaps, then, the writer  
is speaking, in these verses, as if in the  
person of Christ."]<sup>13</sup>

Ode 12:3. And He has caused His  
knowledge to abound in me, because the  
mouth of the Lord is the true Word, and the  
door of His light.

Ode 17:8. He gave me the way of His  
precepts [Harris's note: *lit.* steps;  
degrees]<sup>14</sup> and I opened the doors that  
were closed, ...

10. nothing appeared closed to me: because I  
was the door of everything.

Ode 22:1. [The combat motif is  
conspicuous.] He who brought me down  
from on high, also brought me up from

regions below.

3. He who scattered my enemies and my adversaries.
5. He that overthrew by my hands the dragon with seven heads [cf. the seven monsters of the Book of Breathings].
7. Thy right hand destroyed his wicked poison.

Ode 29:4. [He] brought me up out of the depths of Sheol: and from the mouth of death He drew me:

5. and I laid my enemies low.
10. And the Lord overthrew my enemy by His word; and he became like stubble which the winds carry away.

Ode 5:4. My persecutors will come and not see me:

5. a cloud of darkness shall fall on their eyes; and an air of thick gloom shall darken them:
6. and they shall have no light to see: that

they may not take hold on me

8. for they have devised a counsel, and it did not succeed: they have prepared themselves for evil, and were found to be empty. [This is a legal terminology of the law court, as is the following:]

Ode 33:10. I am your judge; and they who have put me on shall not be injured: but they shall possess the new world that is incorrupt.

Ode 9:12. [The victory motif is conspicuous.] All who have conquered shall be written in His book.

13. For their book is victory which is yours. And she [Victory; cf. Maat] ... wills that you shall be saved.

Ode 8:7. For the right hand of the Lord is with you: and He is your helper:

8. and peace was prepared for you; before ever your war was.

Ode 18:6. Let not the luminary be conquered

by the darkness; nor let truth flee away from falsehood.

7. Thou wilt appoint me to victory; our Salvation is in thy right hand.

Ode 1:1. [The *Odes* begin with a coronation song:] My Lord is on my head like a crown, and I shall not be without Him.

2. They wove for me a crown of truth. . . .

3. Thou livest on my head and thou hast blossomed on my head [the owners of the *Breathings* texts wore crowns of leaves and flowers].

Ode 9:8. An everlasting crown is Truth [Maat]. Blessed are they who set it on their heads. . . .

11. Put on the crown in the true covenant . . . ,

12. and all those who have conquered shall be written in His book.

Ode 17:8. [The victory over the underworld is the motif of the Christian descensus, the Lord's descent to deliver the spirits in

prison, the harrowing of hell:] And I opened the doors that were closed,

9. and brake in pieces the bars of iron ...

10. nothing appeared closed to me: because I was the door of everything.

11. And I went over all my bondmen to loose them ... ,

12. and I imparted my knowledge without grudging ... ,

14. and they were gathered to me and were saved.

Ode 31:1. The abysses were dissolved before the Lord: and darkness was destroyed by His appearance.

Ode 42:15. Sheol saw me and was made miserable:

16. death cast me up and many along with me.

17. I had gall and bitterness, and I went down with him to the utmost ... depth: ...

19. and I made a congregation of living men

amongst his dead men, and I spake with them by living lips ...

21. and those who had died ran toward me: and they cried and said, Son of God, have pity on us
22. and bring us out from the bonds of darkness: and open to us the door by which we shall come out to thee.
23. For we see that our death has not touched thee.
24. Let us also be redeemed with thee: for thou art our Redeemer.
25. And I heard their voice; and my name was heard over their heads:
26. for they are free men and they are mine.  
Hallelujah.

## Concluding Rites

Ode 42:1. [This, the last of the *Odes*, presents the last of the ordinances, with a final section on salvation for the dead (see

preceding section):] I stretched out [*peštet*, opened or reached out] my hands and approached my Lord:

2. for the stretching out [*matha*, a different word, meaning properly grasp or clasp] of my hands is His sign:
  3. my extension [*pešituty*]<sup>15</sup> is the outspread tree which was set up on the way of the Righteous One.
  4. And I became of no account [*la hašhu*, not useful, significant] to those who did not take hold of me [‘ehidin, grasp by the hand]; and I shall be with those who love me....
  9. Like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride,
  10. so was my yoke over those that know me.
- Ode 3:2. And his members are with him.  
And on them do I hang, and He loves me [*hbb*, the word for love here is the universal Semitic term for love, meaning

to hug or embrace]:

3. for I should not have known how to love the Lord, if He had not loved me [*r̥ham*, a different word for love, having the sense of loving kindness]. ...
  8. I have been united (to Him) [Harris notes the literal meaning of “mingled with (as water with wine); cf. 1 Corinthians 6:17,” i.e., the *unio mystica*]<sup>16</sup>
  9. because I shall love Him that is the Son, that I may be a son [Harris notes that this is properly *the Son*];<sup>17</sup>
  10. for he that is joined to [*metnaqaf*, lit. embraced by] Him that is immortal, will also himself become immortal.
- Ode 37:1. I stretched out my hands to my Lord: and to the Most High I raised my voice:
2. and I spake with the lips of my heart; and he heard me, when my voice reached Him.
  3. His answer came to me, and gave me the

fruits of my labours.

Ode 28:1. As the wings of doves over their nestlings; and the mouth of their nestlings towards their mouths,

2. so also are the wings of the Spirit over my heart:

3. my heart is delighted and exults: like the babe who exults [Harris notes: or, leaps]<sup>18</sup> in the womb of his mother.

Ode 27:1. [This is the entire Ode:] I stretched out my hands and sanctified the Lord:

2. for the extension of my hands is His sign:

3. and my expansion is the upright tree (*or* cross). [Of this Harris writes: “So it is very likely that the figure in our Psalm is one of the oldest forms of Christian symbolic teaching.”]<sup>19</sup>

Ode 14:4. Stretch out to me, O Lord, ... thy right hand: and be my guide even unto the end.

Ode 36:3. [He joins the company of the blessed:] (The Spirit) brought me forth before the face of the Lord: and, although a son of man, I was named the Illuminate, the Son of God:

4. while I praised amongst the praising ones,  
and great was I amongst the mighty ones

... ,

6. and I became one of His neighbors.

Ode 41:5. Let us, therefore, all of us unite together in the name of the Lord

6. and let our faces shine in His light.

8. For from another race am I:

9. for the Father of truth remembered me: He who possessed me from the beginning.

## Notes

1. J. Rendel Harris, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 3.

2. Jacob Licht, “Solomon, Odes of,” *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971–72), 15:114–15.

3. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 58.

4. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 57.
5. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 13.
6. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 89–138.
7. Walter Bauer, *Odes of Solomon*, in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, ed. and trans. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959–64), 2:576–625. Cf. Walter Bauer, ed. and trans., *Die Oden Salomos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1933); Jérôme-Dominique-Raymond Labourt and Pierre Batiffol, eds. and trans., *Les Odes de Salomon* (Paris: Gabalde-Lecoffre, 1911); James H. Charlesworth, ed. and trans., *The Odes of Solomon* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1977); James H. Charlesworth, “Odes of Solomon,” in *OTP* 2:725–71; John H. Bernard, *The Odes of Solomon* (1912; reprint, Nendeln, Liecht.: Kraus, 1967); in some of these the versification has changed slightly.
8. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 123.
9. My translation.
10. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 104 n. 1.
11. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 104 n. 2.
12. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 104 n. 3.
13. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 127.
14. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 112 n. 2.
15. My translation.
16. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 90 n. 1.
17. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 90 n. 2.
18. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 126 n. 1.

19. Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, 126.

## Appendix 3

# The Pearl

### Description of the Text

The recent increase in available Mandaean and Manichaean texts has put the beautiful and fanciful imagery of the early Christian hymn known as *The Pearl* into a clearly marked category of ritual literature, its plot and setting being very close to those of Books of Breathings. Every student of this poem has been quick to point out the striking parallels found in a wide range of oriental and classical sources, and it should not be hard to establish ties between it and the Breathings literature, especially through Coptic sources.<sup>1</sup> The text of *The Pearl* is in Syriac and is found in the *Acts of Thomas*

*Judas the Apostle*; it is dated by Walter Crum to the first century A.D.<sup>2</sup> and by Alfred Adam to between A.D. 50 and 70, making it contemporary with the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings.<sup>3</sup> It was first translated into English by W. Wright in 1871. Following is a summary and paraphrase of the Syriac text given by Gustav Hoffmann,<sup>4</sup> checked against translations of Albertus F. J. Klijn,<sup>5</sup> and those of Alfred Adam, Gunther Bornkamm, and Montague R. James.<sup>6</sup>

## The Situation

Thomas is confined in prison by order of the Indian King Mazdai and his wicked minister Karish, who accuse him of sorcery. “And whilst he was praying, all those who were in the prison saw that he was praying, and begged him to pray for them too. And when he had prayed and sat down, Judas began to chant this hymn.”<sup>7</sup> Thus *The Pearl*

has the same theme as the (earlier) *Psalms of Thomas*<sup>8</sup> and as the Book of Breathings—namely, the yearning of the living and the dead for deliverance from the dark prison of this world and of the underworld respectively; since the hero brings such deliverance, we have a descensus situation, as in the Egyptian Amduat and Breathings literature, showing the way of escape to them that sit in darkness.

## The First Primeval Childhood

1–2: In my first primeval childhood (*kad 'ena šbar yalud*), I was nurtured in the royal house of my Father with loving care in the midst of abundance and glory.

The speaker may be either the redeemed soul telling of its deliverance or the Savior himself, or it may be both, according to Bornkamm, since both have the same origin, nature, and destiny.<sup>9</sup> In the Mandaean

version, the royal house is called the House of Life.<sup>10</sup>

3: Then my parents sent me forth from our home in the east [the source of light], supplied with all necessities,

Adam: *Reisezehrung* (food or a meal ticket).<sup>11</sup>

Bornkamm: *Wegzehrung und Reisegeld ... als Wege- oder Brückengeld* (food for the road and travel money to pay for tolls or bridges).<sup>12</sup>

Klijn: My parents equipped me (and) sent me forth.<sup>13</sup> [Could it be *zaudu* written for *zaudaqa*, a ticket, passport?]

4: making a packet for me from our rich storehouse.

5: It was sizeable, but light enough for me to carry

6: [containing] gold from the house on high, silver from the great treasury.<sup>14</sup>

In a study entitled “Treasures in the Heavens,” I have shown that the heavenly treasury contains the treasures of wisdom—specifically knowledge of the ordinances, in the Mandaean and Manichaean teaching—which correspond to the earthly treasures of knowledge in the temple. This is the Egyptian House of Gold. Merit acquired on earth is added to the treasure laid up in heaven.<sup>15</sup>

- 7: Precious stones from India and Kushan,
- 8: And they girt me (*hazquny*) with a diamond (*b'adamus*).

We associated Adam’s diamond with the Stone of Truth in the Book of Breathings.<sup>16</sup> In this context the diamond identifies the speaker with Adam,<sup>17</sup> while the significance of the girdle is seen in the ritual girdle of the Mandaeans, meant to give security to the wandering guest on this earth; the prevailing

of the diamond over steel signifies that the true nature of the spirit can never be entirely destroyed by earthly elements.<sup>18</sup> This is confirmed by Klijn's rendering, "they furnished me with adament [*sic*] which can crush iron,"<sup>19</sup> the coincidence of the words *Adam*, *diamond*, and *adamant* being intentional. We have shown elsewhere that the diamond in the girdle is the stone of life (sometimes the plant of life), which, in the Alexander legend, the hero bears with him, having fetched it from the underworld; the hero leaves the girdle and its precious stone on the bank as he bathes in a deep pool, and the serpent steals them, thus robbing him of the hope of immortality. This story is told not only of Alexander but also of the very ancient Gilgamesh, taking it back to the beginning of history.<sup>20</sup>

## The Dangerous Mission

9: They removed from me the garment of light, which they had made for me in love.

The garment represents the preexistent glory of the candidate.<sup>21</sup> When he leaves on his earthly mission, it is laid up for him in heaven to await his return. It thus serves as security and lends urgency and weight to the need for following righteous ways on earth. For if one fails here, one loses not only one's glorious future in the eternities to come, but also the whole accumulation of past deeds and accomplishments in the long ages of preexistence.<sup>22</sup>

In some texts the garment is kept folded beneath the throne of God, awaiting the return of the owner.<sup>23</sup>

10: And my purple [Bornkamm:  
*scharlachfarbene*, scarlet]<sup>24</sup> robe, made exactly to fit me.

This outer garment is the garment of the high priest as depicted in the murals of the Dura Europos synagogue<sup>25</sup> and in other sources; the two garments go together and make a unity, but the white undergarment is the proper preexistent glory of the wearer, while the other is the priesthood later added to it.<sup>26</sup> Note that the individual's garment fits him and no one else.

11: And they made a covenant with me and wrote in my heart, lest I go astray.

The letter is, among other things, a birth certificate that shows the holder to be beyond the ultimate powers of this corruptible world and so guarantees that his progress shall be eternal, an *incrementum ad aeternum*.<sup>27</sup>

12: [He was instructed to go down into Egypt and bring back a pearl,]  
13: which is in the sea, guarded

(surrounded) by a (fire or poison) snorting serpent [Adam and Bornkamm: dragon.]<sup>28</sup>

One thinks at once of the Egyptian Setne story.<sup>29</sup> Here, as elsewhere, the serpent represents the perishability of all earthly or physical things, corruptible *hylē*, the *ouroborus*, the frustrated consumer of its own substance,<sup>30</sup> presenting the great obstacle to the further progress and spiritual development of the hero, who can only get the pearl with great toil and danger: “The soul must exert itself and make full use of its free agency” to accomplish its mission.<sup>31</sup>

The pearl is the soul itself, rescued and returned from the depths.<sup>32</sup> Hoffmann sees in it also the individual’s “capacity for growth ... even in an alien ... environment; the goal of this growth is realizing the full capacities of the personality.”<sup>33</sup>

14: [Returning with the pearl, he may resume

his garment of light and the outer (priestly) mantle]

15: and become the heir to our kingdom, along with our Second One (*trayanan*),

The Second One is not the second-born, but “next” or “second” in line to the throne, the second in glory, the successor, i.e., the *first*-born.<sup>34</sup> It is Christ, the elder brother.

16: [Two guides or guardians, official couriers who know the way, were sent down with him;

17–18: they arrived at Maišan, where the merchants of the east gather,]

Maišan is the place of transition between worlds, neither heaven nor earth but in between; it is the “midpoint” of the winter solstice, which is as far as the sun descends; it is the realm ruled by the planets, the zodiac, etc.<sup>35</sup> It is on the border of the sea, the *tehom*, the jumping-off place—a creation

room, the place where the hero must change his clothes (line 72) and part with his heavenly guides, who can accompany him no further (line 20).<sup>36</sup>

19: and came to the country of Babel,  
entering the walls of Sarbug.

Babel is the symbol of the idolatrous and materialistic world (Revelation 18).

Hoffmann notes that this can hardly have been the Mesopotamian Babylon, which at the time was completely insignificant.<sup>37</sup> Of considerably more importance was the Babylon in the Delta of Egypt; when Abraham went down to Egypt to receive the lowest degrees of initiation, before returning to Bethel to complete his initiation, he had to pass through Babylon, the merchant city in the Delta.<sup>38</sup>

The resemblance between the name Sarbug and the ancient Mesopotamian city of

Surupak was early noted by scholars, but the identity was rejected on geographical grounds. The Greek text has Labyrinth instead of Sarbug, and Crum notes that the Arabic word *šarbūka* also means “labyrinth,” referring to the maze of alleys in the center of Babylon city; <sup>39</sup> Adam notes that the Akkadian name of Harran also means “street” and suggests that we have here the center of the ruling planets.<sup>40</sup> It is a symbolic and ritual city: Surupak was the city of Gilgamesh; and the importance of the *labyrinth* as the difficult and dangerous way of the initiate in the (under)world is well known.

## The Fall of Man

20: [Here the guides left him on his own, and he went on toward Egypt.]

Egypt means the same as spiritual Sodom (Tobit 8:3; Revelation 11:8; 13:2, 4; 16:10);

it is this telestial world.

21: [In Egypt he immediately looked up the serpent and found him at an inn.]

He has the mistaken idea that he can match wits with the serpent and win at once—but that is hopelessly naive.<sup>41</sup>

22: [He also put up at the inn (Gasthaus,<sup>42</sup> Rasthaus,<sup>43</sup> Herberge<sup>44</sup>), in order to catch the dragon asleep.]

Hoffmann notes that Satan is also a traveler in the earth (Job 1:6–7; 1 Peter 5:8) who puts up at the inn, or vanity fair,<sup>45</sup> a world of tawdry wares and greedy merchants.<sup>46</sup>

24–28. [There he met a young nobleman from his own country, born in the covenant, with whom he shares full confidence, and he warned him against the temptations and defilements of Egypt.]

The young nobleman is variously interpreted as the uncorrupted spirit of the saint in the world, the heavenly *Bar-mšīhē* who keeps the covenant, i.e., the person's higher nature. The fact that this youth is no more heard from after the candidate adopts the vicious ways of the world seems to rule out his identification with a guardian angel, or even with the church as companion, counselor, and guide.<sup>47</sup>

- 29: [To avoid arousing suspicions as a stranger, he adopted the dress of the Egyptians,  
31: but they still noticed that he was an alien  
32: and inveigled him into partaking of the native food,]

Recall that he had brought his own food in his pack (lines 4–5).

- 34: [whereupon he forgot that he was the son of a king, and served their king; ]

You cannot serve both—you must love one and hate the other (Matthew 6:24).

35: [The rich food dulled his senses and he fell into a deep sleep.]

*B-yuqra da-trufayhun*, “by the richness of their *tryphē*” ; even the non-Christian Greek writers see in *tryphē*—luxury, gourmet food, spoiled appetites for everything—the root of all evil. The forgetting and falling asleep is the Platonic cup of Lethe.<sup>48</sup> Hoffmann suggests that the heavy food is the false philosophies of men, based on the intellect and senses alone. By the sleep and forgetting, he has become as a little child.<sup>49</sup>

## Recalled by a Letter

36: [Meanwhile, the heavenly parents, aware of what had happened,

37: called a family council

38: of all the great and noble relatives,

- 39: who decided it was time to act.
- 40: They drafted and all signed a letter,  
addressed]
- 41–42: To our Son in Egypt, [from] thy  
Father the King of Kings, thy Mother, the  
Queen of the East, and our Second One,  
thy Brother.

In “the upper region … [t]he soul has a father and a mother, as the [b]ody has a father and mother in this world.”<sup>50</sup>

- 43: Awake, arise from thy sleep! Heed this letter;
- 44: remember that you are the son of a king,  
and take a good look at your present master!
- 45: Remember your mission—to fetch the pearl;
- 46: remember the garment and robe that are awaiting you
- 47: so that you can put them on again when

your name is called out from the book of those who were valiant

48: and you become the heir to our kingdom along with your Brother, the successor to our throne.

James: Thy name is named (in) the book of life, and with thy Brother whom that hast received <thou shalt be> in our kingdom.<sup>51</sup> (Hoffmann notes that this is not the Book of Life that one would normally expect.)<sup>52</sup>

Klijn: When thy name hath been read out in the list of the valiant, and with thy brother, our viceroy, thou shalt be in our kingdom!

53

Adam: That thy name may be read out in the Book of Heroes, and that thou with thy brother, our Prince, mightest be together in our kingdom! <sup>54</sup>

Bornkamm: So that thy name be read in the Book of Heroes, and thou mightest become heir in our kingdom, along with thy brother, our lieutenant (*Stellvertreter*).<sup>55</sup>

Compare Doctrine and Covenants 76:76–79: “These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness … who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father.... These are they who are not valiant ... wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.” In this vision, given to Joseph Smith in 1832, it is plain that those who *are* valiant obtain the crown along with the Son. Here we have the explanation for leaving one’s happy heavenly home for a sojourn in a wicked world. Only so can one overcome and be written in the Book of Heroes. Without confronting and overcoming the powers of darkness, no one can lay claim to the highest glory, the kingship itself. Hence the need for the danger and struggle here below.

- 49: The king with his right hand sealed the letter against
- 50: the evil children of Babylon and the

rebellious spirits of Sarbug.

That is, he protected it against those who might delay or waylay it. Sarbug appears as the purlieu of the fallen angels, who traffic with the worldly people of Babylon.

51: [The letter reached him as an eagle, king of the birds.]

This was originally the sun-bird (the phoenix of the resurrection) and later the figure of the Redeemer.<sup>56</sup>

When Adam, being drugged, fell into a deep sleep and forgot everything, it was an eagle that came and awakened and instructed him.<sup>57</sup>

Here one thinks of course of the Egyptian Horus-hawk as messenger to the sleeping king, and of King Solomon's *Huhhud*, which drops the sealed letter on the bosom of the sleeping Queen of Sheba, who awakens and submits to the instructions of the divine

missive.

52: [It alighted by his side] and became all speech

53: [whereupon he awoke and arose from his sleep.]

This shows it to be, according to Alfred Adam, the message of the Living Spirit to *the man Adam*, but also to any soul in need of deliverance.<sup>58</sup>

## The Road Back

54: [He kissed the letter, broke the seal, and read,

55: Lo, it is the same letter as that which he brought with him from on high written in his heart.

56: He remembered that he was a king's son, and his royal nature asserted itself.]

From this point on, everything is in reverse. Bornkamm observes that it is

important to recognize the *double nature* of the events in the story, where awakening, remembering, journey, etc., occur *twice*.<sup>59</sup>

One thinks of how the pyramid rites, upon reaching the lowest point in the deepest and darkest chamber, abruptly do an about-face as the entourage starts moving in the opposite direction—always upward, toward the light and the real release from the bonds of death.<sup>60</sup>

Thus the temple ordinances properly begin in darkness and end in a blaze of light.

57: [He remembered the pearl

58: and set about lulling the serpent to sleep,

59: invoking over it the name of his Father]

60: and of our Second, and of my Mother the Queen of the East.

Scholars naturally interpret this as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thereby running into serious complications which cannot be

treated here.

- 61: [Having seized the pearl he does an about-face, wholly drawn in one direction —toward his Father's house, having at this point reached the uttermost depths (line 13).]
- 62: First he shed his filthy garments and left them behind in the world where they belong.
- 63: He set his course undeviatingly] toward the light of our home in the East:
- 64: [The letter that awoke him also led the way,
- 65: both as a guiding voice and a guiding light.
- 66: It was a real document, written on paper or silk of high sheen with red ink,]  
Hoffmann: on Chinese paper with *Rötel* (red crayon) [61](#)  
Bornkamm: *Auf chinesischem Gewebe mit*

*Rötel* (on Chinese fabric with red crayon) [62](#)

Adam: For the royal (?) silk gleamed before me with its shining colors [63](#)

James: For at times the royal garment of silk  
<shone> before mine eyes [64](#)

It will be recalled that the Book of Breathings was written “on royal linen,” according to instructions enclosed, and yet it was actually on paper. In leading the candidate to his heavenly goal, it performs exactly the same functions as the prince’s letter in *The Pearl*,

67: [encouraging the traveler by its guiding voice,]

Klijn: and with its voice and with its guidance it also encouraged me to speed. [65](#)

Hoffmann: comforting his fears on the way. [66](#)

It is plain that the journey is a strenuous and a perilous one.

68: and drawing him on with love.

69: [He successfully passed through Sarbug  
and left Babylon on his left,]

That is, he passed through the trials and tests of the dark labyrinth, which throughout the world represents the journey of the soul out of the bonds of the underworld. Leaving Babylon on the left is significant.

70: and so reached Maišan, the port of the merchants

71: on the shore of the sea.

He has made his perilous water crossing. He has reached the transition place, the horizon of the east, where he may at last resume his heavenly garment. This is where the Book of Breathings properly begins with the passage through the waters of birth, purification, etc.

## **Return to the Heavenly Home**

72: [His garment of light and his outer robe  
were waiting for him here; ]

Note that raiment is put on not only at the beginning of the journey and at the end, but is also donned at intermediate stages.

73: [they had been sent ahead from home by  
his parents, in the custody of the

74: two faithful guides.

75: He had forgotten how glorious the  
clothing was, having lost his childhood  
memories of home,

76: but the moment he saw it, it all came  
back to him, and he saw himself as he was  
—as if in a mirror—

77: he and the garment completely identified  
with each other

78: as a single individual—though they were  
separate.

79: He noticed the same phenomenon in the  
two guides that brought the garment:

80: that there were two of them, but each bore the identical token of the king.]

The tokens were marks:

Klijn: for one sign of the king was *written* on them (both).<sup>67</sup>

Adam: For the seal of the King was *stamped* on them.<sup>68</sup>

Bornkamm: For the same single sign (*Zeichen*) of the king was engraved (*eingezeichnet*) for them.<sup>69</sup>

James: One royal sign was set upon both of them.<sup>70</sup>

## The Mysterious Garment or Hanging

81: [By this sign he also reclaimed his own inheritance,]

The sign was given:

Adam: from the hand of him who returned my treasure and my wealth to me by their

hand.<sup>71</sup>

Klijn: One sign ... of the hands of him who restored to me through them my trust and my wealth.<sup>72</sup>

Hoffmann: Who [the king or the sign?] through them returned to me the honor of my deposited treasure (*Pfand*, endowment, security) and riches.<sup>73</sup>

Bornkamm: The sign (of him) who through them gave back to me the (honor of) my deposit and my wealth.<sup>74</sup>

James: The money and wealth they had in their hands, and paid me the due price.<sup>75</sup>

82: [namely the garment,

83: with the gold and precious stones which adorned it.]

84: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann, Adam, and Bornkamm: prepared in its full majesty.<sup>76</sup>

Klijn: skillfully worked in its home on high.<sup>77</sup>

They were fastened above (*or* in the height): What it says is that the thing was suspended or fastened from the top (*b-raumah matqna*).<sup>78</sup>

85: [Fastened everywhere with diamond clasps.]

Adam: All its seams were sewn with diamonds.<sup>79</sup>

This indicates that the garment, though the same one, is now enhanced (*gesteigert*)—the same garment, but better, enriched by earthly merits and victory.<sup>80</sup>

86: [And the image of the king of kings covered the whole thing].

Klijn: embroidered and depicted in full all over it.<sup>81</sup>

Bornkamm and Hoffmann: was painted (*aufgemalt*) all over it.<sup>82</sup>

There were royal marks on it (*tzalmeh da-*

*malek malke*). From here on, what follows is more descriptive of the veil than of the garment, though, as has been noted, the two follow the same pattern, according to early Christian, Jewish, and other sources. Lines 82–99 all speak about the garment, but with strange elaborations, including the same concern with wrapping and embracing that we have noted above. If the rest of the poem is applied to the garment only, it is full of strange anomalies, but these become perfectly clear in terms of the well-known veil of the temple.

88: (86 in Adam.)<sup>83</sup> [Then he saw the whole thing begin to stir, set in motion  
89: as if preparing to communicate.]

James: And again I saw that throughout its motions of knowledge were being sent forth, and it was ready to utter speech.<sup>84</sup>  
Klijn: And I saw also that all over it the instincts of knowledge were working, and I

saw too that it was preparing to speak.<sup>85</sup>

Adam: I looked again, that from its whole extent the motions of (complete) knowledge suddenly set it in motion. I saw that it was getting ready as if to speak.<sup>86</sup>

Bornkamm: And I further saw that all over it the motions of (knowledge) were stirring and that it was arranging (*anschickte*) itself as if to speak.<sup>87</sup>

Hoffmann: And I saw moreover that everywhere thereon motions of my gnosis stirred (*wimmeln*), and also saw that it was preparing as if to speak.<sup>88</sup>

This is the anticipation of something behind a curtain rather than a garment. What can “motions of knowledge” be that are “sent forth” from a garment?

90: [This line baffles everyone.]

James: And I heard it speak <with them that had brought it>.<sup>89</sup>

Adam: I detected the song of its song, which

it whispered to those who brought it.<sup>90</sup>

Bornkamm: The sounds of its *Lieder* I understood (*vernahm*), which it whispered as it (descended).<sup>91</sup>

Hoffmann: I comprehended (*vernahm*) the sound of its melodies which it whispered [while it was coming down].<sup>92</sup>

Klijn: I heard the sound of its tones which it uttered with its —.<sup>93</sup>

The word that Klijn has left untranslated is *mahtanah*—the root *hatna* meaning to make a sign or covenant, whether a baptism, circumcision, or marriage; it is related to the universal Semitic (and Egyptian) root *htm*, meaning to seal or enclose.<sup>94</sup> All agree that the words were whispered (*mretma*); but all the translators are puzzled by the context.

## The Royal Embrace

91–92: [The words of these lines are completely puzzling as the scholars render

them.]

93: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann and Bornkamm: And with his kingly motions it was all poured out to me.<sup>95</sup>

Klijn: And in its kingly movements it poured itself entirely over me.<sup>96</sup>

Adam: And with his kingly motions it reached itself out to me.<sup>97</sup>

James: And all its royal motions rested upon me as it grew toward the impulse of it. (And with its kingly motions it was spreading itself toward me).<sup>98</sup>

Compare Alexander Moret on the pouring out of *sʒ* over the prince by special gestures during the royal embrace.<sup>99</sup>

94: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann: And hastened in the assignment [*lit.* “upon the hand”] of its givers, that I might take.<sup>100</sup>

Adam: And upon the hand of its bringer

[presenter] it hastened, that I might take it.[101](#)

James: And it hastened, reaching out from the hand of <him that brought it> unto him that would receive it.[102](#)

Klijn: And on the hands of its givers it hastened that I might take it.[103](#)

Bornkamm: And on the hand of its transmitter (*Überbringer*) it hastened, that I might take it.[104](#)

## 95: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann: And also my love to go and meet it pierced (pricked, *stachelte*) me.[105](#)

James and Adam: And me also did yearning arouse to start forth and meet it and receive it.[106](#)

Klijn: And love urged me to run to meet it and receive it.[107](#)

Bornkamm: And my love also spurred me to run to meet it and receive it.[108](#)

## 96: And I stretched out and received it,

adorned myself with the beauty of its colors,

97: and wrapped myself completely in my shining mantle.

James: And I stretched forth and received it, and adorned myself with the beauty of the colours thereof and in my royal robe excelling in beauty I arrayed myself wholly.<sup>109</sup>

Adam: And I reached out before me and received it; with the beauty of its colors I decked myself. And my toga of brilliant colors I wrapped around me in its full breadth.<sup>110</sup>

Klijn: And I stretched forth and took it. With the beauty of its colors I adorned myself, and I wrapped myself wholly in my toga of brilliant hues.<sup>111</sup>

Bornkamm: And my brilliant colored toga I pulled (completely) over me entirely.<sup>112</sup>

Compare the appearing in full regalia at the time of the royal embrace in the Book of

Breathings.<sup>113</sup> Here clothing, wrapping, and ritual embrace are again identified.

## 98: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann and Bornkamm: I clothed myself with it and mounted on up to the gate (court) of greeting and worship [doing reverence].<sup>114</sup>

James: And when I had put it on, I was lifted up unto the place of peace (salutation) and homage.<sup>115</sup>

Adam: to the gate of salutation and giving honor (*Begrüssung und Ehrerweisung*).<sup>116</sup>

Klijn: I clothed myself with it, and went up to the gate.<sup>117</sup>

## 99: [Translations vary.]

James: I bowed my head and prayed to (worshipped) the glory of the Father which had been sent (or sent it) to me.<sup>118</sup>

Adam: I bowed my head and gave honor to the *Lichtglanz* which my Father had sent to meet me.<sup>119</sup>

Klijn: I bowed my head and worshipped the majesty of my Father who sent me.[120](#)

Bornkamm: and worshipped the brightness (*Glanz*) of my Father (who) to me had sent it (the garment).[121](#)

Note that one says it was the brightness which was sent, another the speaker who was sent, the third the garment which was sent by the Father. So uncertain are the experts as to the significance of these lines.

100: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann: Whose commandments I had fulfilled while he on his part has done what he had promised.[122](#)

James: For I had performed his commandments, and he likewise that which he had promised.[123](#)

Adam, Klijn, and Bornkamm: Because I had carried out his orders, and he too had done as he promised.[124](#)

## 101: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann: At the gate (or court) of his princes (*lit.* sons of his house), I mingled with the great ones.[125](#)

James: And at the doors of his palace which was from the beginning I mingled among <his nobles>.[126](#)

Adam: And at the gate of his satraps I mingled with his mighty ones.[127](#)

Klijn: And at the gate of his — I mingled with his princes.[128](#)

Bornkamm: At the gate of his satraps I mingled among his great ones.[129](#)

## 102: [Translations vary.]

Hoffmann: (He) who received me joyfully, and I was with him in his kingdom.[130](#)

James: And he rejoiced over me and received me with him into his palace.[131](#)

Adam and Klijn: And he rejoiced over me and received me, and I was with him in his kingdom.[132](#)

Bornkamm: For he rejoiced over me and received me, and I was with him in his kingdom.[133](#)

103–5: [These lines promise a second appearance before a king, which Bornkamm suggests in a later addition, adapting the story to suit the biography of the religious leader Mani.[134](#) Each interpreter gives a different picture.]

## Parallels in the Manichaean Kephalaia

There are many early parallels to the story of *The Pearl*, which follows the pattern of the Book of Breathings quite closely. An interesting variation is found in the Manichaean *Kephalaia*, where the departure from the hero's heavenly home is accomplished by the same rites of embracing as mark the *return* in *The Pearl*:[135](#)

13–17: The first five ordinances of the peace (greeting) which the gods and angels in the land of light [the east in *The Pearl*] gave to the first man at the time when he wanted to go forth against the enemy. The gods and the angels escorted him and gave him peace and their power (*poujin*) and their blessing and their best wishes (*noutchro*, wishes for victory, success).

What follows from the *Kephalaia* plainly refers to definite ordinances:

17–19: This is the first (greeting of) peace which the gods and angels gave to the first man as he departed from the aeon of light.

20–21: [the second token]. The first of the right hand (*t-šarp n-ounem*) is that which the Mother of Life gave to the first man as he went forth to the contest.

22–24: The first embrace (*aspasmos*) is that which the Mother of Life gave to the first

man as he separated himself from her in order to come down to earth to the testing (*agōn*).

24–25: Also all the gods and angels embraced him on that occasion.

26–29: Also all who were to be of the church ... embraced (*aspazein*) him with love.

30: The first honoring (*nouošt*, good wish) is that which Adam received when he left for the abyss below; he bowed the knee, worshipping the God of Truth and of all the aeons of light.

## Notes

1. See appendix 4 below.

2. Cited in Gunther Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, ed. and trans. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959–64), 2:304; English translation in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Robert M. Wilson, trans. J. B. Higgins et al. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963–65), 2:435.

3. Alfred Adam, *Die Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied als Zeugnisse vorchristlicher Gnosis* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1959), 59.
4. Gustav Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 4 (1903): 273–83.
5. Albertus F. J. Klijn, ed., *The Acts of Thomas* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 120–25.
6. Montague R. James, trans. and ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament*, corrected ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), 411–15.
7. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 120.
8. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 81.
9. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:304; English trans., 2:434–35.
10. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 69.
11. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 69.
12. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:303; cf. English trans., 2:434.
13. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 120.
14. So Adam and Bornkamm. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 49; Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:349; cf. English trans., 2:498.
15. See Hugh W. Nibley, “Treasures in the Heavens: Some Early Christian Insights into the Organizing of Worlds,” *Dialogue* 8/3–4 (1973): 78–98, reprinted in *Old Testament and Related Studies*, CWHN 1:171–214.
16. For more on the Stone of Truth, see above, commentary

to line 16, pp. 190–202.

17. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 286.
18. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 285–86.
19. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 120.
20. Hugh W. Nibley, “Strange Ships and Shining Stones (A Not So Fantastic Story),” in *A Book of Mormon Treasury* (Salt Lake: Bookcraft, 1959), 144–51, reprinted in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, CWHN 6:351–58.
21. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 284.
22. Nibley, “Treasures in the Heavens,” 79, reprinted in *Old Testament and Related Studies*, CWHN 1:177–78.
23. 2 Baruch 54:13, in APOT, 2:511; in OTP, 1:640; Mark Lidzbarski, *Ginzā: Der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1925), 279–82; David Winston, “The Iranian Component in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Qumran: A Review of the Evidence,” *History of Religions* 5 (1966): 212.
24. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:349.
25. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 66.
26. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 284–85.
27. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 286, citing *Pistis Sophia*; see appendix 4.
28. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 50; Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:350; cf. English trans., 2:499.
29. For more on the Tale of Setne, see above, commentary to line 37.

30. Erik Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 172–73; English translation, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. John Baines (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 178–79.
31. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 286.
32. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 69; Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 283.
33. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 286.
34. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 283.
35. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 290.
36. Cf. the Arabic *maidan* as “the field of this world,” in Meir Fraenkel, “Zur Deutung von Medina ‘Bezirk, Staat,’ ” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 (1965): 215; cf. Matthew 13:38; 1 Nephi 8:20; Hugh W. Nibley, “Into the Desert,” in *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, CWHN 5:44–45.
37. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 290, 292.
38. Zohar, *Lech Lecha*, 80a–84a, in *The Zohar*, trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (London: Soncino, 1984), 1:270–80.
39. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 64.
40. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 64.
41. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 287.
42. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 275.
43. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 50.
44. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:350.

45. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 275 n. 2; cf. 291.
46. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 287.
47. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 287.
48. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 284.
49. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 286–87.
50. Zohar, *Shemoth*, 12b, in *The Zohar*; trans. Harry Sperling, Maurice Simon, Paul P. Levertoff (London: Soncino, 1984), 3:37.
51. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 413.
52. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 277 n. 6.
53. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 122.
54. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 51–52.
55. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:351; cf. English trans., 2:500–501.
56. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:303; cf. English trans., 2:434.
57. *Apocryphon of John* II, 23, 25–31=IV, 36, 20–28=III, 30, 14–21, in *NHLE* (1977), 111; (1988), 118; Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1987), 46.
58. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 69.
59. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:304; English trans., 2:435.
60. For more on light, see above, “The Temple as a Powerhouse,” in commentary 3, pp. 264–76.
61. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 279.
62. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:352.

63. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 52.
64. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 414.
65. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 123.
66. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 279.
67. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 124, emphasis added.
68. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 53, emphasis added.
69. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:352; cf. English trans., 2:502; also Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 124.
70. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 414.
71. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 53.
72. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 124.
73. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 280.
74. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:352; cf. English trans., 2:502.
75. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 414.
76. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 281; Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 53; Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; cf. English trans., 2:502.
77. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 124.
78. See Carl Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1928), 832.
79. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 53.
80. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 286.
81. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 124.
82. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353, cf. English trans.,

2:503; Hoffmann, "Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten," 281.

83. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 53; Adam's numbering is altered throughout the latter part of the poem.
84. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 414.
85. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 124.
86. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 53.
87. Bornkamm, "Thomasakten," 2:353; English trans., 2:503.
88. Hoffmann, "Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten," 281.
89. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 414.
90. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.
91. Bornkamm, "Thomasakten," 2:353; cf. English trans., 2:503.
92. Hoffmann, "Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten," 281.
93. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
94. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 264.
95. Hoffmann, "Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten," 281; Bornkamm, "Thomasakten," 2:353; English trans., 2:503.
96. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
97. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.
98. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 414.
99. Alexandre Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique* (Paris: Leroux, 1902), 47; Alexandre Moret, *Le rituel du culte divin journalier en égypte* (Paris: Leroux, 1902), 23, 64, 99–100.
100. Hoffmann, "Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten," 282.
101. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.

102. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415.
103. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
104. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; English trans., 2:503.
105. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 282.
106. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415; Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.
107. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
108. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; cf. English trans., 2:503.
109. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415.
110. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.
111. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
112. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; cf. English trans., 2:503.
113. For more on the ceremonial regalia, see above, commentary to lines 54–55, pp. 354–55.
114. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 282; Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; cf. English trans., 2:503.
115. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415.
116. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.
117. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
118. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415.
119. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.
120. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
121. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; cf. English trans., 2:503.

122. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 282.
123. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415.
124. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54; Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125; Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; cf. English trans., 2:503.
125. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 282.
126. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415.
127. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54.
128. Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
129. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; English trans., 2:503.
130. Hoffmann, “Zwei Hymnen der Thomasakten,” 282.
131. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 415.
132. Adam, *Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied*, 54; Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 125.
133. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:353; English trans., 2:503.
134. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten,” 2:305; English trans., 2:436.
135. *Kephalaia*, chapter 9, p. 38, lines 13–33, in Carl Schmidt, *Kephalaia (Berlin Manichaean Manuscript)*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1935), 1:38.

## Appendix 4

# From the *Pistis Sophia*

## Nature of the Text

Though the *Odes of Solomon* come from the land of the Tigris, five of those odes are incorporated in the *Pistis Sophia*, an early Coptic writing from faraway Thebes in Upper Egypt.<sup>1</sup> In between these distant but related outposts emerge early Judeo-Christian texts in various languages, all conveying a common message and looking to a common home—Jerusalem, via the sectarian settlements of the Judean desert.<sup>2</sup>

The *Pistis Sophia* is a third-century Christian work from Egypt, written in the Coptic dialect of Thebes, where our own Book of Breathings—a near contemporary—

was found.<sup>3</sup> The opening statement, that Jesus taught these things to his disciples “after he had risen from the dead” and that they extended to “the first degree (*topos*, phase, step) of the ordinances (*em-mystērion*)”—namely, “what is within the veil” (*et-p-houn em-p-katapetasma*)<sup>4</sup>—puts the writing in the category of the Forty-Day literature, the higher teachings given by the Lord to the apostles in secret after his resurrection, many of which writings were hidden up by the ancient Christian communities and have come to light only in our own day.<sup>5</sup> While the close association of the *Pistis Sophia* with the *Odes of Solomon* and *Psalms of Solomon* ties it also to the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is of further significance in the present situation and of special interest to the student of Egyptian religion since it preserves in the Christian milieu many of the basic concepts of ancient Egyptian religion

and much of its imagery.<sup>6</sup> Thus it is the nearest thing to a direct link between Joseph Smith Papyri XI and X and early Christianity in Egypt and hence, less directly, to all the sources contained in our appendixes. If the *Pistis Sophia* is a “gnostic” aberration, its contradictions and perplexities nonetheless furnish valuable clues to the genuine article that it was trying to dissemble.

The numbers preceding each quotation in the text that follows indicate pages in Carl Schmidt’s edition,<sup>7</sup> which closely matches the pagination of the principal manuscript, the Askew Codex. The *Pistis Sophia* is of great length and contains much repetition, both of single items and of series of episodes. Hence, our presentation requires excerpting and does not follow the order of the book.

## Purpose of the Writings

page 246. The ordinances (mysteries) of the three dispensations (*lit.* inheritances, *en-klēros*) of light become ever more numerous; you can find them in the two great books of Jeu,

349. [which are taken from the writings which] Enoch wrote ... and hid up in the rock of Ararad.

346. For this purpose I (Jesus) have brought the key of the mysteries of the heavens, without which no flesh on earth could be saved, since without an ordinance (*mystērion*) no one, whether righteous or unrighteous, shall enter into the kingdom of light. Wherefore, I have in this wise brought the keys of the mysteries to earth that I might deliver those sinners who shall believe on me and obey me, that I might deliver them from the bonds and seals of the rulers (of this world) and bind them in the sealings and garments and degrees of

light.

314–15. Proclaim it to the entire world: ...

Strive to receive the mysteries of the light in this time of tribulation, so that you might enter into the kingdom of light. ... For when the number of those who receive initiation (*lit.* the *teleioi*) is completed, I will shut the doors of light and no one will enter from that time on.

234–35. All who receive the mystery of the kingdom of light shall go individually to receive that inheritance which

corresponds to the degree to which one has attained (received) in the world. ... He who accepts less will inherit the lesser mystery, and he who receives the higher mystery will inherit a higher place (*topos*). And everyone will remain in his place ... and have authority over those orders (*taxis*) that are below him, but not over the degrees that are above him.

203–4. [States the same in different words:]

They who receive ordinances of the minor mysteries will find themselves in a minor degree (of glory, *taxis*); in a word, each one will remain in that *taxis* of inheritance of light which corresponds to (the share of) the mystery (ordinance) he has received.

350–51. Before I [Jesus] came into the world, no soul entered into the light. . . . I have opened the gates . . . and the ways that lead to the light. Now, therefore, whoever is worthy, . . . let him receive the mysteries and enter into the light. As for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I have forgiven them all their sins and shortcomings and given them the mysteries.

322–24. [Mary asks:] My Lord, if a good man who has carried out all the ordinances has an unrighteous (male) relative . . . who has died, . . . what can we do to deliver

him from the punishment of the dragon of outer darkness ... so that he can find the mysteries of the kingdom of light? ... The Savior answered Mary, saying, ... Perform these same ordinances of the Unutterable One for him, saying, ... The soul (*psychē*) of the man So-and-so of whom I am thinking in my mind (*hēt*) ... if it has completed the number of cycles of change (cf. Egyptian *hpr.w*), may it be led to the virgin of light ... to seal him with the seal of the Ineffable. ... [Then the dead will be baptized] and receive the seal and the sign (*maīn*) of the kingdom ... and be taken to the degree (*taxis*) of the light.

350–51. Now therefore, let everyone who is worthy receive the ordinances (mysteries) and enter into the light

277. that mankind may not die the death appointed for them by the forces (*en-archōn*) of natural law (*himarmenē*).

314. [Christ's message to the world:] Seek constantly and do not give up until you have found the mysteries of the light!
280. Every man who comes to you [the apostles] believing and ... worthy, give them the mysteries of the light and conceal them not. And give the higher mysteries to whoever is worthy of them and the lower mysteries to whoever is worthy of them. [Each should receive to the limit of his capacity.]
372. But *hide* this ordinance [of sacrifice], and do not give it to everybody, but only to him who shall do everything which I told you by way of commandment.
273. [If you have given the mysteries] to those who are unworthy and who have deceived you and use the mysteries for their own purposes (*lit.* make a *paradigm* of them; can also mean use them to impress others), ... you shall say, ...

return the mystery to us, and let them become aliens to the mystery of the kingdom forever. [The whole passage indicates the manner in which the ordinances became *widespread* and *corrupted* throughout the world.]

## Purification Rites

347–48. [Baptism comes first among the ordinances.] I have said to all men that they are to seek after the mysteries of the kingdom of light, which shall cleanse them and make them wholly pure (*hilikrines*) and bring them into the light. For that reason John the Baptist prophesied concerning me, knowing that I would bring the mysteries into the world to cleanse sinners ... and bring them to the light.

123–24. He who has baptized has forgiven the human race and transformed (made) them in the peace of the Sons of Light.

298–99. To him who receives the mysteries of baptisms, those ordinances become as a mighty fire . . . , consuming sins [and by purging making strict separation between all that is false—*atimimon*, mere pretense—and all that is good and true].

197–98. [In time] all who have repented will come to the middle place [*i.e.*, this world, the transition between premortal and postmortal existence], and those who are in the middle will baptize them and give them the spiritual anointing and seal them with the seals of their ordinances (mysteries), and they shall pass through all the stations (*topos*, degrees) of the middle . . . , receiving from each the seal of its mystery and remaining at each level (*topos*) of ordinances until one finally reaches the inheritance of light.

290–91. [At each level (*topos*) the soul is examined and tested.] They will all test

(*dokimaze*) that soul to find their signs (or tokens, *maein*) in it, as well as their seals and their baptisms and their anointing (*chrisma*). And the virgin of the light will seal that soul, and the workers (*paralēmptēs*) will baptize it and give it the spiritual anointing. ... And then the receptionists (workers) hand it over to the great Sabaōth ... at the gate of life ... [and] call Father. And to him the soul (fem.) gives ... his seals and his responses, ... with the seal of each degree (*topos*) in the right hand [this is the proper meaning of the word *ounam*]; and the soul will give its knowledge (*epistēmē*; special knowledge) and with the righthand seal of every *topos* with hymns of glory, ... and all the assistants (*paralēmptōr*) of Melchizedek will seal that soul and lead it to the treasury of the light, ... the *topos* of its inheritance.

## The Creation of Man

136. The [creative] word which it [Wisdom] spoke is the outflowing of light which came (*lit.* drew) together at the temple. [The personification of Wisdom, Sophia, is biblical as well as Egyptian (Maat). Thus Proverbs 7:4; 8:1; Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:35; 11:49; for wisdom specifically as an agent of the creation, see Jeremiah 51:15; Proverbs 3:19.]
- 130–31. It was Michael and Gabriel who took charge, bringing the outpouring of light into disorganized matter (*chaos*); ... they were entrusted with the distribution (*apohroia*) of the light, which I handed over to them to be applied to (introduced into) chaos.
133. The outpouring of light entered into chaos and suffused itself over all the realm of blind chance (the *authades*, that which is under no control but its own nature, the

“self-willed”). And also the word of thy power uttered through Solomon: It has drawn all things and brought them together at the temple. ... And again: ... The emanations of blind chance (the *authades*, who acknowledges no law) could not dominate over (*amahte*, contain, control) the outpouring of light within the confines (*sobet*) of the darkness of chaos.

35. [After the sun's light has been purified,] leftover matter is brought down to this lower sphere and fashioned into men and likewise into the souls of creeping things, and cattle and wild animals and birds ... all being sent down to this world of man, where they become souls.

129–30. I [Christ] called upon Gabriel from the midst of the worlds (*aeons*) along with Michael, pursuant to the command of my Father, ... and I gave to them the task of the outpouring of the light and caused them

to go down into matter unorganized (*chaos*) and assist Pistis Sophia. ... And as soon as the flow of light entered the chaos, it became brighter and brighter, suffusing all chaos, and spread out and occupied every part (*topos*) of it. ... Then Michael and Gabriel introduced the stream of light into the inert matter (*hylē*) of the body of Pistis Sophia, pouring back into her the light powers which had been taken from her; and all her physical body became full of light, ... the light having been given to them by me. And Michael and Gabriel, who are charged with administering the light, they who introduce light into chaos, will also give the ordinances of the light to them [the initiates?].

129–30, 133–36. [It is Michael and Gabriel who pass between heaven and earth from time to time in their assignment of

organizing the world out of chaos.]

65. Now, this is the mystery which was the type for every race which was about to come into existence, that that race at its creation should sing a hymn to the Most High (*or e-p-jise*, on high). Because light has looked down from his light on high, and he shall look upon all that matter which is below. [In the lines that follow, the sending down of light at the creation is compared with the visitation of the Lord to those who sat in darkness in the descensus:]

69–70. Wilt thou not send light into chaos from thy realms, and will not deliverers come ... down into the darkness at thy command? Will they not declare the mystery of thy name in chaos? Let thy light come to me here!

52. [In common] with those who carry out the mysteries in his name,

51. spirit (*psyche*) and matter praise the Lord [in a hymn of creation]. Now therefore let all material substance rejoice! Seek ye after the light that you might live. ... For the light has hearkened to substance and will not leave any matter unpurified; let living souls (Coptic *psychooue* < Greek *psychē*) and matter (*hylē*) together praise the Lord of all the worlds, along with matter and whatever comprises it.

34. [The one who directs all such operations between worlds is] Melchizedek, the great transmitter (*paralēmptōr*) of the light; he was wont to come into the midst of all the worlds (*en-en-aiōn*) and the rulers (*en-archōn*), who are bound ... by the laws of chance; ... he would remove what was disturbing them and set in motion the driving force (*spoudastēs*) controlling them, causing them to accelerate their

revolutions (*kyklos*, cycles).

333–34. The refuse (*sorem*, i.e., of other worlds) that is left over after a purification by light is taken by Melchizedek, and the five great forces (*archons*) of nature (*himarmenē*) rework (*lit.* knead, *ouošem*) that refuse among themselves and then portion it out to various individual souls, so that every one of the rulers of the worlds contributes something to each separate soul—that is why they process (knead) it mutually among themselves.

341–45. [The creation of man is the type both of his birth and his resurrection. Thus 365 assistants or ministers (the complete cycle of the year) seal the parts of the body together in the womb, the operation taking exactly seventy days—the period of the Egyptian embalming bath. Each part of the body is touched as it is completed, in

the manner of the Opening of the Mouth.]

335. And that new power (the new body) is exactly like (*homoiōs*) the appearance of the spirit (*psychē*), resembling it in every particular.

332–34. When an ancient (*i.e.*, preexistent) spirit (*ou-psychē en-archaion*) is about to come down to that region which they call the kingdom of Adam [to take an earthly body], ... that archon who is at the head of the place gives that preexistent soul a cup of forgetfulness, if it is an ancient spirit; then the head of the aeons himself [Melchizedek] mixes the cup of forgetting [so that everything on this earth seems strange and counterfeit].

374. And then ... the Adamas comes, who hands the cup of forgetting to souls, bringing a cup filled with the water of forgetfulness and giving it to the soul, which drinks and forthwith forgets every

place and every realm (*topos*) in which it has ever been. And they cast it down into a body to spend a period of time in constant travail (or trial, testing), and tribulation of heart.

## The Garden and the Fall

Since this book is primarily a revelation to Mary and her female friends, the feminine figure of Pistis Sophia (Egyptian Maat)—who is *fides quaerens intellectum*, the searcher after knowledge—dominates, taking the role of Eve. It will be recalled that even in the biblical story of the garden, Eve plays a more active role than Adam, being the first to acquire earthly knowledge (*sophia*). In the *Life of Adam and Eve*, it is Eve who tells the story of the fall, speaking in the first person.  
42–44. I entered into the thirteenth aeon and found Pistis Sophia, ... and she was alone; not one of them being with her, she sat in

that place in sorrow and anguish [the fall]. [In her desire for knowledge, she looked behind the veil before she was ready and so was cast out into outer darkness where she was at the mercy of all the primal forces of chaos.]

47. And I went and there [she says] I was in the darkness of the chaos beneath, and I could not escape, ... being beset by all the forces (emanations) of the natural law (*authades*); and the power of the lion-faced one took all my power from me. [In Egyptian imagery as in early Christian, the unharnessed and untamed forces of the universe are often depicted as a raging lion.]

63. My light they have taken from me, and my power has withered, and I have forgotten my mystery which formerly I used to perform.

45–84. [In her distress she cries out—the

penitential Psalms—to Jesus, who comes to her rescue.]

98. O light, in whom I have believed from the beginning, ... help me! And in that very hour her repentance was accepted, and the first mystery hearkened to her, and I was sent forth by his order and came down to help her and brought her up out of chaos since she had repented.

139. Then, at the command of my Father, I sent Gabriel and Michael forth again ... to help Pistis Sophia. And I instructed both Gabriel and Michael to carry out Pistis Sophia on their hands, ... and I also instructed them to guide her through the regions of chaos out of which they were to bring her,

208–11. [and was accordingly under obligation to study the highest mysteries, since only by receiving such in this world can one comprehend the meaning and

purposes of God's plan for the eternities, including the meaning of evil and the principle of opposition in all things (which the woman was first to comprehend). The mysteries answer all the fundamental questions.]

194–95. Jesus ... and Melchizedek, the two great guides (leaders, presiding rulers, *prohēgoumenos*), have issued forth from the pure and perfect (unmixed) light of the first tree, and so to the fifth. Jeu (Jesus), the supreme overseer (*episkopos*) of the light, comes forth first, from the pure light of the first tree, while he who stands guard at the veil of the right hand has come forth from the second tree [the enigmatic sections on trees at least establish a garden setting].

311. [Mary explains the mysteries of the ordinances carried out on behalf of the woman in terms of the fig tree, that being

the tree of life, which turned barren at the fall (cf. Luke 13:6–9)].

137–38. [The fallen Sophia is sorely afflicted by the great serpent taking the reptilian forms of seven-headed serpent and dragon and]

354–56. [the Ouroboros of the solar disk. It was he who was cast out of heaven.]

## The Road Back

Being cast out, man leads a life that is neither paradise nor hell, but “the condition of in-between”—*hiooue en-t-mête*—where one is exposed to constant dangers and pains.

357–58. Mary asked, ... My Lord, make known to us the advantage of the ways of the middle, for we have heard from thee that they lie through great tribulations (*kolasis*, punishments); how, my Lord, will we ever escape from them? ... or just

how long is their punishment?

308 [cf. 86–88, 91]. [They who reject the mysteries] and leave their bodies without having repented ... must dwell in the midst of the mouth of the dragon of outer darkness, to perish without trace (*haliske*) and be as if they did not exist—forever [they will cease to progress].

306. From that time on they will not be worthy to return to the use (*metabolē*) of bodies or of anything else, but are cast into outer darkness.

45–84. [But there is a way out. Repentance comes first—Pistis Sophia's penitential psalms are the beginning of the process.]

163–64. [Jesus teaches them to the disciples. The delivering ordinances are the gate which Christ opens to all; ]

350–51. [before his coming no soul had such an escape route:] But when I came I opened the gates (*em-pylē*) of light and

opened the way to the light. Now therefore, whoever is worthy, let him receive the mysteries and enter into the light.

87. All the relentless powers encircled me, saying they would take away every bit of my light. But I turned to thee, ... saying, Thou art my Savior. ... Save me out of the hands of the *authades*; ... place thy light upon me.

328. Savior, have mercy that none of our kindred dead should come to such a state [Mary speaking] and condition; have mercy on all souls that shall be in such a condition, for thou art the key which opens the door of all things (*em-p-tēref*, the universe) and shuts the door of all, and thy mystery embraces them all.

323–25. [When the work of baptism and sealing is being done,] during which you shall say, The soul of So-and-so of whom I

am thinking in my mind, the dragon will take its tail out of his mouth and release that spirit from its embrace ... and the ministers (agents) of Melchizedek will snatch it away from the dragon or from the archons out of whatever place it is in.

350–51. Now therefore, let everyone who is worthy receive the ordinances and enter into the light.

316. [For many] souls will knock at the gates of light and say, Lord, open unto us! And I will answer: I do not know you. ... But they shall say, We have received your mysteries and carried out your instructions. ... But I will answer: I do not know you because you are workers of iniquity [the ordinances do not save automatically]. ... Therefore, announce to the whole world to repent and leave the world and all the material things in it, and receive the ordinances of the light before

the set number of initiated (*teleios*, perfect) souls is completed. ...

196–98. [They who are still in this place of testing, in the condition of “in between” (*en-t-mēte*), should perform the ordinances for those dead who did not have the opportunity in life, baptizing them and] giving them the spiritual anointing and sealing them with the seals of their mysteries, so that they can pass through every level (*topos*), passing by the nine guards (watchmen), ... each of whom gives them his seal so that they can pass on to the next.

276–77. [Workers for the dead must labor to see to it that they are passed on from order to order with the slightest possible delay] so that ... they can go on higher and higher in the inheritance of the kingdom of light.

169. [The way back leads through twelve aeons; when the Lord descends to deliver

Pistis Sophia, then] the gate is opened; those who are in all the aeons will know it because of the great light that will pervade all their regions. [The imagery is Egyptian.]

317–20. [Jesus to Mary]: The outer darkness is a great dragon with his tail in his mouth [the Egyptian Ouroboros], he being outside the entire cosmos and containing within himself a multitude of regions (*topos*) of punishment—namely, the twelve great (*našt*) prisons (*tamion*) of punishment, each having its archon, each with a different face. [Here the description becomes frankly Egyptian, the faces being those of crocodile, cat, dog, serpent, bull, pig, bear, vulture, etc.] Each one has a special name for each hour, and each one changes his face every hour. [The watcher of each of the twelve gates is in turn supervised by watching angels, more than

one figure standing at each gate or door.] [Exactly as in the Egyptian texts, the doors have names, which the initiate must give in order to pass].

265 and passim: [One proceeds on the way from one station (*chōrēma*, from *chōreō*) to the next by producing answers, explanations, symbols, tokens (*psēphos*), and seals (*sphragis*).]

330. [A given cycle (*kyklos*) in the changes of the body has not been completed until the appropriate ordinances have been performed—the concept is that of the Egyptian *hprw*.]

126. These are the names as I give them [writes the scribe]. ... They should be written in code (*lit.* in a symbol, *hen ou-maīn*) that the Sons of God [code name for the early Christian community] may communicate (*lit.* reveal) them up to a point (up to this place). The name of the

Immortal One [common Hebrew expression for God] is written aaa www [with three alphas and three omegas]. The voice [that sets all things in motion] ... is iii, etc.

78. [Even the psychostasy comes into the picture.] God shall sit in the council (*lit.* synagogue) of the gods and judge the gods (cf. Psalms 81:1).

256–59. [A long Negative Confession is set forth in the Egyptian manner.]

94. [The usual turning of the tables against one's accusers:] May darkness overcome those who wanted to take away my light and my power.

361. [The image of the balance is introduced in Bubastis, definitely a Book of the Dead setting:] and when she comes to the seventh house of the sphere (house of the zodiac), that is the balance (libra); then the veil is drawn between the right hand and

the left hand, and the Great Sabaōth the Good looks out in the height with (*hen*) the right hand. [The guilty is seized by the monster Paraplex, the Egyptian Amentit of the pyschostasy scenes.]

278. [Here the arrested sacrifice is indicated.] He who performs that mystery and carries out all the prescribed forms (*nef-schēma*) and figures thereof (*nef-typos*), and its steps (*jin-aheratou*), will not really come out of the body in doing so; yet when he dies, he will not have to go through it all again—the responses and explanations and tokens—on the other side. [Christ has provided the ordinances] that men need not die the death appointed for them by the rulers of fate [*i.e.*, in the course of nature].

246–47. [It is done figuratively, on a certain level (*chōrēma*); ] these things are only types and figures (*schēma*).

## Culminating Ordinances

290–91. [At every station, inspectors] prove the soul and find together their signs in it, and their seals and their baptisms, and their anointing [whereupon they put their seal on the soul and send it forward to the next inspection point. This goes on to the highest levels]. The assistants of the light hand over the soul to the Great Sabaōth the Good, who is at the gate of life ... who is called Father, ... who gives the soul his seals ... and Melchizedek seals that soul and all the assistants of Melchizedek seal that soul and lead it into the treasury of light [where it is again sealed, and so] goes over into the realm of its inheritance.

240. [When one receives the mystery by proxy,] he will not be judged, ... but we will hand him on quickly from one to another, from order to order (*topos*) until he reaches the virgin of light [Egyptian

Maat], ... who sees the signs and tokens in him, but holds him back [until he has received complete clearance and] then seals him with the holy seal.

276. [For the dead, this can be in monthly installments, as] every month by month the virgin seals the candidate with a higher seal.

196–97. [The candidate always moves in a company of his kind; each *arithmesis*—set number—of souls has its time and place on earth, and when the number is fulfilled or the initiation completed of *teleioi psychai*, the group of souls moves on to] a higher inheritance in the light. ...

Everyone must remain in the *topos* in which he is ... until he is ready to receive the mysteries of the next.

350. [Only] one in ten thousand ... will ever attain to the mystery of the first mystery.

353–54. [An important episode of the group

initiation is the prayer circle, which we have treated elsewhere.]<sup>8</sup>

190–91. [There are mysteries far beyond any known on earth.]

189. When I lead you to the *topos* of those who have received their inheritance ... the sun will look like nothing but a tiny speck of cornmeal because of the enormous distance and because the new world is so much greater.

218–19. [These higher mysteries are not for the unqualified, who are terrified of them; they go far beyond mortal comprehension.]

276–77. [As the Spirit soars into the heights, no power is able to hold it down or even to approach it.]

359. [The initiates become the dispensation of the Sons of Light on earth, who receive whatever they desire.]

370–71. [They become] the followers of the lord [followers is an extremely common

Egyptian expression] ... numbered among the kingdom of my Father.

190–91. When they of this earth become exalted by the mysteries, they will be with me in the *topos* of the light, and each of them will be a king over his dominions (emanations; Coptic *probolooue* < Greek *probolai*) ... according to his measure of glory.

196. Everyone according to the measure of glory he has received will rule with me in the inheritance of the light.

232. All who receive the ordinances will be fellow kings with me ... in my kingdom.

118–19. [The mystic embrace is prominent in the *Pistis Sophia*.]

121–22. [Mary, the mother of Jesus, recounts an episode from the childhood of Jesus:] It was when you [Jesus] were quite small, before the Spirit had descended upon you; you were in the vineyard one day with

Joseph. The Spirit came down from on high and came right into the house—looking just like you, and since I did not know him, I thought that it was you. And the Spirit said to me: Where is Jesus, my brother? I want to meet him. And I was perplexed and thought it must be a phantom sent to test me[.] [Mary went and got Jesus and Joseph,] and we all went down together to the house and went in and found the Spirit tied to your bed [where Mary had bound him,] and he was let loose and embraced you and kissed you; and you also embraced him and the two of you became one [*unio mystica*]. This must then be the interpretation of the saying [about grace and truth embracing].

124–25. Then Mary, the Mother of Jesus, again came forth ... and said ... [the saying that] grace and truth met together refers to me—Mary, your mother—and

Elizabeth, the mother of John, with whom I met. For mercy must be the power of Sabaōth that was in me ... while truth was the power which was in Elizabeth as John, who proclaimed ... the Way of Truth.

Furthermore, mercy (*hesed*, grace) meeting with truth is the meeting of you, my Lord, with John on the day which you received baptism.

362–64. [When the rule of evil is destroyed, Melchizedek expects us at the veil and invites us to proceed.]

223. [For the highest of mysteries in this world, the first mystery,] lies beyond the veil.

194. [There at] the veil of the great light [the guardian—Melchizedek—waits to introduce us to Ieou.]

23. I went up to the great aeons of the archons and stood before their veils and shining gates, ... and their veils and their

gates were parted, that is to say, their veils were. ... And I entered within the aeons, becoming ever more shining, all about me shining with immeasurable brightness.

315. [There is a whole series of] aeons and veils and firmaments [cf. Moses 7:30: “His curtains are stretched out still”],

85–86. [each representing the transition to another world, so that, e.g., the light of the sun must penetrate many veils and *topoi* before it reaches the earth, where we see only a dim and misleading image of its true glory.]

41–42. [When one reaches the end of a stage of existence—*epochē*—one goes up to the veil at the thirteenth aeon, where] their veils ... parted and opened to me.

324–31. [After one has completed the tests, the baptism, and the anointing and has been conducted to the treasury of the light, one ascends up a few steps to the drawing

aside of the veil and the entrance into a new purification, when the cycle begins all over again, but at a higher level.]

194–95. [In an ever-expanding system,]  
fellow kings reign ... in the region of the souls of those who have received the first mystery of the first mystery. ... They will be kings with the first Savior of the first voice.

15–17. And when Jesus had finished saying these things to his disciples, he added, ... Behold, I have put on my garment, and have been given all authority (*exousia*) by virtue of (*hitem*) the first mystery. Yet a little while and I will tell you all the mysteries. ... [The key to the whole thing] is that mystery which lies beyond the world (*et-en-bol hem-p-kosmos*), for the sake of which the universe itself exists, ever mounting up, ever expanding (*sōr ebol*). ... Come to us, for we are your

fellow members, all of us identical with yourself; we are all one and you are one with us.

## Notes

1. J. Rendel Harris, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 10–22.
2. See Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967), 69–74, reprinted as *Since Cumorah*, CWHN 7:61–64.
3. Carl Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia* (Hauniae: Gyldendalske Boghandel-Nordisk, 1925), xix, xxxii–xxxiii.
4. *Pistis Sophia* 1.1, in ibid., 1–4; English translation in Carl Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia*, trans. Violet MacDermot (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 1–4.
5. Hugh W. Nibley, “Evangelium Quadraginta Dierum,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 20 (1966): 1–24, reprinted in *When the Lights Went Out: Three Studies on the Ancient Apostasy* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 33–54; and *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, CWHN 4:10–44.
6. See László Kákonyi, “Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion,” *ZÄS* 97 (1971): 105–6.
7. See indicated pages of Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia*, for the context. Schmidt’s pagination is retained in Violet

MacDermot's English translation. [Nibley's translation appears here with minor editorial changes, including in punctuation and capitalization—eds.]

8. Hugh W. Nibley, "The Early Christian Prayer Circle," *BYU Studies* 19/1 (1978): 41–78, reprinted in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, CWHN 4:45–99.

## Appendix 5

# Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Ordinances

## Nature of the Text

Cyril of Jerusalem (d. A.D. 386) delivered his *Five Explanatory Lectures to the Newly Enlightened* (i.e., newly baptized or initiated) at Easter time in Jerusalem in A.D. 347, 348, or 350, before he had become a bishop. The lectures are entitled *Mystagogikai Katecheseis*, or “Instructions to Initiates into the Mysteries.” In a recent and rather sensational work, Morton Smith demonstrates at length that the word *mystery*, as used by the first Christians, usually refers to ordinances. He duly notes that Judaism itself was an ancient “mystery religion” in

which the rites of circumcision and passover were “mysteries,”<sup>1</sup> and that such early and orthodox Christian writers as Clement of Alexandria “think of Jesus as a ‘hierophant,’ a teacher of mysteries.”<sup>2</sup> As Smith sums it up, “This was the mystery of the kingdom—the mystery rite by which the kingdom was entered,” i.e., the ordinances of initiation.<sup>3</sup> The teaching was very secret and limited to an “inner circle,”<sup>4</sup> which may explain why the closest parallels to it are found not in the Old Testament or in Palestinian Judaism, but in the Egyptian magical papyri.<sup>5</sup>

The time and place of Cyril’s lectures are both significant since it was in the middle of the fourth century and at Jerusalem that the cult of the temple enjoyed a spectacular albeit specious revival.<sup>6</sup> These particular lectures contain “the fullest account extant” of ordinances in the church at that crucial

period,<sup>7</sup> giving unique insights into almost unknown areas of “sacramental teachings, ... sacrificial mysteries of the Eucharist, and arcane practices.”<sup>8</sup> Our translation is from J.-P. Migne in Patrologia Graeca.<sup>9</sup>

## Purpose of the Writing

1.1. I have long wanted to talk with you about these spiritual and heavenly ordinances. But since I am well aware by experience that seeing is far more convincing than hearing, I have waited until now, when you would all be in a better condition to understand what I am talking about as I conduct you from your recent experience (*or test, peira*) into the brighter and more fragrant meadow of this Paradise. As a matter of fact, you are now capable of receiving more godly mysteries, having been deemed worthy of the divine life-giving baptism. It is time to

set a table of more advanced (perfect) teachings, that you may better understand the significance (*emphasin*, meaning) of what you have been through.

## Purification

- 1.2. First you entered the annex (*proaulion oikon*, i.e., *w'b.t*) of the baptistery, and as you stood facing west you heard (instructions) and were asked to raise your hands. Thereby you cast out Satan from your midst (*apetattesthe*) as if he were present. Now you must understand that this is a type of something that goes back to very ancient times, i.e., ... when Moses led the Hebrews out of their evil servitude to the Egyptians [it is explained that the same waters—of the Red Sea—which liberated the Jews destroyed their satanic oppressors: a type of baptism].

- 1.3. Now turn with me from the old to the

new, from the type to the reality, ... when the blood of Jesus Christ actually provides the means of deliverance from the demons.

- 1.4. Hear further instruction as you raise your hands. [He elaborates on the renunciation of Satan.]
- 1.5. In this most awful hour, everything you say is written in the books of God. You are now bound by oath and will perjure yourselves if you act contrary.
- 2.2. [Review:] Yesterday,...immediately upon entering you removed your street clothes. And that was the image of putting off the old man and his works, ... the former man, corrupted as he was by the desire for false (deceptive) things; and may that garment, once put off, never be put on again!
- 1.10. In the holy bath of rebirth, God removes every tear from every face. There is no more sorrow, for the old man has

been removed.

1.8. In renouncing Satan and joining with Christ ... flee to the mountain, to Jesus Christ, to the stone cut without hands (*tmēthenta*, or precious—*timēthenta*—stone)... which filled the whole world (cf. the Stone of Truth).

3.1. Upon emerging from the tank of holy running water, you were given an anointing, the antitype of which was the anointing of Christ.

3.2. He was anointed with ... what is called the olive oil of exaltation (*agalliaseōs elaiō*—a coronation figure) ... while you were anointed with myrrh (scented oil), making you companions and copartners (*koinōnoi kai metochoi*) with Christ.

3.3. You were anointed on your brow and your other sense organs, and so while the body is anointed in outward appearance with myrrh, the soul (*psychē*) is sanctified

by the life-bestowing Holy Spirit.

3.4. First of all, you were anointed on the brow (*metōpon*, forehead and eyes, *lit.* “space between the eyes”) to free you from the shame which completely involved the first man when he fell, and that you might clearly perceive (*or reflect, katoptrizisthe*) the glory of the Lord with wide-open mind (*lit.* with uncovered face). Then your ears that you might receive the hearing ears of the mysteries of God. . . . Next come the nostrils, that upon receiving the holy ordinance you may say: “We are the sweet odor of Christ to God among the saved.” After that (you were anointed) on the breast (*ta stēthē*, “the seat of feeling [passion] and thought”),<sup>10</sup> that, clothed with the breastplate of righteousness, you may stand against the wiles of the devil [countering his evil thoughts with good ones].

3.5. It is because you are worthy of this holy anointing (*chrismatos*) that you are called Christians. ... It is by following this road that you have advanced to the point of earning that title.

3.6. When Moses received the order to make his brother a high priest, after washing him with water he anointed him, and he was called a Christ, because of the anointing which was the type [of Christ]. Thus also Solomon, being called to the kingship, was anointed after a bath in Gihon by the high priest. For them it was a type [making them kings and priests], but for us it is not symbolical but real, since you really have been anointed by the Holy Ghost. The king (*archē*) of your salvation is Christ, for he is the true firstfruits and you are the unleavened bread. If the firstfruits [*i.e.*, the priestly office] is holy, that holiness will be transferred to the unleavened bread

[i.e., you too will become kings and priests].

3.4. As Christ after his baptism ... went forth to confront the adversary, so you, after your holy baptism and mystic anointing, were clothed in the armor of the Holy Ghost to stand against the opposing power.

1.10. Having put off the old man's garment of sorrow, you now celebrate as you put on the garment of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3.1. Having been baptized in Christ and having put on Christ like a garment, you come to resemble (*symmorphoi gegonate*) the Son of God.

4.8. After you put off the old garments and put on those of spiritual white, you should keep them always thus spotless white. That is not to say that you must always go around in white clothes, but rather that you should be always clothed in what is really white and glorious, that you may say with

the blessed Isaiah (61:10), “Let my soul exult in the Lord, for he hath clothed me in a robe of salvation and clothing of rejoicing.” [The word here used for “clothe” is *endyō*, meaning to place a garment on one, and is the ultimate source of our word “endowment,” derived in the *Oxford English Dictionary* from both *induēre*, to invest with a garment, and *inducēre*, to lead into or initiate.]<sup>11</sup>

## The Creation of Man

2.1. Useful to us are the daily ordinances (*lit.* initiations, *mystagōgai*), as well as the newer instructions that introduce us to unfamiliar activities (*pragmatōn*), especially so to you who have just been renewed by leaving an old life for a new one [cf. Book of Breathings, “It is useful (*ȝh*) to him in the next life” ]. Therefore I must give you a review of yesterday’s

ordinances in sequence, so that you will understand the symbolism of what you went through in the inner building.

- 2.2. You were true imitators of Adam, the first man to be created, who was naked in the garden and was not ashamed.
- 2.3. Then ... you were anointed with olive oil from the crown of your heads to your feet (*heōs tōn katō*).
- 2.4. You were immersed three times, representing symbolically Christ's three days in the tomb. For as the Savior was in the bowels of the earth, ... so you, ... in rising up, (came) ... into the light of day, and went down into the darkness of night when you were immersed. ... And therein you died and were born; and that water of salvation was both tomb and mother to you [cf. *Nut als Mutter und Sarg!* (*Nut as Mother and Coffin*)]. You can say with Solomon: "There is a time to be born and

a time to die," which works also in reverse: There is a time to die and a time to be born [cf. the Egyptian "Recite-in-reverse" formula], ... since both your birth and death took place simultaneously (*syndromes*—by the same ordinance).

## The Garden

1.11. All these things took place in the outer building. God willing, when we enter the holy of holies after having advanced in the proper order of the initiatory ordinances (*tais hexēs mystagōgiais*), we shall there be made acquainted with the *symbola* of the fully initiated.

1.9. [Meanwhile,] the testament of Satan having been renounced, ... the paradise of God is opened to you, which was planted eastward. ... This is symbolized when you turn yourselves from the west to face east, the place of light.

1.4. [The candidate said] I renounce thee, deceitful serpent, working all manner of wickedness. I renounce thee who plotted against, and under the semblance of friendship brought about, the fall of our first parents!

1.7. [This because Satan offers the food of vanity, just as Christ offers the bread and wine of the sacrament (the meal in the garden)].

4.7. Christ came and spread a mystic and symbolic table ... as a sharing with God. “He anointeth my head” (Psalms 23:5) refers to the sealing on the brow before the meal, making one the type of the seal, the sacred mark of God.

2.3. Having [like Adam] been cut off from the wild olive tree, you are driven (goaded) toward the good olive tree, that you might become sharers in the fatness of the true olive... . For the inhalations [cf.

*snsn*] of the saints (*or* of holy things) and the act of calling upon the name of God [as Adam did] act as a most mighty lamp to scorch and drive off the demons [cf. the Egyptian banning of the serpent from the garden and the tree by fire].

## The Way Back

- 1.9. The paradise of God ... from which our first parent was expelled through transgression is now opened to you. ... The symbol of this is your turning from the west to face the east, the place of light [setting out on the journey].
- 1.10. Be alert (sober) and take advantage of the protection these words (*logois*, written or spoken instructions or formulas) afford you. For the adversary ... like a roaring lion goes about seeking whom he might devour [cf. Egyptian Apophis]. In times past, death has devoured mighty men.

3.7. Keep your anointing undefiled, ... for it is the holy spiritual protection (*phylaktērion*) of the body and the salvation of the soul. ... Keep it by you undefiled and blameless as you progress on your way (*prokoptontes*) through good works, and be compliant (*euarestoi*) to the guide (*or author, archēgō*) of your salvation (*or safety*), Christ Jesus.

3.3. [This after having put on “the armour of righteousness” ], for a contest.

1.2. [It was in the waters that the adversary was overcome (cf. Apophis and the combat motif).]

5.17. Temptation is like a dangerous torrent to cross. Those who are not overwhelmed by temptation are those who get across, becoming some of the best swimmers. Others are drowned (sunk). ... Thou hast tried us, O God, thou hast tested us as silver is tested in the fire; thou hast led us

into the trap; thou hast placed heavy burdens upon our backs.... We have come through fire and water, and thou hast led us to a resting place.

2.6. Let no one suppose that baptism is for the removal of sins only; it also has the purpose of making us sons. ... It vouches for the gift of the Holy Ghost and is thereby a similitude (*antitypos*) of the sufferings of Christ.

1.4. [Facing the serpent, the destroyer, the candidate can say:] I no longer fear thy power, for Christ has broken (*kateluse*) it, sharing with me his blood and flesh, that through them death may abolish death, that I might not be held forever in bondage.

2.2. [The candidate is not only the type of Adam in the garden, but also “imitates” Christ in the crucifixion,] dismantling<sup>12</sup> earthly power and authority and openly triumphing on the cross. Since powers of

the adversary still linger in your members, it is not yet possible for you to wear that ancient robe. I am not speaking entirely of tangible things, but rather of the old man perishing amid deceptive lusts.

2.5. O strange and paradoxical thing! We did not die in reality, nor were we really buried, nor did we rise up after having been actually crucified. Rather, it was imitation (*mimēsis*) by a token (*eikoni*), while the salvation part is the real thing. Christ was really crucified, really was buried, and really rose again, and all that for our benefit, so that by sharing his sufferings in imitation we might attain to a real salvation. O love of men overflowing! Christ really received the nails in his blameless hands and feet and suffered pain; while I, without any pain or struggle, by his sharing of suffering the pain, enjoy the fruits of salvation!

## Petition for Admission

- 2.1. I put before you yesterday's ordinances of initiation in their proper order, so that you may learn which tokens (*symbola*) must be given by you in the inner temple (*oikos*, house, the Jerusalem word for temple).
- 5.2. [The penultimate rite is a prayer circle.] Now you see the deacon (*diakonon*, assistant) providing wash things for the priest and the elders (*presbyterois*) all standing in a circle around the altar. It is not for washing off physical dirt—that is not it at all; ... but it is symbolic of the purity from all sin and unrighteousness which we must have.
- 5.3. Then the assistant cries out: Exchange signs with each other (*allēlous apolabete*) and let us embrace! You must not suppose that this is the usual hug and kiss (*philēma*) of common friends in the

marketplace. It is not such a sign of affection (*philema*).... The embrace (*philema*, kiss) is, in fact, the sign of a mingling of souls and the erasing of all ill feeling. Wherefore, Christ said, "If ... thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar," etc. (Matthew 5:23–24). ... Hence the *philema* is a complete reconciliation, and for that reason it is holy.

5.4. The priest then calls out, Lift up your hearts! For truly, at that awe-inspiring time the heart should be lifted up to God, devoid of all earthly things. ... Then you answer: We are turned toward the Lord, all speaking in unison to declare our unanimity of spirit.... Of course we should have God in mind at all times, but if this is impossible because of human weakness, still at this particular time we should make every effort to do so.

5.5. Then the priest says, Let us give thanks to the Lord. And truly, we should give thanks that he has called us to such grace, unworthy as we are, ... condescending to adopt us as his sons by the Spirit. Then you say, It is right and proper, for the thanksgiving prayer follows the prescribed order.

5.6. Then, in our prayer we make mention of heaven and earth and sea, of sun and moon and stars and all the creation of rational and irrational creatures and things visible and invisible, of angels, archangels, powers, princedoms, dominions, etc.

5.8. We pray for the common peace of the church and the well-being of the world (*kosmos*); for kings, commanders, and allies, for the sick and afflicted, and, in short, for all who need help.

5.9. After that we remember the dead— patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs—

that God might grant our petition through the joining of our prayers with theirs. Then we pray for ... all of our own people who have fallen asleep, believing that the greatest possible benefit can come to the spirits on whose behalf (*hyper hōn*) the petition is made.

5.10. I have often heard people ask: What good does it do the departed spirit, whether the person was good or bad in life, to be remembered in the prayer? ... Answer: By doing for them and for ourselves what a loving God requires (*exileoumenoi*), we make available (*prospheromen*) the atoning sacrifice which Christ made for our sins.

5.11. We then pray: ... Our Father who art in the heavens, ... the heavens being those in which God dwells and among which he circulates [continues analyzing the Lord's Prayer].

## Concluding Rites

- 5.1. In the preceding meetings by the goodness of God you have heard quite a bit about baptism, anointing, and the taking on of (*metalepsēōs*, participation in) the body and blood of Christ. Now it is necessary to advance to the next things, and today we are going to place the crown on the spiritual edifice of your endowment (*ōphēleias*).
- 5.2. You have just seen the prayer circle [this is described in 5:2–16].
- 5.17. [The preceding rites compared to a passage through dangerous waters and a testing in the fire.] We have passed through fire and water, and thou hast led us out into the refrigerium (*anapsychēn*, place of rest and refreshment [Psalm 65:10–12]). Don't you see them emerging safely from the perilous passage, joyful with relief (*parrhēsiazomenous*)?

5.20. After that you hear a chanter (*psallontos*) inviting you with a sacred song to share together in the holy mysteries, saying: Taste and see how good the Lord is! ... Not bread and wine, but the antitype of the body and blood of Christ.

3.1. [Baptism and garment identify one with Christ.] Being baptized and having “put on Christ,” you have become of the same form (*symmorphoi*) as the Son of God. [So does anointing:] For God has foreordained you to be sons and to share the form of the body of the glory of Christ; having become sharers (*metochoi*) with Christ, you are properly called Christs, and of you God has said: Do not touch my anointed ones (Christs).

5.3–4. [The embrace has the same effect:] It is the sign of the mingling of spirits. ... In that awesome hour [one must have one’s

mind] wholly on (*pros*) God.

5.20. [Best known of all, the sacrament establishes identity:] For those who partake are commanded not to partake of bread and wine but of the antitype of the body and blood of the Christ.

5.21. [This final ordinance is now described in terms of an embrace. As they are not to think of the food as bread and wine, so they are not to think of this simply as an embrace:] As you step forward, therefore, do not advance with the open hands extended or with the fingers parted, but place the left hand in support of the right as if making a throne about to receive the king, and holding the hand in cupping shape (*koilanas tēn palamen*), receive the body of Christ as you respond with amen ... so that if anything is fumbled (dropped), you must consider it as a diminution of your own members. [The

sacrament represents a sacrificial offering, of course, and the hand is held as a receptacle “with the palm hollowed,” to signify the shedding of blood.]

5.23. [Conclusion:] Keep these traditions inviolate, and see that you do not stumble. Do not break off your unity, nor through the defilement of sin deprive yourselves of these holy spiritual ordinances (mysteries). ... Amen.

## The Clouded Mirror: Echoes in the Church Fathers

The apostolic fathers are full of oblique references to the ordinances; they understand their extreme importance but are not in a position to talk freely about them. The situation is painfully apparent in Ignatius’s explanation to the Trallians: “Couldn’t I write about the higher things (*ta epourania*)? Yes, but I am afraid I would only do you

harm, since you are still but babes. I must ask you to excuse me in this—you would simply strangle on what you are not yet able to digest. And that goes even for me, quite apart from my being a prisoner just now, though I do have some knowledge (*or* mastery, *dynamenos*) of the high things, and the degrees (*or* dwellings, *topothesias*) and the councils in the heavens (*lit.* assemblies or natures of the rulers, *archontikas*), things seen and unseen. In this and more (*or* because of this, *para touto*) I have long since been instructed (*lit.* a disciple)."<sup>13</sup>

The long version of this passage reads: "Wouldn't I like to write to you more about the mysteries? ... And I, even though a prisoner, am able to know the higher things (*ta epourania*), the degrees (*taxeis*) of the angels, the interrelationships (*or* the fall, *exallagas*) of the angels and the hosts, the distinctions of the powers and dominions,

the changes among thrones and authorities (*or* the distances between seats and powers), the vastness of the eternities (*aiōnōn te megalotētas*), the high offices of cherubim and seraphim, the exalted nature of the Spirit, and the rule and dominion of the Lord, and above all, the incomparable nature of the Most High God.<sup>14</sup>

“Therefore, I beg of you—or rather, not I, but the love of Jesus Christ—to take only Christian nourishment and keep from alien exotic plants, which are false doctrine. There are those who mix poison with Jesus Christ, pretending that it is the real thing, administering a deadly drug mixed with wine and honey, so that the ignorant receive it gladly, deadly as it is.”<sup>15</sup> Here it is plain that Ignatius had a lot of knowledge about the mysteries, which, in his fixed determination to be martyred as quickly as possible,<sup>16</sup> he had no intention of handing on to the

churches; yet he is much concerned about the trend in the church of filling up the gaps by fakes and substitutes, which can only have calamitous results. All he can do, however, is warn against the rising tide.

The tradition of the early ordinances lives on in the later doctors of the church as a tantalizing mixture of intellectual abstraction and constant hinting and hoping for something better, such an ambivalent position being made possible by the art of rhetoric, which supplanted inspiration in all the offices of the church. Thus the doctors reduced the temple to a rhetorical abstraction but still could never completely escape a longing for the real temple.<sup>17</sup> The ordinances were remembered in the same way; a good illustration of this is Paulinus of Nola's *Eleventh Ode to St. Felix*,<sup>18</sup> which uses all the imagery of the old mysteries, but on a purely "spiritual," i.e., rhetorical, level.

It is all there: the victory of the light over the darkness, the cosmology of the heavens, the dark and dreary world, the false gods and the serpent driven from the temple. Though the poem was written in Gaul and degenerate versions of the mysteries everywhere are held up to ridicule, the emphasis is all on Egypt: Satan flees from Egypt, in the form of a thousand monsters, while Joseph takes over the cult of Serapis.<sup>19</sup> Isis is overthrown by a neat schoolroom syllogism: “Can a woman be a goddess? If divine, she cannot have a body, and without a body there can be no sex, or without sex there can be no giving of birth.”<sup>20</sup> But the important thing is not that the Egyptian mysteries are collapsing, but that they are being consciously supplanted by other mysteries, centering around the tombs —the tumuli of the martyrs.<sup>21</sup> St. Felix is the morning star, the conqueror of darkness, expelling Bel from the temple in combat and

journeying through the underworld in the best manner of the Amduat.<sup>22</sup> The office of the martyrs at their tombs is the same as that of Osiris in his—to reverse the blows of death: the drama is still funerary and the theme is the resurrection.<sup>23</sup> Constantine, acting by divine inspiration, has distributed tombs of the martyrs throughout the civilized world as the means of occupying every land in conquest.<sup>24</sup> In each place the sacred ashes spread the report of signs and wonders “like the seeds of life scattered abroad in diverse places,” or like rivers of life-giving water.<sup>25</sup> Paulinus goes on to talk of various forms of the cross, those which represent the sacred ordinances: not only containing the cosmic number 365,<sup>26</sup> but “serving as a royal scepter over the exalted ones. Signifying that Christ rules over all as God, who by the four wooden extremes spread out reaches the four utmost regions of the earth (*orbem*),” while

the Alpha and Omega flanking the symbol of crucifixion signify that the death of Christ was the end of all evil.<sup>27</sup> And so ancient ordinances survive as fossils buried in a deep matrix of rhetoric, philosophy, and art.

## Notes

1. Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 83.
2. Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 28.
3. Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 96, emphasis dropped.
4. Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 115.
5. Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 102.
6. See Hugh W. Nibley, “Christian Envy of the Temple,” *JQR* 50 (1959–60): 111–18, reprinted in *When the Lights Went Out: Three Studies on the Ancient Apostasy* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 68–74, and in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, CWHN 4:400–405.
7. Theodor Förester, “Cyril of Jerusalem,” in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1950; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1970), 3:334–35.
8. Othmar Perler, “Kyrillos, Bisch. v. Jerusalem,” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Michael Buchberger et al. (Freiburg: Herder, 1957–65), 6:710.

9. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis 19: Mystagogica (Lessons on the Initiatory Ordinances)* 1–5, in PG 33:1065–128.
10. Henry G. Liddell, Robert Scott, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. with supplement (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 1643, s.v. *sth`qo~*.
11. *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933; 2nd ed., 1989), s.v. “endue.”
12. See PG 33:1077 n. 4.
13. Ignatius, *Epistola ad Trallianos* 5, in PG 5:680.
14. Ignatius, *Epistola ad Trallianos* 5 (long version), in PG 5:781–84.
15. Ignatius, *Epistola ad Trallianos* 5 (short version), 6, in PG 5:680.
16. See Ignatius, *Epistola ad Romanos*, in PG 5:685–96.
17. See Nibley, “Christian Envy of the Temple,” 100–109, reprinted in *When the Lights Went Out*, 93–99, and in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, CWHN 4:393–99.
18. Paulinus of Nola, *Poemata* (Poems) 19 = *Carmen 11 in S. Felicem* (Ode 11 to St. Felix), in PL 61:509–50.
19. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 85–100, in PL 61:515–17.
20. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 129–31, in PL 61:520.
21. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 306–15, in PL 61:529–30.
22. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 241–82, in PL 61:527–28.

- 23. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 309–20, in PL 61:529–30.
- 24. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 321–42, in PL 61:530–31.
- 25. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 342–77, in PL 61:531–33, quotation in lines 358–59.
- 26. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 604–31, in PL 61:544–45.
- 27. Paulinus of Nola, Ode 11 to St. Felix, lines 637–52, in PL 61:546–47, quotation in lines 638–41.

## Appendix 6

# From the Gospel of Philip

### Nature of the Text

The *Gospel of Philip* is one of the Coptic Christian documents discovered at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt in 1945. Its date is uncertain (the original is usually assigned to the early second century A.D.), and its classification remains uncertain, as does its nature and purpose. In the light of what has gone before, however, it deserves close attention.<sup>1</sup> The numbers following indicate plates or pages in the edition of Pahor Labib, *Coptic Gnostic Papyri in the Coptic Museum at Old Cairo*.<sup>2</sup> Limited space requires some condensing and paraphrasing.

## Purpose of the Work

- 51.29–52.34: [Discourse on adoption (initiation) into the covenant, e.g.,]
- 52.21–22: When we were Hebrews we were orphans, ...
- 23–24: but when we became Christians we got a father and a mother. ... [For this we must take certain steps:] ...
- 28–29: Let us sow in this world that we may reap in the next. ...
- 53.3–5: Those who were strangers he bought, made them his own, and saved his own. ...
- 8: [The plan goes back to the creation:] Since the day the world came into existence
- 9: he laid down his life. Of his own free will at that time,
- 10: even at the beginning, he came ...
- 14–16: to ransom [the soul of man. In this world the law of opposition prevails in all

things]. ...

21–23: [The plan belongs to the eternal order of things.]

54.5–13: [Those who know the true name of the Son do not speak of it, such things being kept secret from the world,] ...

18–25: [because Satan's followers (the Archons), jealous of man's heritage, seek to pervert all things through the manipulation of words and labels.]

## **Purification, the Garden, Hieros Gamos, and the Fall**

55.6–11: [Until Christ came we were outcasts from the paradise of Adam, living under a grim economy.]

12–13: But the perfect man (*teleios*; initiate) brings back the heavenly nourishment. ...

17–35: [The father of Adam is the father of Christ.]

23–30: [Mary is the type of the virginal Eve,

the earthly mother.] ...

56.3–13: [The names of Christ.]

13–15: Christ contains all things in himself whether as man, angel, mystery, or father.

...

24–32: [The flesh, as a garment to cover our nakedness,] ...

57.4–5: [is sustained by food and drink (of the sacrament).] ...

11–19: [It will rise in the resurrection.]

19–24: [On earthly and heavenly garments: the latter are put on with a purifying by water and fire,] ...

27–28: [the fire being the anointing (*chrism*).] ...

58.15–17: [You cannot enter into the king's presence without proper clothing.]

17–22: [Adam is our example:] If the children of Adam are numerous though mortal, how much more so the posterity of the perfect man that do not die and go on

being born forever!

59.1–4: [The *hieros gamos* is represented by a holy kiss.] ...

6–12: [The three Marys are types of Eve.]

...

31–32: [Sophia (Wisdom) is barren without (?) the Son (text damaged).] ...

60.6–8: [Because of the fall we are all astray;] ...

11–12: [our Sophia is the Sophia of death;]

...

19–23: [man toils in the fields along with the beasts.]

23–31: [The perfect man (initiate) also toils, for the very purpose of earth life is to meet opposition, while the Holy Ghost supervises everything.]

61.1–6: [Though of noble lineage, Adam's posterity turned to adultery and murder,]

7–9: a bastard race, a son of the Serpent, who became a murderer like his father.

## The Way Back

- 61.12–18: [We are like cloth that must be dyed anew; God is the dyer.]
- 19–20: [The dyeing is baptism (dunking) in water.] ...
- 62.7–16: [The various names of Christ and their meanings.]
- 17–23: [He is the pearl, the precious jewel that never loses its value in any situation; ]
- 23–24: such also are the sons of God [*i.e.*, Stones of Truth]. ...
- 63.11–29: [The way is one of continual progress (*prokoptei*), no mere empty ordinances.]
- 63.30–64:4 [By herself Sophia is barren. The importance of Mary.]
- 64.5–9: [Jesus says, No matter how good the eyes, no one sees in the dark: until the apostles have more light they will not understand these things.]
- 10–22: [For man's true stature and

preexistence are not revealed.]

22–29: [Baptism and the title of Christian are but borrowed goods without the Holy Ghost and] the gift of the name.

29–37: [The world could not stand without the great mystery of marriage (...) (text damaged).]

65.1–37: [In this wicked and adulterous world, marriage is the best defense against evil.] ...

66.4–13: [The flesh is to be neither loved nor despised.]

10–20: [Seek the Way of Life that leads to rest instead of suspense (*mesotēs*) hereafter],

20–21: for many go astray. ...

66.29–67.1: [The condition of the world compared with a burning house.]

## **Recapitulation of Ordinances**

67.2–5: The soul and the spirit (*pneuma*)

emerge from the water and the fire as the son of the bridal chamber,

5–6: fire being the anointing which imparts a special beauty and light. ...

9–11: [Truth must enter the world properly clothed] in types and images.

12–16: [Thus there is both a rebirth and a symbolic rebirth, and it is quite possible to be born again ritually (figuratively); there is a resurrection and a type of the resurrection,]

16–18: [and so with the bridal chamber, an image looking forward to reality—a “restoration” (*apokatastasis*)].

19–25: [One must receive a new name with the anointing of ransom,]

26–27: [becoming] no longer a Christian but a Christ.

27–30: [The Lord did everything by ordinance (*mystērion*)], there being *five* steps: [baptism, anointing, eucharist,

ransom (sacrifice), and bridal chamber.]

68.1–17: [The world is shut out from the view of eternal things.]

17–22: [Before Christ came we were trapped; there was no way back.]

23–28: [When Eve became separated from Adam,] death entered in, [and we are shut out until they are united again]

69.1–8: [in a marriage which, though physical, is not bestial; it is only for free men and virgins, through the Holy Ghost, by which we are born again a second time, being] ...

12–14: [washed with water and anointed with light.]

14–22: There were three houses of sacrifice in Jerusalem, [*i.e.*, ] ... the holy place, ... the holy of holy, and ... the holy of holies, which only the high priest could enter.

22–25: [These correspond to baptism (lacuna: anointing or ransom), and bridal

chamber, which represent]

26–27: [the resurrection, the atonement, and marriage (*nymphōn*).]

27–28: [The bridal chamber is higher than the other mysteries (lacuna).] ...

35–37: The veil parted [...] the bridal chamber, but without the imagery (*eikon*) [...].

70.1–4: [The parting (or rending; *pōh*) of the veil makes it possible for some to pass from the lower to the higher,]

5–8: [clothing themselves in perfect light,]

9: in the ordinance (*mystērion*) of the uniting (joining).

10–12: [Since it was the separation of the woman and the man that brought death,]

13–17: Christ came for the express purpose of ... bringing them together again [in eternal life; thanks to him,] ...

19–20: those who are united in the bridal chamber will never more be separated.

## Applied to Adam

70.20–26: [Adam himself represents a union of the spirit and flesh effected by a breath (text damaged), hence a living soul.]

71.1–3: [Adam] was begotten again (*palin*), again became a son, again was anointed, again was ransomed, and again paid the price (*af-sōte*).

3–7: If it is permitted to utter a mystery, the Father of All united with the Virgin. ... It was he who revealed the bridal chamber,

8: so that his [Adam's] body came into existence

9: on that day. ...

12–15: In the same way Jesus established everything on that foundation (by means of these), and it is necessary for every follower of his to enter into his rest.

16–22: [Just as Adam had as mothers the Spirit and the virginal earth, so Christ was born of a virgin to mend the effects of the

fall.]

24–26: [For] Adam ate of the tree which  
begets animals and became an animal [...]  
[cf. Moses 3:18–21].

72.5–17: [All these things and doings pertain  
to a figurative (*eikonikos*) Adam.]

## Applied to the Initiates

72.17–29: [The duty of those who have been  
saved is to save others.] In the kingdom of  
heaven the free will minister to the slaves

72.30–73.1: going down into the water [...]  
to ransom him [...] in his name. For he  
said [...] we shall fulfill righteousness  
[text damaged].

73.1–4: [If we do not receive the rites of  
resurrection in this life, we have nothing  
coming.]

5–8: The same holds true of baptism: ... they  
who receive it will live.

8–19: Joseph the Carpenter planted a garden

[from a tree which was made the cross: it was the tree of life in the midst of paradise, and *also* the olive tree from which the anointing (*chreisma*) came for his resurrection (oil of healing)].

19–23: [All physical things are consumed in this world (cf. the Ouroboros serpent),]

23–27: [but Jesus supplies us with the food of another life.]

27–28: God prepared a garden (paradise) [...].

74.1–8: [Adam ate of all the trees, but the tree of knowledge killed him; yet it saved mankind,] for the law was the tree, giving knowledge of good and evil. Yet many continue in evil unto death [cf. Moroni 7:5–19]. ...

12–15: [Anointing is higher than baptism, making us Christians.]

15–21: [Christ was so called because of the anointing. For] the Father anointed the

Son, and the Son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us. He who is anointed possesses everything: the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Ghost;

21–24: the Father gave him this in the bridal chamber, and he received it; the Father partook of the Son and the Son of the Father. This is the kingdom of heaven.  
[Badly damaged section about the literal substratum of the ordinances—this is more than mere wordplay.]

75.2–10: [The world is in a fallen state in which nothing endures.]

10–11: [All things pass away—only posterity is eternal.]

11–13: No one will be able to partake of incorruption without becoming a son.

13–14: [For we receive that we might give to others.]

15–21: [Whenever we drink of the

sacramental cup,] we shall receive for ourselves the perfect man, likewise ...

24–25: [he who goes down into the water unclothes himself and puts on the living man as a garment.]

25–27: [Every creature begets after its kind.]

...

34–36: Christians are a choice breed ...

76.5: and we are a special species [text damaged], true man and son of man ... sons of the bridal chamber in this world.

6–9: [The mating in the next world is of an entirely different nature from this one; though we use earthly vocabulary in speaking of them,]

9–12: [there are other forms of union that transcend all description (*lit.* naming).] ...

17–22: [Indeed, it is not needful that they who have all these things know absolutely everything; let them enjoy what they have.]

22–26: [The *teleios* (initiate) cannot be held

back,]

27–28: [being clothed in the garment of perfect light] ...

31–33: [even before he leaves this world.]

77.1: Only Jesus knows the end (goal) of all this.

2–9: [The truly pure is wholly pure, even to the flesh; he renders pure whatever he receives: the bread, the cup, or anything else.]

## **The Substitute (Arrested) Sacrifice**

77.9–11: [We go down into the water, but we do not have to suffer death by it.]

12–15: [The spirit of the world blows winter and death, but the Holy Ghost blows life and summer.]

15–20: [Knowledge makes free.]

20–26: [If we do not return to the sinful ways of the world we shall escape, freed from the world; our minds will be

expanded,]

26–31: [and we shall become the servants of others who are not yet free, freeing them through the work of love]

31–36: [and sharing freely with all,]

78.1–3: [that they too may enjoy the anointing at the hands of those who have received it.]

4–7: [If the latter stand aloof, their own anointing will be an evil odor.]

7–11: [Our example is the Good Samaritan: the wine and oil he administered] is nothing else than the anointing [by which love heals (*therapeue*) the blows of death (*plēgē*)]. ...

15–25: [The fruit of our love should not be that of this adulterous generation, but of the Lord, that our offspring may be like him.]

78.25–79.1: [Like embraces like, species mingle with their own kind, spirit with

spirit, logos with logos, all in perfect unity.]

## Sacred Embracing

79.1–11: [Light should cleave to light in a kind of intercourse; ]

12–13: [another spirit or species cannot enjoy you because you have no part in it.]

...

18–30: [As the husbandry of earth rests on the four elements, so God's husbandry rests on four virtues: faith, hope, love (*agapē*), and knowledge.]

80.1–5: [The perfect man (Christ) is an offense to this world.]

6–8: [How then can we hope to save others?]

8–10: [The first rule is to offend no man,]

10–22: [but to give comfort and joy to all.]

23–34: [There is an analogy between the world's economy]

81.1–14: [and God's economy, in which each creature receives its particular requirements in its own sphere and element,]

14–29: [including the human race, which receives from God through the Son of Man the power both to beget and to create, even as they were begotten and created.]

30–35: [The process of begetting remains a secret, however.]

82.1–4: [If earthly procreation is an intimate and secret thing,]

5–11: how much more concealed is the undefiled marriage, a true mystery? It is not carnal but pure, [having nothing of lust and darkness.]

11–26: [The marriage relationship should be ever modest, discreet, and withdrawn.]

## Sacrifice Again

82.26–31: [Abraham's circumcision] teaches

- us to sacrifice the flesh in this world. As long as their [...] are intact and they live, 32–34: [but when they] are exposed they die after the manner [...] of the visible man.
- 35: So long as the entrails of a man are covered he lives,
- 83.1–2: that is to say, when his insides come out he dies.
- 3–17: So it is with a tree [which survives various cuts inflicted on it by the axe as long as its root remains.]
- 18–35: [What we must really uproot and kill is all the malice within us.]

## **Concerning the Veil**

- 84.1–12: [As truth is revealed step by step, it makes us free.]
- 13–14: [We must become united to the truth, receiving a fulness,]
- 15–20: [not despising things because they are hidden,]

- 20–21: [for] they are mysteries of truth manifested in types and images. . . .
- 23–25: The veil concealed in the beginning how God carried out the creation.
- 25–26: But if the veil is parted (rent)
- 27–29: and the things behind the veil become known, the house is destroyed and left desolate or rather destroyed,
- 29–31: and the Godhead utterly desert that place, the holy of holies,
- 31–32: which can no longer be related to the unconstrained light and the immensity of undefiled pleroma.
- 33–34: Instead, it will come under the wing of the cross and under its arms.
- 84.34–85.1: This ark [of the covenant, the original holy of holies,] will become for us a wall (*jaei*; barrier, veil)<sup>3</sup> when the flood overwhelms them.
- 85.1–5: If some are of the order (*phylē*) of the priesthood they will be allowed to

enter within the veil along with the high priest,

5–13: [but the rending (parting, opening) of the veil from top to bottom means that higher things are now made accessible to us below,] permitting us also to enter into the secret of the truth.

14–15: But we enter by means of despised symbols (types) and in our weakness(es).

16: [The symbols we have now] are indeed meager compared with the perfect glory,

17–18: for there is glory above glory and power above power,

18–19: so that the fulness (*teleion*) opens up to us with the hidden truths,

19–21: even the holy of holies and the bridal chamber.

20–24: [These things are kept secret to frustrate the malicious, but they are not withheld from the company of the seed of the Holy Ghost.]

- 24: [Though sin still enslaves us,]  
25–27: when the truth is revealed the perfect light will flow for everyone,  
27–31: [and all it envelops will receive the anointing, be liberated and ransomed,]  
31–32: [that those who were separated may be united and filled,]  
32–33: [and] all who enter the bridal chamber may beget the light; [...]  
34–35: [not after the manner of nocturnal mating],  
86.1–4: for the mysteries of this marriage are consummated in the light of day, that day whose light will never fade.  
4–5: Whoever becomes a son of the bridal chamber will receive the light,  
6–7: but unless he receives it in these places, he will not be able to receive it in the next world (the other place).  
7–11: [He who receives it in this world cannot be overcome by the world,]

11–13: and when he goes out of the world he has already received the truth in images [cf. John 5:24, 29: who passes the test (*krisis*) here will not have to undergo it again].

13–18: The world came into being for the sake of the aeons, each of which expands to an infinite pleroma, ... to a perfect day and a holy light.

18: *The Gospel according to Philip.*

## Notes

1. See *Gospel of Philip*, in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, ed. and trans. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959–64), 1:197–99; English translation, *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Robert M. Wilson, trans. J. B. Higgins et al. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963–65), 1:276–78; Walter Till, *Das Evangelium nach Philippos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963); Robert M. Wilson, ed. and trans., *The Gospel of Philip* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Wesley W. Isenberg, “The Gospel of Philip (II, 3),” in James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*

(San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), 131–51; Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1987), 325–53.

2. Pahor Labib and Mahaf al-Qibti (Antiquities Department), *Coptic Gnostic Papyri in the Coptic Museum at Old Cairo* (Cairo: Government Press, 1956), 1:99–134. [Since the first edition of this work was published in 1975, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Leiden: Brill, 1974–84), in twelve volumes, has been published, and the page numbers of the codices were renumbered. Since the new numbering is now standard, we follow it here; to obtain the old page numbers, add 48 to the given page numbers. The *Gospel of Philip* is found in Codex II—eds.]
3. Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), 753.

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