HYMN TO OSIRIS ON THE STELE OF AMON-EM-HA

TRANSLATED BY D. MALLET

This hymn to Osiris is engraved on a semi-circular stele of limestone which forms part of the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. It comprises 28 lines of hieroglyphics, in a very good state of preservation, excepting only that the name of the god Amon, which once figured in several proper names, has been carefully chiselled out, in the age of the so-called heretic kings Khu-n-Aten (Amenophis IV) and his successors.

The text may have been sculptured on the stele in the time of the eighteenth dynasty—Chabas has remarked that the wife of Amon-mes, the father of Amon-em-ha, bore the same name as the favourite wife of Amenophis I—but it reproduces a religious work of more ancient date, which goes back at least to the epoch of the twelfth dynasty, as is shown on the one hand by the small number of determinatives and on the other by the use of certain formulae, e.g. the position of the father's name before that of the son: "Osiris son Horus" in the sense of "Horus
son of Osiris.” The references of the monument to
the cult of Osiris are consequently very ancient, and
they thus possess all the greater importance for the
history of the Egyptian religion.

The text has been reproduced for the first time
and translated by Chabas in the Revue archéologique
(May-June 1857), from a squeeze furnished him by
Devéria. Chabas published a new translation, which
differed considerably from the first, in the first series

The semicircular part of the stele is divided into
two compartments. At the top is the ring in the
form of a seal, accompanied by the two sacred eyes.
The first compartment includes two scenes of une-
qual importance. On the left, Amon-em-ha pre-
sents the table of offerings, filled with provisions of
all sorts, to his father and mother, seated side by
side in a large armchair, the wife resting the left
hand, as usual, on the shoulder of her husband.
Behind the chair is a child, with a long lock of hair,
who puts his left hand to his mouth and holds
a flower in the right. Behind him runs a vertical
inscription: “His son Amon-em-ua.” Above the
two seated personages we read: “The superintend-
ent of the oxen Amon-mes; his wife, the mistress of
the house, Nofri-t-ari.” Above the table of offerings
is: “His son Amon-em-ha.” On the right, a person
clothed in a panther's skin, the characteristic garb of
the priests, presents a seated lady, “the mistress Baki-t,
deceased”—doubtless another wife of Amon-mes—
with an incense-burner which has a long handle like an arm, while with the other hand he pours out a libation of water over a double altar, and the legend engraved before him runs: "The Khri-heb of Osiris, the son, comes."

The second compartment is occupied by a series of six kneeling persons, whose faces are turned to the right; their names are engraved in a vertical direction in front of each of them:—"His son Si-t-Maut; his son Amon-ken; his daughter Meri-t; his daughter Amon-bai-t; his daughter Suten-Maut; his daughter Hui-em-nuter."

Next comes the hymn itself, which occupies the rest of the stele.
HYMN TO OSIRIS

1. Adoration to Osiris by the superintendent of the oxen,
   Amon-em-ha son of the lady Nofri-t-ari. He says:
   Homage to thee, Osiris, lord of eternity, king of
   the gods with the thousand names, with the sacred
   existences, with the secret acts in the temples; he
   is rich in Ka in TATTU, holding property.

2. in Sokhem, master of the sacred dances in Busiris,
   prince of abundance in On, master of remem-
   brance in Mati, hidden soul, master of Kerer,
   venerated in the Memphite nome; the soul whose
   body itself is RA, who reposes in

1 Compare the epithet "with a myriad of names" often applied to Isis
   by the Greeks (Plutarch: de Isid. et Osirid. 53). A Greek inscription
   in the Louvre (No. 1) calls her "many-named." The same expression
   is used of Amon.

2 Khopuru is usually translated here "transformations." But Osiris
   is never transformed and khoper merely signifies "to be" or "become."

3 Av-ru or iru has no determinative; it appears to refer to the cere-
   monies performed in the temples rather than to the forms of the god.

4 The Ka is the double of the individual; the gods and sometimes
   men themselves have several; at Mendes Osiris doubtless had quite a
   series of them inherent in his sacred statues.

5 Mendes.

6 Or perhaps, "great nourisher."

7 Letopolis.

8 The word is several times determined in this stela by the figure of a
   dancing man, so that it must refer to dances in the temple performed
   in honour of the god.

9 Literally "provisions of victualling."

10 Heliopolis, the On of the Old Testament, the daughter of whose
   priest was married by Joseph.

11 Unidentified locality. It is the name of the Hall of Truth where
   Osiris and his assessors judge the souls of the dead.

12 Perhaps Paqur, Paphrodiopolis. In the tomb of Bok-en-rani near
   Saqqarah, Osiris also is named "master of Kerer"; in the temple of Seth
   I at Qurnah, Anubis has the same title.

13 "The White Wall."
3. Hnes;\textsuperscript{1} dispensing benefits\textsuperscript{2} in Nart,\textsuperscript{3} when his soul awakens, master of the great dwelling of Shmun,\textsuperscript{4} very valiant\textsuperscript{5} in Shashotep,\textsuperscript{6} lord of eternity, the first in Abydos; distant is his domain in To-Sar,\textsuperscript{7} stable is

4. his name in the mouth of mankind; he who contains the double ennead of the double land; Tum who nourishes the doubles, first of the divine ennead, perfect ghost among the ghosts.\textsuperscript{8} The Nu\textsuperscript{9} has procured for him his water,\textsuperscript{10} the wind of the north has brought him food,\textsuperscript{11} the air enters his nostrils, to refresh his heart,

5. to strengthen his heart.\textsuperscript{12} The soil has produced for him provisions, the vault of heaven has brought\textsuperscript{13} unto him its stars; the wide gates open for him, the master of acclamations in the southern sky, of adorations in the northern sky. The indestructible ones

6. are under the place of his face, the immortals are his abodes.\textsuperscript{14} When he has gone forth in peace by the

\textsuperscript{1} Heracleopolis, now the mounds of Ahas el-Medineh, S.E. of the Fayoum. It is the Hanes of the Old Testament (Isai. xxx. 4).
\textsuperscript{2} Literally "beneficent in useful things: kaahu here has no determinative.
\textsuperscript{3} A locality near Hanes and often identified with the latter.
\textsuperscript{4} Hermopolis Magna.
\textsuperscript{5} Literally "great with the double solar force."
\textsuperscript{6} Shoth, capital of the Hypseleite nome, S. of Assiout.
\textsuperscript{7} "The sacred land."
\textsuperscript{8} Khu, "luminous," and hence "a magic power," often applied to the dead as having become luminous.
\textsuperscript{9} The primordial water or abyss. Compare "the deep" of Gen. i. 2.
\textsuperscript{10} Khent is usually rendered "to extract." But the Nu is anterior to Osiris, and therefore gives instead of receiving his water. Moreover the construction seems to make this explanation necessary.
\textsuperscript{11} Mewt, "the night," more especially that which precedes the New Year, and hence the feast which took place then in honour of Osiris (Brugsch, Dict., 706).
\textsuperscript{12} Perhaps the word I have read rnt-u should be decomposed into rnt repent-i-u, "to give the productions of the year (to his heart)."
\textsuperscript{13} Or "has submitted to him."
\textsuperscript{14} The two compound words in parallelism here, akhim-u sek-u, akhim-u urit-u, have been translated: "the fixed stars" and "the wandering stars" or planets, as well as "stars which always remain on the horizon," and "stars which are there only at certain hours." These distinctions are not proved; and it is best to adhere to the literal sense of the words.
HYMN TO OSIRIS

order of Sêb, the divine ennead adores him, the inhabitants of the ëauw 1 prostrate themselves to the ground, the mighty 2 bow the head, the ancestors 3 are in prayer.

7. When they beheld him, the august dead 4 submit to him, the two lands together 5 unite to render glory to him, marching before his majesty. Glorious noble among the nobles 6 from whom proceeds [all] dignity, who establishes supreme authority, 7 excellent chief of the ennead of the gods, with charming aspect,

8. beloved of him who has contemplated him, extending his terror through all countries that they may proclaim his name before all others. 8 All make offerings unto him, even to him the master whose memory (is eternal) in heaven as on the earth. Manifold are the shouts during the festival of Uaga 9; the two lands are united to celebrate the funeral dances. 10

9. The great prince, eldest of his brothers, the chiefs 11 of the divine enneads, who establishes the truth in the

1 The other world, which in Egyptian belief was not under the earth but beyond its limits; see Maspero, Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, 1887.
2 The word read t'at-ëa by Chabas seems to be tei-ti-ëu, “those who are exalted,” and forms a natural antithesis to kes-ëu, “bent.”
3 Ter-ti-ëu and not tera-ëu (“all”), that is the common herd of the dead, the ancestors of men in general, in opposition to the tei-ti-ëu or “mighty.”
4 Në-ti-ëu am, “those who are below,” a vague expression, euphemistic for “the dead.”
5 Literally “in a single place.”
6 Sahu probably denotes the higher officials.
7 Hîq is a feudal prince, and hîq-t the absolute authority he possessed in his domain, large or small, whether composed of several nomes or of less extent than a single nome. The title is often applied to the kings, though not as kings of all Egypt.
8 Literally “in advance.”
9 One of the great festivals of Osiris when lamps were lit throughout Egypt (see Herodotos ii. 62).
10 All is, like hannu, determined by the figure of a dancing man. As the festival was in honour of the dead, the dances would have had a funereal character.
11 Ur-ëu is in the plural, and consequently must be construed with the preceding word.
double land, who seats the son on the throne of his father, the favourite of his father Set, the beloved of his mother Nut; very valiant, he overthrows the impious; strong of arm, he immolates his adversary, breathing terror upon his enemies, conquering the distant frontiers of the wicked.  

Firm of heart, his feet are vigilant. Flesh of Set, royalty of the two lands, Set contemplates his benefits, he has ordered him to govern all countries to assure their prosperity. He has fashioned this earth with his hand, [with] its waters, its atmosphere, its vegetation, all its large cattle, all its wild birds, all its domesticated birds, its reptiles and its game.

The desert carries its tribute to the son of Nut, Egypt is happy when it sees him appear on the throne of his father. Like Ra he rises on the horizon, he creates light on the face of the darkness; he has illuminated Shu by the help of his two feathers, he has inundated the earth like the (solar) disk at dawn. His white crown pierces the vault of heaven fraternising with the stars, guides of all the gods. Accomplished are the commands of his voice; [for he is the] favourite of the great ennead, the chosen of the small divine ennead. His sister has saved him, scattering the rebels, repelling evil, uttering the word with the incantations.

1 Literally, "bringing on the frontiers," often applied to conquering kings.  
2 Of "heir."  
3 As in English, abstract terms are sometimes used of persons. 
4 Literally, "to conduct the countries to prosperity."  
5 Pat are the birds who fly freely through the air, khenen those who rest, probably therefore domestic fowls or perhaps water-fowl.  
6 Shu sometimes means "the shade," but here it seems to denote either the god Shu himself or the space which he occupies between the earth and the sky, uplifting, like Atlas, the celestial vault with his two arms. 
7 Set simultaneously means "the image," a sense which would suit here very well, the stars being images or manifestations of each god. The absence of a determinative makes a decision difficult.  
8 "Making turn," literally,  
9 Khu, the magic charms which enable the gods and more especially Isis to triumph.
of her mouth. Expert is her tongue, voice is not wanting to her, and her speech is effectual. [For she is] Isis the charmer, the avenger of her brother, who seeks him without failing,

15. who traverses this earth with lamentations, without resting\(^1\) before she has found him, creating the light with her feathers, producing the wind with her wings, celebrating the sacred dances and depositing her brother in the tomb,

16. raising\(^2\) the remains of the god with the immovable heart;\(^3\) inhaling his seed, making flesh,\(^4\) suckling the infant\(^5\) in solitude without any knowing where he is.\(^6\) She makes him grow, his arm becomes strong in the great dwelling

17. of Seb. The divine ennead rejoices, when the son of Osiris comes, even Horus\(^7\) with the firm heart, with the just voice,\(^8\) the son of Isis, the flesh of Osiris. He has assembled the chiefs of truth,\(^9\) the divine ennead, [he] himself the universal master.\(^10\) The lords of truth collected there

18. cast sin afar from them,\(^11\) seated in the vast dwelling-place of Seb to establish the dignity of him who is their master, the royalty of justice who resides there. Horus has been found of just voice; to him has been given the office of his father. The diadem has come to him by the order of Seb;

\(^{1}\) Ken used of birds who remain stationary. Elsewhere Isis is winged.
\(^{2}\) Putting them one on the other so as to reconstitute the mutilated body of Osiris.
\(^{3}\) That is Osiris.
\(^{4}\) Or "an heir."
\(^{5}\) Horus, born of Isis and the revivified Osiris.
\(^{6}\) Isis hid herself in the marshes of the Delta with Horus in order to rear him in peace.
\(^{7}\) In the text "Osiris son Horus." This way of expressing affiliation belongs to the age of the twelfth dynasty, e.g. in the tomb of Khnum-hotep at Beni-Hassan, where we have "Neheri son of Khnum-hotep," i.e. Khnum-hotep son of Neheri (Cf. Lepsius, Denkmaler, iv. pl. 126 ssqq.).
\(^{8}\) M. Maspero explains this expression, which is used generally of the defunct, in a material sense, "he whose voice knows the correct intonation in reciting prayers and formulae." M. Grébaut and most Egyptologists take it in a moral sense: "true of speech," "truth speaking."

\(^{9}\) The acolytes who sit with Osiris in the Hall of Truth.
\(^{10}\) Perhaps this merely signifies "the entire god" who now has all his limbs.
\(^{11}\) Literally "put behind them."
19. he has assumed the dominion of the double land, the white crown being established on his head. He has valued the earth with all it contains; heaven and earth are under the place of his face; has made him command mankind, the spirits, the race of the men of Egypt, the Ha-Neb-U. The circle

20. of the solar disk is under his orders, winds, river, inundation, fruit trees as well as all the annual plants.

As the god Nepri he makes all his herbage, the wealth of the soil, to grow; he ascends and all are satiated; he spreads himself through all lands.

21. All that exists breathes; (all) hearts are happy, (all) breasts rejoice. Every being invokes him, every man adores his beauties. Delightful for us is his love; his grace environs the heart; great is his love in all the reins. One offers

22. unto the son of Isis his enemy overthrown by his vigour. The author of evil pronounces magical words and displays his power in his turn; [but] the son of Isis makes his way unto him, he avenges his father, sanctifying and honouring his name. Terror is calmed;

23. her domain is extended, is strengthened according to the laws which he dictates. The paths are cleared, the roads are opened, evil flies away; the earth,

---

1 Properly, "count," "reckoning." The same metaphor occurs in the Bible.

2 Compare the Biblical expression in Psalm lx. 13.

3 Rekhi-a "the intelligent," "those who know," frequently used of the dead.

4 "All those of the north," i.e. all the inhabitants of the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean. In later times the term was specially used of the Greeks.

5 Or perhaps "trees which last," in opposition to plants which die and revive each year.

6 The grain-god who presided over cereals, vegetation, and the products of the earth. Amon-Ra is also called Nepri in the hymn contained in the Bulaq Museum (pl. viii, Grégoire, Hymne à Amon-Ra, p. 21).

7 Properly, "every face."

8 Literally "his time."

9 Or "rendering beneficent."

10 Horus or Osiris.
fertilised by its lord, teems\textsuperscript{1} with produce. Established is the truth

24. for its master; sin is pursued; happy is thy heart, O Unnôfôrê.\textsuperscript{2} The son of Isis has assumed the white crown, he has caused the authority of his father to be recognised in the great dwelling of Sekhmet. Ra is his word, Thoth are his writings.

25. The divine chiefs\textsuperscript{3} are happy, [for] what thy father Sekhmet has ordained for thee, that is executed when he has spoken.

Divine oblation to Osiris Khênt-Amenti, lord of Abydos, so that he may give good funeral offerings of bread, liquids, oxen, geese, cloths, incense, perfumes

26. and all vegetable products; [so that he may grant] to grow,\textsuperscript{4} to take possession of the Nile, to appear in the form of a living soul, to see the (solar) disk at dawn, to enter and depart by the ro-sta- \textsuperscript{5} so that the soul may not be driven into the other world, but be received

27. among those who chant in the presence of Unnôfôrê and who share in the offerings laid upon the altar of the great god; so that it breathes the delicious breezes of the north and drinks of the current

28. of the river.

To the double of the superintendent of the oxen of Amon, Amon-mes, of the just voice, born of the lady Hont, of the just voice, his wife who loves him [Nofri-tari].

\textsuperscript{1} The determinative of the legs seems to contradict this rendering, but I can find no other signification for the word ëaru, uaru, and we are compelled to admit a grammatical error.

\textsuperscript{2} "The good being," Osiris.

\textsuperscript{3} Those who sit with Osiris in the Hall of Judgment.

\textsuperscript{4} Khôpitru, "the becomings."

\textsuperscript{5} The corridors or defiles which led (like the defiles of the mountain-cliffs to the west of Abydos) from this world to the next.
The Complete Text can be found on our CD: 
**Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature**
which can be purchased on our Website:
or
by sending **$64.95** in check or money order to:
Brainfly Inc.
5100 Garfield Ave. #46
Sacramento  CA  95841-3839

**TEACHER’S DISCOUNT:**
If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher’s
discount.  Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website
(www.Brainfly.net)  or **Send us $55.95** and we will send you a full copy
of **Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature AND our 5000 Classics CD** *(a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt)) plus our Wholesale price list.*

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:
[webcomments@brainfly.net](mailto:webcomments@brainfly.net)