

THE
BOOK OF RESPIRATIONS.

TRANSLATED BY

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THE manuscript, a translation of which here follows, belongs to the Museum of the Louvre in Paris, where it is registered under the No. 3284, (*Devéria, Catalogue des MS. égypt.* p. 132). It probably dates from the epoch of the Ptolemies. It is in hieratic writing and generally known by the name of *Book of Respirations*, or *Book of the Breaths of Life* according to Mr. Le Page Renouf's ingenious interpretation. This book seems to have been deposited exclusively with the mummies of the priests and priestesses of the god Ammon-Ra, if we may judge from the titles inserted into the manuscripts.

Dr. Brugsch, in 1851, first directed the attention of Egyptologists to this curious work, by publishing a

transcription in hieroglyphics of a hieratic text in the Berlin Museum, with a Latin translation, under the title of *Shai an Sinsin, sive liber Metempsychosis, etc.* He added to this a copy of a hieratic text of the same book found in Denon, *Voyage en Égypte*, pl. 136.

A full analysis of this literary composition has also been given by Dr. Samuel Birch, in his Introduction to the *Rhind Papyri*, London 1863.

The Paris manuscript is as yet unpublished, but a copy of it will be produced ere long by the present translator. A few passages corrupted by the ancient scribe have been restored from copies of the same text, which are in the Egyptian Museum of the Louvre.

The *Book of Respirations* has a great analogy with that of the *Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys*. It not only makes allusion to the formulæ and acts by means of which the resurrection is effected, but also treats of the life after death; thus greatly increasing our knowledge of the religious system of the ancient Egyptians.

THE BOOK OF RESPIRATIONS.

1 COMMENCEMENT of the Book of Respirations
 made by ISIS for her brother OSIRIS,
 to give life to his soul,
 to give life to his body,
 to rejuvenate all his members anew ;
 that he may reach the horizon with his father, the Sun ;
 that his soul may rise to Heaven in the disk of the Moon ;
 that his body may shine in the stars of Orion on the bosom
 of NU-T ;¹
 in order that this may also happen
 to the OSIRIS, divine Father, Prophet of AMMON-RA, King
 of the gods,
 Prophet of KHEM, of AMMON-RA, bull of his mother,
 in his great abode,
 ASAR-AAU, justified,
 Son of the Prophet of the same order, NES-PAUT-TA-TI,
 justified.
 Conceal (it), conceal (it) !
 Let it not be read by any one.
 It is profitable to the person who is in the divine Nether-
 World.
 He liveth in reality millions of times anew.

2 Words spoken :
 Hail to the OSIRIS N !² thou art pure ;
 thy heart is pure,
 thy fore-part is purified,

¹ Nut personified the Upper Hemisphere of Heaven.

² Here was written the name of the deceased.

thy hind-part is cleansed,
 thy middle is in *Bat*¹ and natron.
 No member in thee is faulty.
 The OSIRIS N is (made) pure by the lotions
 from the Fields of Peace, at the North of the Fields of
 Sanehem-u.

The goddesses UATI (and) SUBEN have purified thee
 at the eighth hour of the night
 and at the eighth hour of the day.

Come OSIRIS N !

Thou dost enter the Hall of the Two Goddesses of Truth.
 Thou art purified of all sin, of all crime.
 Stone of Truth is thy name.

3 Hail to the OSIRIS N !

Thou, being very pure, dost enter the Lower Heaven.
 The Two goddesses of Justice have purified thee in the
 great Hall.

A purification hath been made to thee in the Hall of Seb.
 Thy members have been purified in the Hall of Shu.³
 Thou seest RA in his setting,
 (as) Atum⁴ in the evening.

AMMON is near to thee, to give thee breath,
 PTAH, to form thy members.

Thou dost enter the horizon with the Sun.
 Thy soul is received in the barque Neshem⁵ with OSIRIS.
 Thy soul is divinized in the Hall of Seb.
 Thou art justified for ever and ever.

4 Hail to the OSIRIS N !

Thine individuality is permanent.
 Thy body is durable.

¹ Probably a substance used for purifying and perfuming.

² The earth.

³ Heaven.

⁴ The setting sun.

⁵ The solar barque.

- Thy mummy doth germinate.
 Thou art not repulsed from heaven, (neither from) earth.
 Thy face is illuminated near the Sun.
 Thy soul liveth near to AMMON.
 Thy body is rejuvenated near to OSIRIS.
 Thou dost breathe for ever and ever.
- 5 Thy soul maketh thee offerings, each day,
 of bread, of drinks, of oxen, of geese, of fresh water, of
 condiments.
 Thou comest to justify it.
 Thy flesh is on thy bones,
 like unto thy form on earth.
 Thou dost imbibe into thy body.
 Thou eatest with thy mouth.
 Thou receivest bread, with the souls of the gods.
 ANUBIS doth guard thee.
 He is thy protection.
 Thou art not repulsed from the gates of the Lower Heaven.
 THOTH, the doubly great, the Lord of Sesennu, cometh to
 thee.
 He writeth for thee the Book of Respirations, with his own
 fingers.
 Thy soul doth breathe for ever and ever.
 Thou dost renew thy form on earth, among the living.
 Thou art divinized with the souls of the gods.
 Thy heart is the heart of RA.
 Thy members are the members of the great god.¹
 Thou livest for ever and ever.
- 6 Hail to the OSIRIS N !
 AMMON is with thee each day
 to render thee life.
 APHERU openeth to thee the right way.
 Thou seest with thine eyes ;

¹ Osiris.

thou hearest with thine ears ;
 thou speakest with thy mouth ;
 thou walkest with thy legs ;
 Thy soul is divinized in Heaven,
 to make all the transformations it desireth.
 Thou makest the joy of the sacred *persea* in An.
 Thou awakenest each day.
 Thou seest the rays of RA.
 AMMON cometh to thee with the breath of life.
 He granteth to thee to breathe in thy coffin.
 Thou comest on earth each day,
 the Book of Respirations of THOTH being thy protection.
 Thou breathest by it each day.
 Thine eyes behold the rays of the disk.
 Truth is spoken to thee before OSIRIS.
 The formulæ of justification are on thy body.
 HORUS, the defender of his father, protecteth thy body.
 He divinizeth thy soul as well as (those) of all the gods.
 The soul of RA giveth life to thy soul.
 The soul of SHU filleth thy respiratory organs with soft
 breath.¹

7

Hail to the OSIRIS N !

Thy soul doth breathe in the place thou lovest.
 Thou art in the dwelling of OSIRIS, who resideth in the
 West.

Thy person is most pure.
 Thou dost arrive in Abydos.
 He (OSIRIS) filleth thy dwelling Hotep with provisions.

8

Hail to the OSIRIS N !

The gods of all Egypt come to thee.
 Thou art guided towards the end of centuries.
 Thy soul liveth.
 Thou dost follow OSIRIS.

¹ Another version : uniteth itself (to) the breath of thy nostrils.

Thou breathest in Rusta.
 Secret care is taken of thee by the Lord of Sati¹
 and by the great god.²
 Thy body liveth in Tattu (and in) Nifur.
 Thy soul liveth in Heaven for ever.

- 9 Hail to the OSIRIS N !
 SECHET prevaileth against what is injurious to thee.
 HAR-AA-HETU taketh care of thee.
 HAR-SHET doth form thy heart.
 HAR-MAA doth guard thy body.
 Thou continuest in life, health (and) strength.
 Thou art established upon thy throne in Ta-ser.
 Come, OSIRIS N !
 Thou appearest in thy form.
 Strengthened by thine ornaments³
 thou art prepared for life.
 Thou remainest in a healthful state ;
 thou walkest, thou breathest everywhere.⁴
 The Sun doth rise upon thine abode.
 Like unto OSIRIS, thou breathest, thou livest by his rays.
 AMMON-RA giveth life to thee.
 He doth enlighten thee by the Book of Respirations.
 Thou dost follow OSIRIS and HORUS, Lord of the sacred
 barque.
 Thou art as the greatest of the gods among the gods.
 Thy beautiful face liveth (in) thy children.
 Thy name doth always prosper.
 Come to the great temple in Tattu.
 Thou wilt see him who resideth in the West,
 in the Ka-festival.

¹ Another version: by thy Lord, Ra.

² Osiris.

³ Those of the mummy.

⁴ This is the acknowledgment of the resurrection effected by the ceremonies of the mummification. I am indebted to the friendly aid of M. Chabas for the translation of this and one or two other passages.

Delicious is thy perfume as that of the blessed ;
great thy name among the elect.

- 10 Hail to the OSIRIS N !
Thy soul liveth by the Book of Respirations.
Thou unitest thyself to the Book of Respirations.
Thou dost enter the Lower Heaven ;
thine enemies are not (there).
Thou art a divine soul in Tattu.¹
Thy heart is thine ;
it is (no longer) separated from thee.
Thine eyes are thine ;
they open each day.

- 11^a Words spoken by the gods who accompany OSIRIS,
to the OSIRIS N :

Thou dost follow RA.
Thou dost follow OSIRIS.
Thy soul liveth for ever and ever.

- 11^b Words spoken by the gods who dwell in the Lower
Heaven (like) OSIRIS of the West, to the OSIRIS N :
Let them open to him at the gates of the Lower Heaven.
*He is received*² in the divine Nether-World,
that his soul may live for ever.
He buildeth a dwelling in the divine Nether-World.
He is rewarded.³
He hath received the Book of Respirations,
that he may breathe.

- 12 Royal offering to OSIRIS who resideth in the West,
great god, Lord of Abydos,
that he may give offerings
of bread, of *hak*, of oxen, of geese, of wine, of the liquor
aket, of bread *Hoteḫ*,

¹ Corrupted passage restored by means of the manuscripts of the Louvre.

² Another version : "thou art received."

³ Corrupted passage : translation uncertain.

of good provisions of all kinds,
to the OSIRIS N.

Thy soul liveth.

Thy body doth germinate,
by order of RA himself,
without pain, without injury,
like unto RA for ever and ever.

13 Oh Strider, coming out of AN,¹

the OSIRIS N hath not committed any sin.

Oh Mighty of the Moment, coming out of Kerau,

the OSIRIS N hath not done any evil.

Oh Nostril, coming out of Sesennu,²

the OSIRIS N hath not been exacting.

Oh Devourer of the Eye, coming out of Kerti,

the OSIRIS N hath not obtained anything by theft.

Oh Impure of visage, coming out of Rusta,

the OSIRIS N hath not been angry.

Oh Lion-gods, coming forth from heaven,

the OSIRIS N hath not committed any sin by reason
of hardness of heart (?)

Oh Fiery-Eyed, coming out of Sechem,

the OSIRIS N hath not been weak.

14 Oh ye gods who dwell in the Lower Heaven,

hearken unto the voice of OSIRIS N.

He is near unto you.

There is no fault in him.

No informer riseth up against him.

He liveth in the truth.

He doth nourish himself with truth.

The gods are satisfied with all that he hath done.

He hath given food to the hungry,

drink to the thirsty,

clothes to the naked.

¹ Heliopolis.

² Hermopolis.

He hath given the sacred food to the gods,
 the funeral repasts to the pure Spirits.
 No complaint hath been made against him before any of
 the gods.

Let him enter (then) into the Lower Heaven
 without being repulsed.

Let him follow OSIRIS, with the gods of Kerti.

He is favoured among the faithful,¹

(and) divinized among the perfected.

Let him live !

Let his soul live !

His soul is received wherever it willesh.

(He) hath received the Book of Respirations,
 that he may breathe with his soul,

(with) that of the Lower Heaven,

and that he may make any transformation at his will,

like (the inhabitants) of the West ;²

that his soul may go wherever it desireth,

living on the earth for ever and ever.

He is towed (like) OSIRIS into the Great Pool of Khons.

When he has retaken possession of his heart³

the Book of Respirations is concealed in (the coffin).

It is (covered) with writing upon Suten,

both inside and outside (and)

placed underneath his left arm,

evenly with his heart ;

When the Book has been made for him

then he breathes with the souls of the gods for ever and ever.⁴

It is finished.

¹ Another version : "the living."

² Literally : "the Westerners."

³ Illegible passage restored by means of the manuscripts of the Louvre.

⁴ Another version : "this volume of the Book of Respirations is made for him and the souls of the gods."

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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