

HYMNS TO AMEN.

TRANSLATED BY

C. W. GOODWIN, M.A.

THESE beautiful poems are contained in the *Anastasi Papyri* in the collection at the British Museum. They have been mostly translated in French by M. F. Chabas, from whose interpretation I have occasionally found reason to differ.

The Papyrus itself is considerably mutilated, and bears no date, but from the character of the script

there can be little doubt that it is of the period of the XIXth Dynasty.

These Hymns have been published by myself with exegetical notes in the *Transactions* of the Society of Biblical Archæology, Vol. II, Part 2, 1873, p. 353; and, as before mentioned, in French by M. Chabas in the *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 1870, p. 117.



HYMN TO AMEN.¹

1 "OH! AMEN, lend thine ear to him
 2 who is alone before the tribunal,
 3 he is poor (he is not) rich.
 4 The court oppresses him ;
 5 silver and gold for the clerks of the book,
 6 garments for the servants. There is no other AMEN,
 acting as a judge,
 7 to deliver (one) from his misery ;
 8 when the poor man is before the tribunal,
 9 (making) the poor to go forth rich."

 HYMN TO AMEN.²

1 "I cry, the beginning of wisdom is the way of AMEN,³
 2 the rudder of (truth).
 3 Thou art he that giveth bread to him who has none,
 4 that sustaineth the servant of his house.
 5 Let no Prince be my defender in all my troubles.
 6 Let not my memorial be placed under the power
 7 of any man who is in the house My Lord is (my)
 defender ;
 8 I know his power, to wit, (he is) a strong defender,
 9 there is none mighty except him alone.
 10 Strong is AMEN, knowing how to answer,

¹ 2 Anastasi, page 8, line 5, to page 9, line 1.

² 2 Anastasi, page 9, line 2, to page 10, line 1.

³ The Phrase which I have translated "the way of Amen" is literally "the water of Amen." In Egypt the river Nile was the great road or highway, hence by an easy metaphor, the water was used to signify "the way" that is the will, command or rule.

- 11 fulfilling the desire of him who cries to him ;
 12 the Sun the true King of gods,
 13 the Strong Bull, the mighty lover (of power)"

HYMN TO AMEN.¹

- 1 "Come to me, O ! thou Sun ;
 2 HORUS of the horizon give me (help) ;
 3 Thou art he that giveth (help) ;
 4 there is no help without thee,
 5 excepting thou (givest it).
 6 Come to me TUM,² hear me thou great god.
 7 My heart goeth forth towards An³
 8 Let my desires be fulfilled,
 9 let my heart be joyful, my inmost heart in gladness.
 10 Hear my vows, my humble supplications every day,
 11 my adorations by night ;
 12 my (cries of) terror . . . prevailing in my mouth,
 13 which come from my (mouth) one by one.
 14 Oh ! HORUS of the horizon there is no other besides
 like him,
 15 protector of millions, deliverer of hundreds of thousands,
 16 the defender of him that calls to him, the Lord of An.³
 17 Reproach me not⁴ with my many sins.
 18 I am a youth, weak of body.⁵
 19 I am a man without heart.
 20 Anxiety comes upon me⁶ as an ox upon grass.

¹ 2 Anastasi, page 10, line 1.

² Tum or Atum, the setting sun, Lord of Heliopolis.

³ Heliopolis the city of Tum.

⁴ Or, "do not censure me."

⁵ Literally, "without his body." It seems to mean weakness, mutilation, or disability.

⁶ Literally, "upon my mouth."

- 21 If I pass the night in¹ and I find refreshment,
 22 anxiety returns to me in the time of lying down.”

[The previous compositions are addressed to the Supreme Being, under the names of Amen, Horus, and Tum, all identical with the Sun. But for the old Egyptians the ruling Pharaoh of the day was the living image and vice-gerent of the Sun, and they saw no profanity in addressing the king in terms precisely similar to those with which they worshipped their god. The following address or petition, which also is found in the Anastasi Papyri is a remarkable instance of this.]

HYMN OR ODE TO PHARAOH.²

- 1 “Long live the King !³
 2 This comes to inform the King
 3 to the Royal Hall of the lover of truth,
 4 the great heaven wherein the Sun is.
 5 (Give) thy attention to me, thou Sun that risest
 6 to enlighten the earth with this (his) goodness.
 7 The solar orb of men chasing the darkness from Egypt.
 8 Thou art as it were the image of thy father the Sun,
 9 who rises in heaven. Thy beams penetrate the cavern.
 10 No place is without thy goodness.
 11 Thy sayings are the law of every land.
 12 when thou reposest in thy palace,
 13 thou hearest the words of all the lands.
 14 Thou hast millions of ears.
 15 Bright is thy eye above the stars of heaven,
 16 able to gaze at the solar orb.
 17 If anything be spoken by the mouth in the cavern,

¹ Lacuna.

² 2 Anastasi, page 5, line 6.

³ Literally, “in health, life and strength;” but the king being the subject of the wish I have ventured to Anglicise the phrase as above.

18 it ascends into thy ears.

19 Whatsoever is done in secret, thy eye seeth it,

20 O ! BAENRA MERIAMEN,¹ merciful Lord, creator of
breath."

[This is not the language of a courtier. It seems to be a genuine expression of the belief that the king was the living representative of Deity, and from this point of view is much more interesting and remarkable, than if treated as a mere outpouring of empty flattery.]

¹ The king Menepthah son of Rameses II., and his immediate successor.



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