

AKHANYATI'S THEOLOGY OF LIGHT AND TIME

by

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1. A NEW RELIGION

KING AMENOPHIS IV, who changed his name to Akhenaten or Akhanyati¹ ('Beneficial for the Aten') and ruled Egypt for 17 years in the middle of the fourteenth century B.C.E., was the first founder of a monotheistic religion in the history of mankind.² There are even those — the most prominent though perhaps not the most expert among them being Sigmund Freud — who postulate a direct influence by Akhanyati on biblical monotheism.³ There may even be a link between foundedness and monotheism. It would perhaps go too far to say that all founded religions are monotheistic, as Buddhism is not theistic at all, but one might safely postulate that they are all anti-polytheistic. In this negative form the statement applies already — and particularly well — to the Amarna revolution.

The aspect of negation, rejection and conversion with regard to the traditional, usual and as it were 'natural' ways of religious life is decisive in all founded religions. They may therefore be termed 'secondary religions', in that they always presuppose the preceeding and/or parallel existence of

- 1 G. Fecht (in 'Amarna-Probleme', ZÄS, LXXXV [1960]) has shown this form to be the probable vocalization of the royal name. For abbreviations used in the footnotes see the List of Abbreviations on p. 176.
- 2 For recent literature on King Akhanyati and his age see C. Aldred, *Akhenaten, King of Egypt*, London 1988; D.B. Redford, *Akhenaten, the Heretic King*, Princeton 1984; and H.A. Schlögl, *Echnaton – Tutenchamun: Fakten und Texte*, Wiesbaden 1985.
- 3 S. Freud, *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*, Amsterdam 1939. Cf. also O. Keel (ed.), *Monotheismus im Alten Israel und seiner Umwelt (Biblische Beiträge, XIV)*, Freiburg 1980; and K. Rahner (ed.), *Der eine Gott und der dreieine Gott: Das Gottesverständnis bei Christen, Juden und Muslimen*, Freiburg 1983, and especially the articles by E. Hornung on the Amarna religion in both of these collections. J. de Moor (in *The Rise of Yahwism*, Leuven 1990) seems to be the first scholar to have searched for 'the roots of Israelite monotheism', not in Amarna but in the Ramesside worship of Amen- Re.

'primary religions'.⁴ We have no evidence of evolutionary steps leading from primary to secondary religions. Wherever secondary religions occur, they seem always to have been established by foundational acts such as revolution and revelation. Such positive acts often have their negative complements in rejection and persecution.

This characteristic feature of secondary religions accounts for the outstanding interest which the Amarna religion holds for the comparative study of religions, despite its episodic nature. It anticipated many characteristics of secondary religions. It was not merely anti-polytheistic but also rationalistic. In its rejection of magical practices, sacramental symbolism ('idolatry')⁵ and mythological imagery, it made a decisive move towards what Max Weber called the 'disenchantment of the world'.⁶ Akhanyati's revolution thus seems to point in the same direction as the monotheism and rationalization which were the aim of later breakthroughs.⁷

Secondary religions are determined and defined by the difference they establish between themselves and primary religions. Their characterization thus depends on a clear recognition of the particular 'defining difference' which they establish between themselves and the primary religion.

But we are in a much less favourable situation to study this defining difference in the case of Amarna than we are with later secondary religions, for the following reason: there seems to exist a necessary link between secondary religions and canonization. All founded religions base themselves on large bodies of canonized texts. Secondary religions appear, first of all, in

4 T. Sundermeier, 'Religion, Religionen', in K. Müller & T. Sundermeier (eds.), *Lexikon missionstheologischer Grundbegriffe*, Berlin 1987, pp. 411–423; *Ma'at*, pp. 17 ff., 279 ff.

5 Cf. my study, 'Interpretation in Ancient Egyptian Ritual', in S. Biderman & A. Ilon (eds.), *Religion and Interpretation* (in press).

6 M. Weber, 'Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus', *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Tübingen 1978, pp. 17–206; M. Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde*, Paris 1985.

7 Because of its profoundly rationalistic character, James P. Allen denies the religious character of the Amarna movement altogether, preferring to speak 'of an intellectual movement, not a religion'. According to Allen, we are dealing with a 'natural philosophy', such as founds an *understanding* of the universe, but not a religion, such as founds one's *relationship* to the universe ('The Natural Philosophy of Akhenaten', in W.K. Simpson [ed.], *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt* [Yale Egyptological Studies, III], New Haven 1989, pp. 89–101). But this seems to imply a restricted notion of religion which is anachronistic with regard to ancient Egypt. Intellectual movements do appear in the form of religious movements, and a religion always establishes not only a relationship to, but also an understanding of the universe. Before the Greeks, we cannot speak of a distinction between 'philosophy' and 'religion'. That is why Akhanyati could not tolerate traditional religion alongside his new 'philosophy', but had to eradicate the old in order to introduce the new.

the verbal space, in the form of textual articulation and scriptural tradition, as a specific kind of collective memory based on richly-structured textual architectures, inherited and kept alive by means of elaborate techniques and institutions of interpretation. Secondary religions live in and by textual memory, which they must build up and cultivate.⁸ But the Amarna religion, due to its episodic character, did not have time to build up such a memory. It died out with its first generation and fell into complete oblivion. Its discovery is a feat of archaeology, not of memory. We are thus reduced to a handful of hymns — actually only two hymns on which all the others depend — addressed to the new god and almost certainly composed by the king himself. They are conventionally called 'the Great Hymn'⁹ and the 'Shorter Hymn'.¹⁰

Our classification of the Amarna religion as a 'secondary religion' does not rest solely on these few texts. The defining difference between the old and the new, 'tradition' and 'truth', was established not so much by verbal as by practical means. These, indeed, were drastic enough. The traditional cults and feasts were discontinued, the temples closed, and the names and images of the gods destroyed — above all the name of Amun, which was erased wherever Akhanyati's militia could find it;¹¹ the capital was transferred, a new style was introduced into language and representational art, and so on. These radical measures of persecution and innovation demonstrate beyond any doubt that the Amarna movement viewed itself as a new religion, absolutely incompatible with any continuation of traditional forms of religious life.

In the extant texts, the difference between the old and the new is more difficult to grasp. There is no attempt at explicit refutation of traditional concepts. This would have required mentioning them, and even that would

8 Cf. A. & J. Assmann (eds.), *Kanon und Zensur*, Munich 1987.

9 The French epigrapher Urbain Bouriant was the first scholar to publish an edition of the Great Hymn, in *Mission Archéologique Française au Caire*, I, Cairo 1884, pp. 2–5, and in U. Bouriant, G. Legrain & G. Jéquier, *Monuments du culte d'Atonou*, I, Cairo 1903, pl. xvi and p. 30. The authoritative edition is by N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna*, VI, London 1908, pls. xxvii and xli, and pp. 29–31. Among the first translators and commentators on the text was James H. Breasted, in *De Hymnis in Solem sub rege Amenophide IV conceptis*, Berlin 1894. For a recent English translation see *AEL*, II, pp. 96–100. Sandman's edition is based on that of Davies.

10 N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna*, IV, London 1906, pls. xxxii and xxxiii and pp. 26–29; *AEL*, II, pp. 90–92.

11 As far south as Kawa, Soleb and Faras in Nubia; cf. R. Hari, 'La religion amarnienne et la tradition polythéiste', in *Studien zur Sprache und Religion Ägyptens*, Göttingen 1984, pp. 1039–1055; and R. Saad, 'Les martelages de la xviii.e dynastie dans le temple d' Amon-Ré à Karnak', unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Lyon 1972 (not seen).

have been deemed insupportable. The very term 'gods', let alone the names of specific gods, does not appear in Amarna texts.¹² Even a phrase like 'there is no god besides the sun disk' is inadmissible.¹³ The difference is thus marked only by negative means, by not mentioning, intentionally avoiding or replacing what traditional religion would have had to say on the same topic, and it can be elucidated only by negative reasoning. This requires a detailed knowledge of the traditional religion and its forms of expression: the more precisely we know what to expect, the more definite will be our recognition of what is absent. New insight into the essence of the Amarna religion thus is to be gained not so much from excavations at Amarna, which until now have failed to unearth any new textual material, but from a better understanding of the pre-existing tradition.

My own approach is based on more than 20 years of collecting and analyzing traditional solar hymns, most of them previously unknown.¹⁴ The discovery of new texts at Thebes led me to distinguish between two anti-polytheistic movements: the 'New Solar Theology', starting some decades before Amarna and continuing after its fall well down to the Late Period, and the 'Amarna Theology', which is a radicalization of the first and found no continuation after the abandonment of the new capital. It became evident that the Amarna revolution was the peak of a much broader movement which I have called the 'crisis of polytheism', and which continued after Amarna. It led eventually to Ramesside theology, which, far from being a mere 'return to orthodoxy', was a quite new form of pantheistic 'summodeism'.¹⁵ For the more restricted scope of the present study it seems unnecessary to deal with this broader context of the Amarna revolution. Suffice it to say that the religion of Amarna shares its anti-polytheistic or, as I shall call it, 'anti-constellational' concept of the solar circuit with the more general tradition of the 'New Solar Theology'. But this study of the Theban hymns has led me to a new appraisal of the Amarna texts as well, and above all of the 'Great Hymn', which will be analyzed more closely in the following pages.¹⁶

12 Cf. E. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, Darmstadt 1971, pp. 248 f.; published in English as *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, Ithaca 1982.

13 The phrase which comes closest to such a 'monotheistic' statement is verse 78 of the Great Hymn: *p3 nṛ w' nn kjj wp ḥr.k*, 'O sole god, beside whom there is none!', Sandman, 94.17; cf. *nn kjj wp ḥr.f*, 'there is no other except him', *ibid.*, 7.7–8.

14 See *Liturgische Lieder; Re und Amun; Sonnenhymnen*; and *Ägypten*.

15 See especially *Re und Amun*. The term summodeism (the worship of a supreme god as head of a polytheistic pantheon) is borrowed from E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, I–IV, Baton Rouge 1956–1974.

16 For a stylistic analysis of the Great Hymn (based on my translation in *ÄHG*) see P. Auffret, *Hymnes d'Égypte et d'Israël: Étude de structures littéraires* (OBO, XXXIV),

2. THE GREAT HYMN

I propose a division of this long text into three parts of approximately equal length. Beneath its surface structure as a hymn, I discern the outlines of three treatises, the first on visibility, the second on creation and the third on energy.

2.1 Visibility

The first treatise is a transformation of a traditional hymn to the sun-god, describing the daily solar circuit in its three phases of morning, noon and evening+night.

But before we turn to an analysis of this first part, let me supply the background. What would be expected under this topic in a traditional solar hymn is not, as one might assume, the sun-god, his theology or mythology, but a very complex cosmic drama, wherein the sun-god only plays a central role. The Egyptian traditionally conceived of the world in terms not of spatial arrangement, but of action and cyclic process.¹⁷ The order and structure of the cosmos unfolded in time: in the regularity of cyclical repetition and in the vigour of reasserted cosmic life, a life which every morning — indeed, every moment — triumphed over the counteracting forces of death, dissolution and arrest. The Egyptian conceptualization of the cosmos unfolds into images of motion, conflict and resolution, interpreted in biological, ethical and political terms. Life, rule and justice, as well as death, rebellion and injustice, are constantly associated. The cosmic drama is interpreted, by 'analogical imagination', in a way that reflects the fundamentals of human life: social justice and harmony, political order and authority, and individual hopes for health, prosperity and — above all — life after death. Life triumphs over death; rule and justice overcome rebellion. It is this relationship of mutual illumination of cosmic, sociopolitical and individual essentials that conveys to the traditional Egyptian world-view and interpretation of reality the character of truth, of natural evidence.¹⁸

In the traditional hymns to the sun, the cosmic process is represented in a form which I have called, in German, the *Tageszeitenlied*, the 'song of

Freiburg 1981, pp. 229–277. My own analysis, which differs considerably from that proposed by Auffret, owes much to Gerhard Fecht, with whom I had the opportunity to read the text in his class on Egyptian metrics in the early nineteen-sixties.

17 For the idea of the solar circuit as a temporal conception of 'cosmos' see E. Hornung, 'Verfall und Regeneration der Schöpfung', in *Eranos Jahrbuch*, XLVI (1977), pp. 411–449; and *Ma'at*, pp. 160–199.

18 For a reconstruction of this mode of thought cf. *Re und Amun*, pp. 21–95.

the three times of day'.¹⁹ The traditional morning stanza focuses on the topic of 'life'. The sun is praised as a living being, reborn and at the same time spontaneously re-emerging within the constellations of birth-giving and life-sustaining deities.

Turning to the Amarna texts, we find that these mythical images of regenerating life have been transformed into concepts of transitive-active life-giving. The decisive predication of the god in the first stanza — *p3 jtn 'nh š3jw 'nh* — has been widely misunderstood, due to a probable misreading by Bouriant.²⁰ The common translation is 'you living sun who first lived', reading *š3'* as 'to be the first in doing something'.²¹ The true reading is *š3j*, 'to allot', the verb from which the word *š3jj*, 'destiny, fate', is derived.²² The sun is the god of life, who, from his own inexhaustible plenitude of life, assigns a portion to everything in existence. The term has a specifically temporal meaning, referring to a defined portion of life.²³ The Shorter Hymn to the Aten is somewhat more explicit regarding this concept of an allocation of individual lives from the One source of cosmic life:

You are the One yet a million lives are in you,
to make them live. The sight of your rays
is breath of life to their noses.²⁴

The abstract notion of time is conceived in the more concrete terms of light and air.²⁵ By seeing the rays of the rising sun, all creatures as it were inhale their daily lifetime. The traditional imagery of the living god — reliving and rejuvenating his daily life within the constellations of the divine world — is now transformed into the concept of the life-giving god who is not included and embedded in divine interaction, but confronts the world from high above, sending down his life-giving rays into the world.²⁶

19 See *ÄHG*, pp. 47–63; and *Re und Amun*, pp. 54–95. For the phase-structure of the solar circuit and its time span of 24 hours see *Liturgische Lieder*, pp. 333–342.

20 The passage is shown as destroyed in Davies' copy and is rendered after Bouriant. All the better-preserved parallels of this divine epithet show *š3<jw>* instead of *š3<w>*; see Sandman, 59.8, 100.7, and 111.1. J. Quaegebeur (*Le dieu Égyptien Shai dans la religion et dans l'onomastique*, Leuven 1975, pp. 45 f.) quotes our passage along with the other three as occurrences of *š3j 'nh*, 'qui détermine la vie' (*ibid.*, p. 46, note 1).

21 A. Erman & H. Grapow (eds.), *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*², Berlin 1957, IV, pp. 406 f.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 402 f.

23 J. Quaegebeur, *Le dieu* (above, note 20), *loc. cit.*

24 Sandman, 15.4–9; *ÄHG*, 91.54–56; *AEL*, II, p. 92.

25 For the association of 'time' and 'air' in Egyptian texts see *Liturgische Lieder*, p. 216, note 137; *Zeit*, p. 40, note 137, pp. 56 f. and p. 63, with note 74; and *Ma'at*, pp. 169 f.

26 For the vertical division of the world into upper and lower, heaven and earth cf. *Liturgische Lieder*, pp. 302–306.

The same transformation from constellational intransitivity to confrontational transitivity applies to the second stanza, devoted to the second phase of the circuit: noon. This stanza traditionally focuses on the topic of rule. The motion of the sun over the sky is interpreted as the exertion of rule and justice. In the traditional, 'constellational' view of the solar circuit, this phase assumes the form of a triumphant victory by the sun-god and his entourage over Apophis, a water-dragon who is the personification of evil on the cosmic plane, in a conflict which, in a typically Egyptian way, displays more of the traits of a legal battle than of physical combat.²⁷ This mythical image is transformed, in Akhanyati's hymn, into an embracing and bending of all the lands by the rays of the sun to the will of the king. The political significance of the noon phase is thus retained. But again, instead of a mirroring relationship between heavenly and earthly, cosmic and political action, we have a direct, transitive subject-object relation between the god and the earthly political sphere. This is not just a variation on a theme, but a fundamental change which affects the central Egyptian concepts of kingship, state and political action.

The elimination of the cosmic foe turns the traditional dualistic worldview into a monistic one. Traditionally, both the cosmic and the political processes were based upon and shaped by the idea of a fundamental conflict, between good and evil, rule and rebellion, motion and arrest, continuity and rupture, coherence and dissolution, light and darkness, justice and injustice, and also life and death. With the elimination of the cosmic foe, a whole universe of meaning is discarded. The 'lands' which are 'embraced' and 'bent' for the king by the sun are not, of course, enemies in a political sense — they have lost their political meaning. In the light of the sun, all political boundaries disappear, because the sun shines over Egyptians and non-Egyptians alike, as well as over good and evil. The abolition of the cosmic foe amounts to a de-polarization of the cosmos, which is reflected in the human sphere by a de-politicization of society.²⁸

The third stanza, devoted to the night, is perhaps the most revolutionary of all. Traditionally, sunset and night are interpreted as the descent of the sun-god into the netherworld to give life to the dead and provide for their well-being.²⁹ As the idea of political welfare rested upon the myth of the triumph over Apophis, so hopes for the afterlife rested upon the myth of

27 *Re und Amun*, pp. 71–82; *Ma'at*, pp. 160–199. The juridical aspects of the sun religion in Egypt and Mesopotamia have been extremely well-documented by B. Janowski, in *Rettungsgewißheit und Epiphanie des Heils: Das Motiv der Hilfe Gottes 'am Morgen' im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament*, I: *Alter Orient*, Neukirchen 1989.

28 See J. Assmann, 'State and Religion in the New Kingdom', in W. K. Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy* (above, note 7), pp. 55–89; and *Ma'at*, pp. 231–36.

29 *Re und Amun*, pp. 83–94; E. Hornung, *Die Nachfahrt der Sonne*, Zürich 1990.

the nocturnal overcoming of death. In the Amarna hymns, however, there is no mention of the netherworld.³⁰

Moreover, the traditional representations of the cosmic process systematically excluded the observing eye. The cosmic process was conveyed by the traditional mythical imagery not from far below, but from within. The texts depict divine actions and constellations, and the topography of that world which no human eye has ever seen. They describe not visible reality but its inner mythical meaning. It is not just the visible but the intelligible world that counts as reality.³¹ In Akhanyati's world, by contrast, reality is restructured from the point of view of the human eye. Reality is reduced to the visible, to the here and now of a human observer. Seen from this point of view, the night appears simply as darkness. Darkness means the absence of light, that is, of the divine presence and life. In the night, when the sun withholds its emission of life, the world relapses into death and chaos: robbers rob, lions rove, serpents bite.

No other Egyptian text, outside Amarna, depicts the night as the absence of the divine.³² The closest parallel to this vision of the night is found in a biblical text, Psalm 104:20–23, where we read:

Thou makest darkness and it is night;
when all the beasts of the forest do creep forth,
the young lions roar after their prey
and seek their food from God.
The sun rises, they slink away and lay them down in their dens.
Man goes forth to his work and to his labour until the evening.³³

The fourth stanza depicts the reawakened life of the morning in no less than 21 verses. The restriction to the visible world is clearly to be felt not as a reduction, but as an enormous amplification and enrichment. What is striking about this stanza is its fondness of detail, its enraptured contemplation of visible reality. After four introductory verses, four more are devoted to the awakening of human beings, who rise, wash, dress and

30 The sole exception occurs in a mortuary text, where the deceased (Ay) is addressed: 'may you pass freely through the doors of the netherworld (*d3t*)' (Sandman, 101.16–17).

31 In the second chapter of *Re und Amun* I assembled the 'icons' that form the basic elements of the traditional solar discourse, which lend themselves with equal ease to both verbal and pictorial articulation.

32 The only exceptions appear in two pre-Amarna texts belonging to the 'New Solar Theology', namely the stela of Suti and Hor, and the stela Leiden V 70; cf. *Re und Amun*, p. 143.

33 תַּשֵּׁחַחֲשֶׁךְ וַיְהִי לַיְלָה בֹר־תִּרְמַשׁ כָּל־חַיֹּת־יָעַר: הַכִּפִּירִים שֹׁאֲגִים לַטֶּרֶף וְלִבְקֶשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלִים: תִּזְרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יֵאֱסָפוֹן וְאֵל מַעוֹנָתָם יִדְבָּצוֹן: יֵצֵא אָדָם לַמַּעַל וְלַעֲבֹדָתוֹ צִיר־עֶרֶב:
The translation is that of H. Fisch in the Koren Bible, Jerusalem 1983, p. 777.

go to work; the following seven to the beasts of the earth and sky; and another six verses to the aquatic beings, where ships appear alongside the fish. The same allocation of ships and fishes — as inhabitants of the sea — occurs in Ps. 104:25–26:

So is this great and wide sea,
wherein are creeping things innumerable,
both small and great beasts.
There go the ships: there is Leviathan,
whom thou hast made to play with.³⁴

Behind the minuteness of detail in the Great Hymn and its enraptured tone of devoted description, one senses a peculiar theological concern. What could be the theological significance of the re-quickenings of nature in the morning? Verses 30 and 35, which parallel one another, give a hint. The birds greet the light with their wings, the men with their hands: the revival of nature is one song of praise. The exaltation of God is no exclusively human privilege; it is shared with all the other creatures. In the corresponding stanza of the Shorter Hymn, in fact, human beings are totally absent:

All flowers exist, what lives and sprouts from the soil,
grows when you shine, drunken by your sight.
All flocks jump on their feet,
the birds in their nests fly up in joy,
their folded wings unfold in praise
of the living Aten, their maker.³⁵

The returning presence of the divine, which again fills the world with light and time, is greeted and answered by the reawakening of nature. Life and existence itself acquire a religious meaning. To exist is to adore, to acknowledge the creative workings of light and time. The flowers turning themselves toward the light³⁶ and adoring God's indwelling presence in sheer vegetative receptivity become the model of piety and devotion.³⁷

34 זה הים גדול ורחב ימים שם-רמש ואין מספר חיות קטנות עם גדלות: שם אגיות, יהלכו ליהתן זה-יצרת לשחקבו:

35 Text: Sandman, 15; translation: AEL, II, p. 92; and see now Uehlinger, 'Leviathan und die Schiffe in Ps. 104, 25–26', *Biblica*, LXXI (1990), pp. 500–526.

36 The Egyptian word is *msnh*; it occurs exclusively in the context of 'vegetal piety'. For later texts see *ÄHG*, No. 132, line 14 (pap. Leiden J 350, ii, 6); *ibid.*, No. 195, lines 159 f. and 236 (pap. Chester Beatty IVr, viii.8 and x.8); *ibid.*, No. 100 (= *Sonnenhymnen*, pp. 194–198 [text 151 from tomb No. 157], with note [h] on p. 196); *ibid.*, No. 49, line 16 (P. Montet, *La nécropole royale de Tanis*, Paris 1951, II, pl. 38).

37 Cf. P. Barguet, *Le temple d'Amon Re à Karnak*, Cairo 1962, p. 238; Proclus, *apud* Th. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, Amsterdam 1974, pp. 208 f., 393.

We find exactly the same concept of vegetative religiosity, expressed in words which could be translated from the Amarna hymns, in texts composed in the context of seventeenth-century German Protestant mysticism; an example is 'Die Gegenwärtigkeit Gottes in der Natur' ('The Presence of God in Nature') by Gerhard Tersteegen, which starts with the proclamation 'Gott ist gegenwärtig!' ('God is present'), and continues further on:

Wie die zarten Blumen
willig sich entfalten
und der Sonne stille halten,
laß mich so,
still und froh,
deine Strahlen fassen
und dich wirken lassen.³⁸

But what is merely a symbol or simile in the context of Christian pietism is meant as literal reality in the context of the Amarna religion. God is not 'like' the rays of the sun, he 'is' the rays of the sun.

Let me summarize our analysis of the first part. Its most striking feature is the complete absence — one should perhaps rather say: the iconoclastic abolition — of mythical imagery, in particular of the cosmic foe and the realm of the dead. Traditionally, the cosmic foe had conveyed to the solar circuit the political meaning of power, rule and justice, while the *descensus* myth had conveyed to the night the meaning of salvation, of life after death. In the Amarna hymn we find, instead of mythical meaning, the beauty and richly-detailed variety of the visible world as the effect of the divine light. Mythical imagery is replaced by visible reality, the mythical concept of meaning by a physical concept of function and causality.

2.2 Creation

The second part of Akhanyati's hymn is devoted to the theme of creation. Traditionally, this theme refers to 'the first time' (*zp tpj*), corresponding to the Hebrew *reshit*, 'the beginning', the primordial time of origin. This reference is eliminated by Akhanyati, whose world-view is structured by the sensual apprehension of reality.

Where visibility became pre-eminent in the dimension of light (or space), so does the present in the dimension of time. Past and future give way to eternal presence in much the same way as the mythical imagery of heaven and underworld give way to visible reality. There is no reference

38 As the tender flowers / willingly unfold / and quietly turn towards the sun, / thus let me, / quietly and gladly, / grasp thy rays and suffer thy influence (*Evangelisches Kirchengesangbuch*, No. 128; transl. J.A.).

to primordial creation and cosmogony in the Amarna texts.³⁹ But how can the author speak of creation while restricting himself to the present? Akhanyati's answer to this problem is as ingenious as it is innovative. Instead of cosmogony he speaks, in the first song of the second part, of embryogony. The second song is devoted to what could be called the 'well-structuredness' or 'well-appointedness' of the world in its present, apprehensible form.

The growth of the seed in the womb and of the chicken in the egg reveal 'time' as the other aspect of that creative energy which flows from the sun into the world. The workings of time transcend the visible sphere; they are 'hidden from sight' (v. 63) and closer to air than to light. The notions of breath, air and time are closely linked in this embryogony.

The idea of a divine breath of life vivifying the embryo in the womb occurs as early as the 'Coffin Texts' of the Middle Kingdom, where it is said of Shu, the god of the air, that 'he knows how to vivify the one who is in the egg'.⁴⁰ The hymn of Suty and Hor, the most important text of the pre-Amarna 'New Solar Theology', calls the sun-god 'Khnum and Amun of mankind'.⁴¹ According to traditional beliefs, Khnum is the god who forms the child in the womb and Amun the one who endows him with the breath of life.⁴² In an older hymn, Amun already appears as 'the one who gives air to him who is in the egg'.⁴³ This traditional formula of emblematic concinnity is transformed, in the Great Hymn, into a whole treatise on embryogony, demonstrating in two stanzas the growth of the child in the womb and of the chicken in the egg and correlating the two parts by the symmetrically-arranged key-words 'to vivify' (vv. 47 and 56) and 'to come forth' (vv. 51 and 60). 'Breath' and 'time' are the two forms in which the creative energy of the sun manifests itself beyond the realm of visibility.⁴⁴ The second stanza passes from micro- to macrocosmos and praises the good order of the world, whose inhabitants are carefully divided into separate kinds living in the air, in the water and upon the earth. Humankind is also divided into different peoples, set apart with regard to language, character

39 The only exception I know is an early inscription referring to Aten as 'the noble god of the first time'; see H. Brunner, 'Eine Inschrift aus der Frühzeit Amenophis IV', *ZÄS*, XCII (1971), pp. 12–18.

40 CT II 33c; see J. Zandee, 'Sargtexte Spruch 80 (Coffin Texts II 27d–43)', *ZÄS*, CI (1974), pp. 70 f.

41 *ÄHG*, No. 89, line 40; cf. *Re und Amun*, p. 119.

42 F. Daumas, *Les mammisis des temples égyptiens*, Cairo 1958, pp. 412 f.

43 Pap. Cairo CG 58038 (= Boulaq 17), vi, 5; *ÄHG*, No. 87E, line 115. See *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 353 (i) for Amun as an air-god.

44 On Egyptian embryology cf. B.H. Stricker, *De geboorte van Horus*, I–IV, Leiden 1963–1982 (with some caveats).

and colour.⁴⁵ There is plentiful provision for every kind, by the sun which shines upon them all and by the water which the sun brings forth — from the earth, for Egypt, in the form of the Nile, and from the sky, for distant countries, in the form of rain.⁴⁶

In its cosmopolitan and universalistic scope, this view of the world corresponds to the political experience of the Late Bronze Age. For the first time in history, there evolved the idea of an *ecumene*, a world inhabited by many different peoples reaching to the ends of the earth and interconnected by political and commercial ties.⁴⁷ The very possibility of something like international law forced Egypt to give up her traditional self-image as an ordered universe surrounded by chaos, and to extend the notion of a divinely-ordered creation to the limits of the *ecumene*.

Multiplicity and order are two aspects which reveal the divine wisdom of creation. Two exclamations — ‘how many!’ and ‘how excellent!’ (or ‘sophisticated’) — point to these two aspects. They recur in Ps. 104:24:

O Lord, how manifold are thy works!

In wisdom hast thou made them all.⁴⁸

The motifs of ‘multitude’ and ‘hiddenness’ recur in a similar combination in a post-Amarna text which belongs to the New Solar Theology:

45 This is the first occurrence of a motif which becomes conventional in later hymns to the creator; cf. S. Sauneron, ‘La différenciation des langages d’après la tradition égyptienne’, *BIFAO*, LX (1960), pp. 31–41. See also C. Uehlinger, *Weltreich und "eine Rede": Eine neue Deutung der sog. Trumbauerzählung (Gen. 11:1–9) (OBO, CI)*, Freiburg 1990, especially pp. 429–434; and S. Donadoni, ‘Gli Egiziani e le lingue degli altri’, *Vicino Oriente*, III (1980), pp. 1–14.

46 For the differentiation of irrigation conditions as an important aspect of the ‘well-appointed world’ cf. also the first part of Ps. 104. For the motif of the heavenly Nile cf. *ÄHG*, No. 127B, lines 45 f.; No. 195, line 166; No. 143, lines 46, 100 ff., and 164 f. (cf. p. 590 *ad loc.*); No. 144C, line 39; No. 214, lines 29–32 (= Book of the Dead, chap. clxxxiii); No. 242, lines 7–8 (cf. D.v.d. Plaas, ‘De hymne aan de overstroming van de Nijl’, Ph.D. Dissertation, Utrecht 1980, pp. 16 f. and 60–63); and cf. A.P. Zivie, ‘Regen’, in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, V, Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 202 and 204.

47 Cf. Guy Kestemont, *Diplomatique et droit international en Asie occidentale (1600–1200 av. J.C.)*, Louvain-la-neuve 1974.

48 מְהִיבֵּן כָּל־מַּעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה בְּכָל־מְהִיבֵּן עֲשִׂיתָ. Cf. one of the early texts of the ‘New Solar Theology’, Theban Tomb 57 [17] (= *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 76, pp. 112 f.): ‘what an artist you are (*hm-wj tw*) in everything you do!’ A similar exclamation occurs in Theban Tomb 41 [6] (= *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 54, pp. 76–80, with p. 78, note [o]). In Theban Tomb 218 (= *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 212, line 32) we read: ‘How beautiful is all that you have created’, and in Theban Tomb 373 (= *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 253, line 26): ‘How great is all that you have created!’. All these hymns belong to the same tradition of the ‘New Solar Theology’. For ‘multiplicity’ and ‘wisdom’ as the two aspects of the ‘well-appointed world’ see *Re und Amun*, pp. 121 f. and 241.

How hidden are thy works while lying in front (of us),
you sole sun, how manifold as to your manifestations (*hprw*)!⁴⁹

Significantly absent in this second part of the hymn, rejected and negated, is the concept of primordial time. In the same way that the first part abolishes the mythical imagery of the not-here — the images of heaven and the underworld — the second part abolishes the images of the not-now, that method of mythical ontology which K. Burke called 'the temporizing of essence'.⁵⁰ Not-here and not-now are the two dimensions of mythical imagination or image-making by which *homo interpretres* bestows meaning upon the universe. Here, again, meaning is replaced by function, interpretation by explanation, reducing the manifoldness of visible reality to one underlying principle of cosmic energy. The mythical theme of creation is transformed into a physiological treatise on embryogony and ecology — that is, into an appraisal of the creative energies of the sun in its micro- and macrocosmic functions.

2.3 Kheperu: Creative and Transformative Energy

The third part of the hymn is centred around one Egyptian word: *hpr*, 'to become'. It is a theory of becoming and at the same time a treatise on the relationship between God and the world. The visible world is shown to be nothing but a 'becoming', a transformation-manifestation⁵¹ of God himself. The relationship between God and the world is neither that of the traditional Egyptian hymns, in which the divine order and the social order mirror one another, nor that of Hebrew monotheism, which draws a sharp distinction between Creator and creation. In Amarna, God and the world are much more intimately interlocked: God is identified as the source of energy which maintains the world by 'becoming' the world, by constant self-transformation.⁵²

In the Egyptian language, *hpr*, 'to become, to come into being, to develop' is the antonym of *wnn*, 'to exist, to persist'. *Hpr* is associated with the god Khepre, the morning sun, the principle of autogenetic energy; while *wnn* is associated with the god *Wnn-nfr*, 'who exists in completion', Osiris, the god of the dead, the principle of unalterable duration. Here we encounter

49 *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 54, lines 31–32.

50 Cf. K. Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, Berkeley 1966, pp. 380 ff., and idem, *A Grammar of Motives*, Berkeley 1969, pp. 430–440.

51 W. Barta (in 'Zur Semantik des Substantivs *hprw*', *ZÄS*, CIX [1982], pp. 81–86) stresses the meaning 'manifestation'.

52 On ancient Egyptian conceptions of genesis as creation-transformation see my article, 'Schöpfung', in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, V, 1984, pp. 676–690; and see J.P. Allen, *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts* (Yale Egyptological Studies, II), New Haven 1988.

the famous dichotomy of *nḥh* and *ḏt*, time happening and time persisting, cyclical and linear time, 'imperfective' and 'perfective' time, etc.⁵³ It is quite consistent with the hymn's equation of the visible world with *ḥprw* that the god himself is called *Nḥh* in the Amarna texts. God is time (*nḥh*), and everything unfolding, 'developing' in time (*ḥpr*) is a manifestation (*ḥprw*) of his essence or energy.

Verses 111–115 deal with the celestial transformation of God, the sun; verses 116–120 with his terrestrial transformations.⁵⁴ These appear to be none other than the millionfold reality of the visible world itself: towns and villages, fields, roads and the river, the world of habitation and traffic. The two aspects of this bipartite world are interconnected not only by the notion of 'becoming' — everything, including the sun itself, emanates from God — but also by the notion of seeing. In the form of the sun, God sees millions of his earthly transformations, and he has made the sky high in order that he may look down upon the whole earth.⁵⁵ In the same way, he can be seen by all living creatures at the same time and at equal distance. 'Every eye sees you in front of itself'.⁵⁶ From verse 121 we learn that God creates the eye in order that the creatures may look upon him as he looks upon them, that his look be returned and light assume a communicative meaning, uniting all existence in a common space of intervision. God and

53 See *Zeit*.

54 Note the symmetrical arrangement of the key words 'heaven' (v. 95) and 'earth' (v. 104).

55 The motif of the creator seeing and supervising his creation in the form of the sun first occurs in the closing hymn of the Teaching for Merikare, which dates back to the Middle Kingdom:

He makes daylight for their sake,
He sails by to see them. (P 134, *AEL*, I, p. 106)

This motif becomes very common in the context of the 'New Solar Theology'; cf. *Sonnenhymnen*, pp. 90 f., note (a); *Re und Amun*, p. 108; and especially the collection of references in *ÄHG*, p. 513, note 39. The notion of the sung-god's 'million *kheperu*' also occurs in a wisdom text of the New Kingdom, the 'Instruction of Any': 'He gives power in a million forms' (*AEL*, II, p. 141).

56 Cf. Theban Tomb 65 [6]–[7] (= *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 83, lines 8–11); this hymn also occurs in the Saite tomb of Pedamenophis, Theban Tomb 33 (= *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 36):

Who approaches the face though being far away,
every country being in front of him.
Men spend the day without getting satisfied of him.

Already in the time of Amenophis II, in an ostrakon belonging among the earliest examples of 'Personal Piety', the 'beautiful face of Amun' is praised as 'being seen by the whole earth' (Cairo 12202v, ed. Posener, 'La piété personnelle avant l'âge Amarnien', *RdE*, XXVII [1975], p. 202).

men commune in light.⁵⁷ This interpretation of the world as a sphere, not just of visibility, but of intervision, gives it a communicative character, one of relation, response and reciprocity.

By seeing light, i.e., God, the eye is created; seeing is thus the sense of divine communication. Light creates everything, but in addition to this general creation it 'creates eyes for every creature':

Your light makes eyes for everything that you create.⁵⁸

In his *Farbenlehre*, Goethe expresses a strikingly similar thought. 'The eye', he writes, 'owes its existence to the light':

Das Auge hat sein Dasein dem Licht zu danken. Aus gleichgiltigen tierischen Hilfsorganen ruft sich das Licht ein Organ hervor, das seinesgleichen werde, damit das innere Licht dem äußeren entgentrete.⁵⁹

In this context Goethe quotes his famous versification of Plotinus, who in his turn takes up Plato's parable of the cave and his idea about the 'sunlike' eye (*helio-eides*).⁶⁰

57 Cf. A. Schöne, *Goethes Farbentheologie*, Munich 1987.

58 Sandman, 11.12–13 (Shorter Hymn); 23.4–5. Cf. *ibid.*, No. 21: 'who makes eyes for everything he creates'. For later texts see *Sonnenhymnen*, p. 266 (c).

59 J.W. Goethe, 'Entwurf einer Farbenlehre', in *Goethes Werke*, XIII, Munich 1975⁷, p. 323.

60 Wäre nicht das Auge sonnenhaft,
wie könnten wir das Licht erblicken?
Läge nicht in uns des Gottes eigne Kraft,
wie könnt uns Göttliches entzücken? (*Ibid.*, p. 324)

Cf. 'Zahme Xenien', *Werke* (above, note 60), I, p. 367. The passage from the *Enneads* of Plotinus noted by Goethe in his diary reads 'neque vero oculus unquam videret solem, nisi factus solaris esset' (*Enn.*, I.L.VI.C.9; J.W. Goethe, *Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft*, hrsg. im Auftrage der Deutschen Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina, Part II, vol. III, p. 17, with further commentaries on pp. 390 ff., and vol. IV, pp. 286 ff.); cf. Plato, *Pol.* VI 509a. See W. Beierwaltes, 'Die Metaphysik des Lichtes in der Philosophie Plotins', *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, XV (1961), pp. 223 ff.

For Goethe, as for Plotinus and Plato, the 'solarity' (*Sonnenhaftigkeit*) of the eye is evidence of the inward presence of the divine. Like the eye, the human mind is 'light out of light' (*phos ek photos*). Seeing and knowing are one and the same. But this is exactly what the Great Hymn denies. Only the king is able to proceed from outward solarity to inward divinity and to speak of *Gottes eigne(r) Kraft*, God's own power, within him:

I am your son, who is beneficial for you,
who displays your name and your might,
with your force fixed in my heart (Sandman, 14.13–16 – 15.1–3)

The first stanza of this third part deals with the 'becomings' of God in their spatial dimension of light: heaven and earth, sun and eye, connected by intervention. The second stanza deals with their temporal dimension. As time, the divine energy operates in the rhythm of night and day. It is thus an interrupted, discontinuous mode, exposing the creatures, in their absolute dependence on light and time, to an equally discontinuous mode of existence. In these verses the hymn reaches its apex of clarity and radicality:

The world becomes on your hand as you make them;
when you dawn, they live,
when you set, they die.

You yourself are lifetime; one lives by you.⁶¹

The time which the sun produces by its rising and setting forms as close a link between God and world as does the light. As God and world commune in light, so do they commune in time. Time is divine cosmic energy and individual lifetime.⁶² As light is created by the sun's radiation, so the lifetime of the individual is created by its motion. But radiation and motion, and with them light, time and life, stop during the night. The night is an interval of death.

But the central theme of the third part is not the relation of God and world, as in the first two parts. Here, with the introduction of a third entity, the king, the bipolar structure of reality now becomes tripolar.

The king is already implied in the very semantics of the word *hprw*, 'becoming'. Almost every king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, among them Akhanyati himself, chose as his throne name a statement about the *hprw* of the sun god:⁶³

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| '3- <i>hpr-k3-r'w</i> | Great is the manifestation of the Ka of Re: Thutmosis I. |
| 3'- <i>hpr-n-r'w</i> | Great is the manifestation of Re: Thutmosis II |
| <i>Mn-hpr-r'w</i> | Firm is the manifestation of Re: Thutmosis III |
| '3- <i>hprw-r'w</i> | Great are the manifestations of Re: Amenophis II |
| <i>Mn-hprw-r'w</i> | Firm are the manifestations of Re: Thutmosis IV |
| <i>Nfr-hprw-r'w</i> | Beautiful are the manifestations of Re: Akhanyati |
| ' <i>nh-hprw-r'w</i> | Living in manifestations is Re: Smenkhkare |
| <i>Nb-hprw-r'w</i> | A possessor of manifestations is Re: Tutankhamun |

61 Sandman, 95.17–18. Cf. *Zeit*, p. 55

62 *Nhh*, cosmic and cyclical time, is a common denomination of the sun-god in the Amarna texts (*ibid.*, pp. 55–57). *Nhh* is the inexhaustible and infinite plenitude out of which the sun allots individual portions of time – '*h'w* – to everything existing.

63 Cf. B. Birkstam, 'Reflections on the Association between the Sun-god and Divine Kingship in the 18th Dynasty', in *Sundries Säve Söderbergh (Boreas, XII [1984])*, pp. 33–42.

hpr-hprw-r'w Manifest in manifestations is Re: Aya
Dsr-hprw-r'w Holy in manifestations is Re: Horemheb

These names are statements about visible reality, which the king proclaims to be a manifestation of Re, and to be 'great', 'firm', 'beautiful' etc. They are statements about the god, who constantly creates the world by 'becoming' the world; about the world, which constantly unfolds the divine energies; and about the king, who rules over the world in its sun-created entirety. It is this conceptual triad of God, world and king on which the third part of the hymn is based.

The king first appears explicitly at the end of the first song, in a sentence so difficult that translators have given up trying to render it at all.⁶⁴ I believe, however, that its sense is in fact strikingly simple, and I propose that it be translated as follows:

When you have gone and there is no eye,
 whose eyesight you have created in order not to be
 compelled to look at your[self as] the only one of creation,
 you are in my heart.

There is no other who knows you,
 only your son Napkhupruria, 'Sole-one-of- Ra',
 whom you have taught your ways and your might.⁶⁵

These verses draw a sharp distinction between seeing and knowing. Seeing is exposed to the rhythm of night and day; knowledge establishes a permanent relationship. In a world constantly alternating between life and death, presence and absence of divine energy, the heart of the king is the only point of permanence and stability.

The dissociation of seeing and knowing may already be seen in the first part of the hymn, where it is said that:

Though you are far, your rays are on earth;
 though one sees you, nobody knows your 'going'.⁶⁶

64 J.P. Allen (in 'The Natural Philosophy' [above, note 7], p. 97) ventures: 'When you have gone, no eye exists, for you create their sight so as not to be seen [your]self.' This makes good sense, but does not take into account the remaining *m w' n jrt.k*.

65 Sandman, 95.14–16.

66 *Ibid.*, 93.16–17. An almost identical passage appears in an important Theban text belonging to the 'New Solar Theology': Theban Tomb 41 [6] (= *Sonnenhymnen*, No. 54, pp. 76–80, and see p. 78, note [u]): 'You are in front of us, but we do not know your "going"'. In *MDAIK*, XXVII (1972), pp. 8–11, I gave a collection of other occurrences of this motif. Cf. also *Sonnenhymnen*, p. 355, note (w) to text No. 253, lines 36 f.:

You cross the sky in front of them
 incessantly, but one does not know your 'going'.

'Going' has the connotation of 'departing' or 'passing away'⁶⁷ and refers not only to the hiddenness of the sun's ways to mortal eyes, but also to its disappearance from human sight during night-time. Knowledge, which is limited to seeing, ceases at night. In a very fragmentary early text on a 'talatat' from Karnak, D.B. Redford has succeeded in deciphering the following traces:

[(Aten) ... who himself gave birth] to himself,
and no-one knows the mystery of [...]
he [go]es where he pleases, and they know not [his] g[oi]ng...]
[...] to him (?) by (?) night,
but I approach [...]⁶⁸

The text is tantalizingly mutilated, but one thing is clear: we are dealing here with the same idea of God being hidden to mortal understanding but accessible to the king, even at night. This dissociation of seeing and knowing makes it perfectly clear that there is no meaning to visible reality. God is revealed to the eye but concealed to the heart — excepting the heart of the king.

This is a precise inversion of traditional convictions. The religion of the New Kingdom developed as a central idea the notion of 'taking God into one's heart'.⁶⁹ That meant knowledge of God, which was required of everybody. But seeing God was the exclusive privilege of the dead, who were believed to meet the gods face to face in that yonder world. In Amarna, knowledge of God becomes the monopoly of the king, whereas seeing God is extended to everybody. Only the understanding heart of the king is able to see, in the emission of light and time, an emission of meaning as well. Only for him does cosmic energy assume personal traits and emission the character of revelation: 'you taught him your ways and your might'.⁷⁰

67 Cf., for example, spell 213 of the Pyramid Texts (the best-known and most frequently copied spell from this corpus), which begins:

O King, you have not departed dead,
you have departed alive.

(K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, I, Leipzig 1908, p. 80)

68 D.B. Redford, 'A Royal Speech from the Blocks of the Tenth Pylon', *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar New York*, III (1981), pp. 87–102; idem, *Akhenaten* (above, note 2), pp. 172 f.

69 See Assmann, 'Weisheit, Loyalismus und Frömmigkeit', in E. Hornung & O. Keel (eds.), *Studien zu altägyptischen Lebenslehren (OBO, XXVIII)* 1979, pp. 12–72, passim.

70 The motif of 'god as teacher' occurs in texts pertaining to 'Personal Piety'; see *ibid.*, pp. 16–19.

3. CONCLUSION

We are now able to reconstruct the initial insight, or 'revelation', which induced Akhanyati to abolish traditional polytheism and found a new religion based on the idea of divine unity and uniqueness. It was his recognition that not only light but also time are to be explained as manifestations of solar energy.⁷¹ With this discovery, everything could be explained as workings, 'emanations', 'becomings' of the sun. In this system, the significance of the concept of 'One' is not theological, but physical: the One is the source of cosmic existence. There are no other sources besides this One, and everything can be reduced and related to it.

But a new concept of God, and a new religion, can never emerge as a result of explanation. What Akhanyati actually apprehended — what he was probably the first to apprehend, and what he himself certainly experienced as a revelation — was a concept of nature.⁷² With regard to the Divine, his message is essentially negative: God is nothing else but the sun, and he is also nature.

Let me interrupt this line of argumentation for a moment to admit an objection which imposes itself here. Is Akhanyati's 'nature' really devoid of meaning? The hymn has an unmistakably anthropocentric ring to it, attributing a benevolent intention to the workings of light and time, which even assume the character of loving labour:

Their Lord of all, who toils for them;
Lord of all lands, who shines for them.⁷³

Where there is intention, there is also meaning. The cosmic process is stripped of its anthropomorphic significance, but it is nevertheless not indifferent to man. On the contrary: the less anthropomorphic its interpretation, the more anthropocentric its meaning. Man is meant by that cosmic performance, and he may read in the cosmos the signs of parental love. 'You are the mother and father of all that you make'.⁷⁴

71 The most common epithet for the sun-god as creator of time is *wpjw rnpt jrjw trw*, 'who distinguishes (or: separates) the year and creates the seasons', which appears already in a magical text of the Middle Kingdom (eighteenth century B.C.E.); see pap. Ramesseum IX, 3.7, ed. A.H. Gardiner, *Ramesseum Papyri*, Oxford 1955, p. 42; and, similarly, pap. Turin, ed. Pleyte and Rossi, 133.9 = pap. Chester Beatty, XI, 3.5. See G. Posener in *Revue d'Égyptologie*, XXVIII, p. 147. This motif is developed into a central theologoumenon in the context of the New Solar Theology; see *Zeit*, pp. 49–54.

72 See Allen, 'The Natural Philosophy' (above, note 7).

73 Sandman, 95.3–4.

74 *Ibid.*, 12.8–12 (Shorter Hymn). The following *jrtj.sn*, 'their eyes', should probably

To be sure, the Amarna hymns are even obsessively repetitive in stating that all that the sun does, it does 'for them'⁷⁵. At the end of the Great Hymn, however, all this is related to the king as the ultimate goal of creation; the anthropocentric perspective is transformed into a pharao-centric one. The sun indeed rises to vivify the world, but it is for the sake of the king that he vivifies it. The king is the one who is ultimately 'meant' by the cosmic process, and he is the only one for whom it has meaning. Meaning, in this world, exists between God and king; it is not shared and lived by the people.

But meaning is a social phenomenon; and so are religion and God. To say that meaning is accessible only to the understanding heart of the king amounts to saying that there is no meaning at all. Explanation replaces interpretation. The more there is that can be explained, the less there is to interpret. Thus, we might say that rather than founding a new religion, Akhanyati was the first to find a way out of religion. Akhanyati's explanation of the world as nature is, above all, an act of iconoclastic destruction, of negating the world's religious significance.

The negativity of Akhanyati's revelation emerges when it is seen against the background of traditional Egyptian religion. The traditional world is not 'nature' because it is not natural, as borne out by several of its qualities:

- (1) It cannot be left alone. Its 'natural' tendency is towards chaos, entropy, dissolution and standstill. It has constantly to be maintained by cultural efforts.
- (2) It is dualistic in character. Or rather: it is ambiguous and has constantly to be disambiguated by the imposition of moral distinctions. Only in light of the moral distinctions between good and evil, good and bad, just and unjust, Ma'at and Isfet does the world become habitable and meaningful.⁷⁶
- (3) The moral sphere which gods and men co-operate to establish and maintain prevails over 'natural' distinctions. Justice may overcome death. The forces of order which vanquish darkness, dissolution and arrest are able to defeat illness, suffering and death.⁷⁷
- (4) In the light of religious interpretation, the world is structured not only by intervention but also by interlocution. The gods speak, listen and can be addressed. The sun-god looks down from the sky, but he also hears the cries of the oppressed:

be added to this sentence, yielding the rendering: 'You are mother and father of all whose eyes you have made'.

75 Assmann, 'Aton', in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, I (1973), p. 532 and p. 539, note 109; *Liturgische Lieder*, pp. 321 f., 344.

76 Ma'at, chap. 6.

77 For the typical correlation of 'light' and 'justice' in ancient oriental thought see Janowski, *Rettungsgewißheit und Epiphanie* (above, note 27).

who hears the supplications of the oppressed,
whose heart inclines towards him who calls unto him,
who rescues the fearful from the hand of the violent,
who judges between the poor and the rich.⁷⁸

Language and interlocution construct the world as moral space;⁷⁹ nature itself is amoral. Only by eliminating these dimensions of signification, by means of a radical de-mystification, de-mythologization, de-divinization, de-polarization, de-politicalization and de-moralization, was Akhanyati able to demonstrate the 'natural' character of reality.

EXCURSUSES

1. ON 'SEEING' AND 'HEARING' IN THE AMARNA TEXTS

With respect to 'seeing' and 'hearing' as two different modes of divine apprehension, the texts draw a clear distinction between God and king. God, of course, is seen, not heard or listened to. But the king frequently appears in the text as an object not only of seeing but also of hearing. People 'see' the god, but they 'listen' to the king, and only they who listen are able to see.

Blessed be he who hearkens to your teaching of life!
He shall satisfy himself with your sight incessantly
and his eyes shall see the sunlight every day.⁸⁰

'I live by listening to what you say'⁸¹ — so the king is addressed in a text. Most explicit in this regard is a passage from a letter sent by Abimilki, the king of Tyre, to Akhanyati:

As for him who hearkens to the king his lord
and serves him in his place,
the Sun-god shall rise over him
and sweet breath from the mouth of the king my lord shall give him life.

But as for him who hearkens not to the word of the king his lord,

78 pBoulaq 17= pap. Cairo CG 58038, iv, 3-5; cf. *Re und Amun*, pp. 168 f. See also Merikare P 130-138; and cf. E. Blumenthal, 'Die Lehre für König Merikare', *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache*, CVII (1980), p. 20; and *Ma'at*, pp. 234 f.

79 Cf. Ch. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 25 ff. ('The Self in Moral Space').

80 Cf. Sandman, 92.8-9; and similarly *ibid.*, 60.6-7.

81 *Ibid.*, 5.10-11.

his city shall perish, his house shall perish,
his name shall not exist in the whole land for ever ...⁸²

A very similar idea occurs some years later in a fragmentarily-preserved text found in the tomb of Neferhotep, from the time of king Ay:

[How happy is he] who is initiated into your [teaching],
who is instructed [...]
He will always hearken [to your voice].
[Everyone who places you] in his heart,
his sun has risen.⁸³

Hearing is the moral and social sense par excellence.⁸⁴ The moral space of the socio-political order is structured by interlocution, by the speaking mouth and the listening ear, and it is the king, not God, who is the center of the moral world, 'who lives on Ma'at'. In this distinction between a moral world, which has its center in the king, and a natural world, centered in the sun, 'meaning' is reserved for the moral world.⁸⁵

2. A NOTE ON THE NAME OF THE GOD IN EL-AMARNA

The name of the god of the Amarna religion appears in three different forms:

(1) The 'didactic name', usually written in two cartouches. It has an earlier and a later form. The earlier form, until year 9, is:

(*'nh Hrw-3htj h" w m 3ht*) (*m rn.f n Šw ntj m jtn*)

(Lives Horus of the lightland who jubilates in the lightland) (in his name of the light [Shu] which is in the sun- disk)

The later form, after year 9, is slightly but significantly different:

(*'nh hq3 3htj h" w m 3ht*) (*m rn.f n <...> jjw m jtn*)

(Lives the ruler of the lightland who jubilates in the lightland) (in his name of light coming forth from the sun- disk)

The point of the alteration seems to lie in the avoidance of divine names

82 See W.F. Albright, 'The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki, King of Tyre', *JEA*, XXIII (1937), p. 199.

83 Theban Tomb 49, ed. N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Nefer-Hotep at Thebes*, reprinted New York 1973, pl. 12.

84 This is the classical Egyptian conception; cf. *Ma'at*, chap. 3.

85 On this bipolar worldview of the Amarna religion see J. Assmann, 'Die "loyalistische Lehre" des Echnaton', in *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*, VIII (1980), pp. 1–32; and see R.C. Bonnel, 'The Ethics of El-Amarna', *Studies in Egyptology (Festschrift M. Lichtheim)*, Jerusalem 1990, pp. 71–97. Bonnel's discussion is largely based on V. Tobin, 'The Intellectual Organization of the Amarna Period', Ph.D. Dissertation, Jerusalem 1988.

like 'Horus' and 'Shu'. Horus is replaced by *hq3* 'ruler', and Shu by a feminine word meaning 'light'.⁸⁶ Moreover, the new form, in replacing *ntj m* 'which is in' by *jj m* 'who comes from/as', clearly refers to motion as one of the two modes of solar energy. In both its forms, the didactic name seems to be based on the conventional triad of divine dimensions:⁸⁷

(i) the local-cultic-political dimension: *Ḥrw/hq3 3ḥtj ḥ"w m 3ḥt*, where *3ḥt* must be understood as referring to *3ḥt-jtn* = Amarna, and thus to the dimension of political rule and cultic accessibility;

(ii) the dimension of language (the divine names): *m rn.f m* 'in his name being ...'

(iii) the dimension of cosmic appearance: *šw ntj m jtn/ <...> jjw m jtn*.

The didactic name amounts to an equation of all three dimensions. Nothing can be attributed to the god but light; he has no other 'name', and there is no dualism between cultic and cosmic appearances.

(2) The simple form *jtn*, pronounced *yati* (as in *Mayaty = Mrjt-jtn*). This form is restricted exclusively to personal names. In all other contexts, the noun *jtn* refers to the sun-disk, not to the god. It is therefore a grave mistake to render the word *jtn*, in texts from Amarna or in any other text, by 'Aten' instead of '(sun)-disk'. When the Amarna texts refer to the god rather than to the disk, they use the third form of the name.

(3) The specification of *jtn* by (a) the definite article *p3* and (b) the epithet '*nḥ*', 'living': *p3 jtn 'nḥ*, 'the living sun'. The epithet '*nḥ*', 'living', may well have a polemical, anti-idolatrous meaning, similar to the divine epithet *ḥayyim* in Biblical texts. Compared to the 'living sun', the statues and objects of the traditional cult appear dead, like inert matter: 'They have ceased, one after the other, whether of precious stones, [gold], [...]'. Thus reads that fragmentary text from a *talatat* in Karnak from which we have already quoted.⁸⁸ The traditional gods, represented by statues, are turned into dead matter, whereas the Aten '[who himself gave birth] to himself, and no one knows the mystery of [his origin]' cannot be captured by means of iconic representation. The traditional gods were made of precious stones,

86 The uncertain reading has been replaced above by <...>. Despite its ingenuity, I find it hard to accept the reading of Sethe, Gunn and Fecht (see Assmann, 'Aton' [above, note 75]): *R'w jtj*, 'Re, the father', because the new formulation carefully avoids all traditional divine names and mythical references. See J. Bennet, 'Notes on the "Aten"', *JEA*, LI (1965), pp. 207–209; and A. Bongioanni, 'Considérations sur les "noms" d'Aton et la nature du rapport souverain-divinité 'à l'époque amarnienne', *GM*, LXVIII (1983), pp. 43–51. Cf. also Assmann, 'Aton', pp. 529–531 (with bibliographical references).

87 See *Ägypten*, pp. 245 f.

88 D.B. Redford, 'A Royal Speech' (above, note 68); idem, *Akhenaten* (above, note 2), pp. 172 f.

and the craftsmen knew how to make them. The god of Akhanyati is his own maker and therefore unknown to human iconography:

The One who built himself by himself,
no craftsman knows him.⁸⁹

The idea of 'life', both in Amarna and in Israel, seems to exclude the use of intermediary icons or symbols, which are reduced to 'dead' idols. The living sun, like the living god, negates the indirect life of statues or cult images; it destroys the intermediary realm of symbolic action mediating between the here and the not-here, the now and the not-now, on which the traditional cult is based.

3. ON THE THEMATIC STRUCTURE OF PSALM 104 AND ITS RELATION TO AKHANYATI'S HYMN⁹⁰

Psalm 104 shows a tripartite structure. Part 1 deals with the construction of the universe and the creation of space, by establishing a vertical axis, separating heaven and 'the depth', and liberating the earth in between by the taming of the waters. Part 2 (the caesura is marked by a shift from second to third-person narration) deals with the creation of life and the different ways of providing for the earth's inhabitants. Part 3 (the caesura is again marked by a shift in 'interpersonal form', from third back to second person) deals with the dependence of all living creatures upon God's creative and sustaining energy, flowing into the world in the forms of light, food and 'breath'. Only Part 3 goes back to an Egyptian model, via a Canaanite hymn. This is important, because the psalm as a whole seems rather far removed from anything Egyptian. The idea of a divine combat with the

89 Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*², Berlin–Graz 1961, pp. 12–13. On this topic see *Sonnenhymnen*, p. 155, note (f); and J. Zandee, *De Hymnen aan Amon van Papyrus Leiden J 350*, Leiden 1947, p. 82.

90 The relationship between Akhanyati's Hymn and Psalm 104 has often been remarked. Among the more recent treatments are some that reject any direct or indirect influence of the Egyptian on the biblical text, such as those of B. Celada ('El Salmo 104, el Himno de Amenofis IV y otros documentos egipcios', *Sefarad*, XXX [1970], pp. 305–324), K.H. Bernhardt ('Amenophis IV und Psalm 104', *MIO*, XV [1969], pp. 193–206) and C. Uehlinger ('Leviathan' [above, note 35]); and some that support the idea of a relationship, however indirect, between the two texts, such as those of G. Nagel ('A propos des rapports du psaume 104 avec les textes Égyptiens', *Festschrift A. Bertholet*, Tübingen 1950, pp. 395–403), F. Crüsemann (*Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (WMANT, XXXII), Neukirchen 1969, pp. 287 f. and p. 287, note 2), P. Auffret (*Hymnes* [above, note 16]), and P.E. Dion ('YHWH as Storm-god and Sun-god', *ZAW*, CIII [1991], pp. 43–71). I am grateful to Bernd Janowski for many fruitful discussions and much bibliographical information.

waters, in particular, is typical of Canaanite conceptions of creation, but entirely absent from Egyptian texts.⁹¹ Part 2 does show a certain affinity with the second song of part 2 of the Amarna hymn, which deals with a similar topic, but the aspects they share do not exceed what must have been a common conceptual frame in the Mediterranean world of the Late Bronze Age. But Part 3 so closely follows the Amarna model — much more closely than does any Egyptian text after Amarna — that literary dependence seems the only plausible explanation.

The most important point of convergence is the idea of the world's absolute dependence on the sun. In the Amarna hymn, this idea finds its most concise expression in vv. 111–114:

The earth comes into being by your hand, as you made it,
when you dawn, they live,
when you set, they die;
you yourself are lifetime, one lives by you.

In Ps. 104:29–30 the idea of the world's dependence on God's intermittent intjection of life is reformulated as follows:

Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled:
thou takest away 'their' [read: thy]⁹² breath, they die
and return to their dust.
Thou sendest forth thy breath, they are created:
and thou renewest the face of the earth.⁹³

We may have a clue as to how Akhanyati's ideas came to be known in Canaan and could eventually have entered Canaanite poetry, in the same letter by Abimilki, king of Tyre, from which we have already quoted in Excursus 1. Unfortunately, the passage in question is rather obscure and allows for different interpretations.⁹⁴ Albright's translation suggested a strong resemblance both to the Psalm and to Akhanyati's hymn:

Who gives life by his sweet breath
and diminishes [it] when he is hidden.⁹⁵

91 With the single exception of 'The Instruction for Merikare', where the creator is praised for having subdued 'the greed of the water' or even, as rendered by Lichtheim, 'the watery monster' (*AEL*, I, p. 106).

92 See below, note 101.

93 תַּסְתִּיר פָּנָיְךָ יִכְהִלֻּן חַסְף רֹחֶם יִגְרֻעִין וְאֶל-עַפְרָם יְשׁוּבוּן: תִּשְׁלַח רִיחָךְ יִבְרָאוּן וַיַּחֲדֹשׁ פָּנָי אֲדָמָה:

94 We refer to Abimilki's polite reference to the sun-god, the king's father, as

ša i-ba-li-it i-na še-ḫi-šu tabi
ù i-ZA-ḪAR i-na ša-pa-ni-šu

See now Uehlinger (above, note 35), pp. 503–506.

95 Albright, 'Egyptian Correspondence' (above, note 82), p. 198.

However, this translation seems untenable. Moran's new translation renders the passage as follows:

Qui accorde la vie par son doux souffle
et revient avec son vent du nord.⁹⁶

In this form, the passage shows less resemblance to the psalm but looks even more Egyptian. It can no longer serve as a 'missing link' between Akhanyati's hymn and Psalm 104,⁹⁷ but it testifies to the presence of Amarna texts and ideas in Canaan.

With or without the mediation via Tyre, it seems to me evident that the idea of God's intermittent introjection of life into the world is common both to the psalm and to the Egyptian hymn. The 'sweet breath' (*šehu*), which appears in the Bible as *rwḥ*, is a common Egyptian metaphor for both time and light. 'The sight of your rays', we read in the Shorter Hymn, 'is breath of life in their noses'. We therefore do not postulate that the poet of Psalm 104 deliberately used an Egyptian model for the third part of his text. What he took, rather, was a Canaanite model, which in turn was based on Akhanyati's hymn. He was aware only of the 'pagan' origin of his material, and accordingly took care to adapt it to his orthodox purposes by affixing a purely Israelite conclusion, and by adding the moral distinction between good and evil to the cosmological picture of a world created by and dependent upon divine energy.⁹⁸

*First Part: Creation — The Stretching of the Heavens and the
Taming of the Waters⁹⁹*

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God thou art very great,
thou art clothed with glory and majesty,
- 2 covered with light as with a garment:
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain:
- 3 who lays the beams of his chambers in the waters:
who makes the clouds his chariot:
who walks upon the wings of the wind:

96 W.L. Moran, *Les lettres d'El-Amarna*, Paris 1987, p. 378; based on an article by C. Grave, 'Northwest Semitic sapanu in a Break-up of an Egyptian Stereotype Phrase in EA 147', *Orientalia*, NS LI (1982), pp. 161–182. The crux of the passage lies in the two verbs: neither *ibalū* nor *izaḥar* are correct Babylonian forms.

97 Cf. *Re und Amun*, p. 142, note 199a.

98 Cf. Psalm 19, where the first, cosmological hymn to the sun (vv. 1–7) is matched by a second, ethical or sapiential hymn to the Torah (vv. 8–15).

99 The text is rendered after the Fisch edition (above, note 33), with minimal alterations.

- 4 who makes the winds his messengers;
the flames of fire his ministers:
- 5 who laid the foundations of the earth,
that it should not be removed forever.
- 6 Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment:
the waters stood above the mountains.
- 7 At thy rebuke they fled;
at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away;
- 8 they went up the mountains; they flowed down the valleys
to the place which thou didst found for them.
- 9 Thou didst set a bound that they might not pass over;
that they might not turn back to cover the earth.

Second Part: Habitation and Provision

- 10 He sends the springs into the valleys;
they flow between the hills:
- 11 they give drink to every wild beast:
the wild asses quench their thirst.
- 12 Besides them dwell the birds of the sky;
from among the branches they sing.
- 13 Who waters the hills from his upper chambers:
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
- 14 Who causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for the service of man:
that he may bring forth food out of the earth;
- 15 and wine that makes glad the heart of man;
oil to brighten his face;
and bread which sustains the heart of man.
- 16 The trees of the Lord have their fill;
the cedars of Lebanon, which he has planted,
- 17 where the birds make their nests:
as for the stork, the cypress trees are her house.
- 18 The hills are a refuge for the wild goats;
and the rocks for the badgers.
- 19 He appointed¹⁰⁰ the moon for seasons:
the sun knows his going down.

100 Or, with Dahood (*Psalms*, III: 101–150 [The Anchor Bible], New York 1970, pp. 42 f.): 'the moon acts according to the seasons', which seems more satisfying from a stylistic point of view, because 'the moon' and 'the sun' are then both construed as subjects of the two *qal* third-person verbs, '*asah*', 'acts' and '*yada*', 'knows'.

Third Part: The Dependence of All Life on Divine Light and Breath

- 20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night;
when all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
- 21 The young lions roar after their prey,
and seek their food from God.
- 22 The sun rises, they slink away
and lay them down in their dens.
- 23 Man goes forth to his work
and to his labour until the evening.
- 24 O Lord, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all:
the earth is full of thy creatures.
- 25 So is this great and wide sea,
wherein are creeping things innumerable,
both small and great beasts.
- 26 There go the ships: there is Leviathan,
whom thou hast made to play with.
- 27 These wait all upon thee:
that thou mayst give them their food in due season.
- 28 Thou givest it to them; they gather it:
thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good.
- 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled:
thou takest away thy¹⁰¹ breath, they die,
and return to their dust.
- 30 Thou sendest forth thy breath, they are created:
and thou renewest the face of the earth.

Postscript: A Resuming 'Hebraization' of the Canaanite Text

- 31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
let the Lord rejoice in his works.
- 32 He looks on the earth, and it trembles:
he touches the hills, and they smoke.
- 33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live:
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
- 34 My meditation of him shall be sweet:

101 Replacing, with Q (11QPs^a frag. E), the traditional *rwḥm* by *rwḥk*, or (more conservatively, and hence preferably) reading *m* as enclitic *mem*, which frequently pairs off with the pronominal suffix; cf. Dahood (above, note 100, p. 46), who breaks down the consonantal *rwḥm* into *rwḥ* plus the enclitic *mem*, 'which serves here as a stylistic surrogate for the pronominal suffix' (i.e., 'your') in order 'to eschew parallelistic monotony'.

I will rejoice in the Lord.

- 35 The sinners will be consumed out of the earth,
and the wicked will be no more.
Bless thou the Lord, O my soul.
Haleluya!

THE TEXT OF THE 'GREAT HYMN'¹⁰²

1. FIRST SONG: THE DAILY CIRCUIT ('TAGESZEITENLIED')

First Stanza: Morning — Beauty

- 1 Beautifully you rise
2 in heaven's lightland,
3 O living Aten, who allots life!
4 You have dawned in eastern lightland
5 and have filled every land with your beauty.

Second Stanza: Noon — Dominion

- 6 You are beauteous, great, radiant,
7 high over every land;
8 Your rays embrace the lands to the limit of all you made.
9 Being Re, you reach their limits
10 and bend them down for the son whom you love.
11 Though you are far, your rays are on earth;
12 though one sees you, your strides are hidden.

Third Stanza: Night — Chaos

- 13 When you set in western lightland,
14 earth is in darkness
15 in the condition of death.
16 The sleepers are in [their] chambers,
17 heads covered, one eye does not see another,
18 were they robbed of their goods under their heads, they don't remark it.
19 Every lion comes from its den,
20 all the serpents bite.
21 Darkness is a grave,

¹⁰² My structuring of the text is based on G. Fecht's reconstruction of Egyptian metrics. See his article on 'Prosodie' in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, IV (1982), pp. 1127–1154. My translation follows that of Lichtheim (*AEL*, II) as closely as possible.

- 22 earth is in silence:
23 their creator has set in his lightland.

Fourth Stanza: Morning — Rebirth

- 24 At dawn you have risen in lightland
25 and are radiant as the sundisk of daytime.
26 You dispel the dark, you cast your rays,
27 the Two Lands are in festivity daily.
28 Mankind awake, they stand on their feet, you have roused them.
29 They wash and clothe,
30 their arms in adoration of your appearance.
31 The entire land sets out to work.
32 All beasts browse on their herbs,
33 trees, herbs are sprouting;
34 birds fly from their nests,
35 their wings raised in adoration of your *ka*.
36 All flocks frisk on their feet,
37 all that fly up and alight,
38 they live when you dawn for them.
39 Ships fare north,
40 fare south as well,
41 every road lies open when you rise.
42 The fish in the river
43 dart before you —
44 your rays are in the midst of the sea.

SECOND SONG: CREATION

First Stanza: The Creation of Life in the Womb

a) The child

- 45 Who makes seed grow in women,
46 who makes water into men;
47 who vivifies the son in his mother's womb,
48 who soothes him to still his tears,
49 you nurse in the womb!
50 You giver of breath,
51 to nourish all that he made.
52 When he comes from the womb
53 to breathe, on the day of his birth,
54 you open wide his mouth and supply his needs.

b) The chicken in the egg

- 55 The chicken in the egg,
56 it speaks in the shell;
57 you give him breath within to sustain him.
58 You have fixed a term for him
59 to break out from the egg;
60 when he comes out from the egg,
61 to speak at his term,
62 he already walks on his legs when he comes forth from it.

Second stanza: Cosmic Creation — Multitude and Diversity

- 63 How many are your deeds,
64 though hidden from sight,
65 O sole God beside whom there is none!
- 66 You made the earth following your heart when you were alone,
67 with people, herds and flocks;
68 all upon earth that walk on legs,
69 all on high that fly on wings,
70 the foreign lands of Syria and Nubia,
71 the land of Egypt.
72 You set every man in his place, you supply their needs;
73 everyone has his food, his lifetime is counted.
- 74 Their tongues differ in speech,
75 their characters likewise;
76 their skins are distinct, for you distinguished the people.

Third Stanza: The Two Niles

- 77 You made Hapy in the netherworld,
78 you bring him when you will,
79 to nourish the people, for you made them for yourself.
80 Lord of all, who toils for them,
81 lord of all lands who shines for them,
82 sundisk of daytime, great in glory!
83 All distant lands, you keep them alive:
84 you made a heavenly Hapy descend for them;
85 he makes waves on the mountains like the sea,
86 to drench their fields with what they need.
87 How efficient are your plans, O Lord of eternity!

- 88 A Hapy from heaven for foreign peoples
89 and for the creatures in the desert that walk on legs,
90 But for Egypt the Hapy who comes from the netherworld.

THIRD SONG: KHEPERU — GOD, NATURE AND THE KING

First Stanza: Light — Seeing and Knowing

a) The seasons

- 91 Your rays nurse all fields,
92 when you shine, they live and grow for you.
93 You made the seasons to foster all that you made,
94 winter, to cool them,
95 summer, that they taste you.

b) Kheperu in heaven and on earth

- 96 You made the sky far to shine therein,
97 to see all that you make, while you are *One*,
98 risen in your *form (kheperu)* of living sundisk,
99 shining and radiant,
100 far and near.
101 You make millions of forms (*kheperu*) from yourself *alone*,
102 Towns, villages, fields,
103 road and river.
104 All eyes *behold* you upon them,
105 when you are above the *earth* as the *disk* of daytime.

c) The king, the unique knower

- 106 When you are gone, there is no eye whose sight you made
107 lest you look upon yourself as the sole of your creatures,
108 but even then you are in my heart, there is no other who knows you,
109 *only* your son, *Napkhupruria, Sole-one-of- Re*,
110 whom you have taught your ways and your might.

Second Stanza: Time — Acting and Ruling

- 111 The earth comes into being by your hand as you made it,
112 when you *dawn*, they live,
113 when you *set* they die;
114 you yourself are lifetime, one lives by you.
115 All eyes are on beauty until you set,
116 all labour ceases when you rest in the west;
117 but the *rising* one makes firm [every arm] for the king,
118 and every leg is on the move since you founded the earth.

- 119 You rouse them for your son who came from your body,
120 the king who lives by Ma'at, the lord of the two lands,
121 *Napkhupruria, Sole-one-of- Re,*
122 The Son of Re who lives by Ma'at,
123 the lord of crowns, *Akhanyati*, great in his lifetime,
124 and the great Queen whom he loves,
125 the lady of the Two Lands *Nafteta*,
126 who lives and rejuvenates
127 for ever, eternally.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AEL, I-II = M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, I-II, Berkeley 1973, 1976.
- Ägypten = J. Assmann, *Ägypten: Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer Frühen Hochkultur*, Stuttgart 1984.
- ÄHG = J. Assmann, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete*, Zurich 1975.
- BIFAO = *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*
- GM = *Göttinger Miszellen*
- JEA = *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
- Liturgische Lieder = J. Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*, Berlin 1969.
- Ma'at = J. Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten*, Munich 1990.
- MDAIK = *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abt. Kairo*
- MIO = *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*
- OBO = *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*
- RdE = *Revue d'Égyptologie*
- Re und Amun = J. Assmann, *Re und Amun: Die Krise des polytheistischen Weltbilds im Ägypten der 18.-20. Dynastie* (OBO, LI), Freiburg-Göttingen 1983 (an English translation of this work is in preparation).
- SAK = *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur*
- Sandman = M. Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten* (BAeg, VIII [1938]).
- Sonnenhymnen = J. Assmann, *Sonnenhymnen in Thebanischen Gräbern* (THEBEN, I), Mainz 1983.
- WMANT = *Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament*
- ZÄS = *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*
- ZAW = *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
- Zeit = J. Assmann, *Zeit und Ewigkeit im alten Ägypten*, Abh. der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Heidelberg 1975.