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THE FOUR GREEK HYMNS
OF ISIDORUS
AND THE CULT OF ISIS

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To

the late Professor C. B. Welles of Yale University
and my parents

Maud M. Vanderlip and the late Fred Y. Vanderlip
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge here my profound debt to the late C. Bradford Welles of the Classics Department of Yale University. I completed my Ph.D. dissertation under his expert direction and shall always consider it fortuitous that I had the opportunity to study a Hellenistic cult under one whose keen scholarship and lifelong interest in the Hellenistic world were matched by his willingness, even eagerness, to direct a beginner's steps through the formidable maze of evidence now available. As pure coincidence, Mr. Welles also found in his own library the excavation reports of 1936 and 1937 from Medinet Madi which, until then, I had thought impossible to obtain in North America. Their discovery permitted me to pursue my chosen field of study, the earliest aretologies to Hellenistic Isis. Mr. Welles last saw and read my manuscript in June 1969.

Throughout my research I have accepted the basic data and facsimiles of the original excavation reports from the University of Milan and I thank Professor I. Cazzaniga for permission to use certain of their photographs in Plates I-XI and XIV. I thank him also for permission to use the photographs of Isrmuthis from E. Bresciani's report of the new excavations at Medinet Madi (XII).

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XIV.* Isermuthis, Anchoes (?), Sokonopis; a fresco found in situ in an alcove of the Second Court, 1936.
XV. The M, or Memphis, text of Harder (R. Harder, “Karpokrates von Chalkis und die memphitische Isispropaganda,” APAX, 1934, pp. 20-21).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for the classical authors, journals, editions of papyri and inscriptions given in the Greek Lexicon of Liddel and Scott (Jones), revised 1940 (LSJ), pages xvi-xlvi, and the Lewis and Short Latin Dictionary, pages vii-xi, are not included below.

A. The Andros aretology to Isis, W. Peek, Der Isisrhythmus von Andros und verwandte Texte, 1930, pp. 15-22; IG XII Supplement, 1939, p. 98; D. Müller, op. cit., p. 11 and note 2. First century B.C.


APAW, Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin.

App. Met., Apuleius, Metamorphoses.


ASAW, Abhandlungen der Sachsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig.


BIE, Bulletin de l'institut d'Egypte, Cairo.

Brady, Reception, T. A. Brady, The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks (300-30 B.C.), University of Missouri Studies, X, I, 1935.


Chronique, Chronique d'Egypte.
Chalkis, The Karpokrates Aretalogy. See Harder, Karpokrates usw.
Class. Rev., Classical Review.
D., Aretalogy to Isis quoted in D. S. 1 27. See also Peek, Andros, p. 126.
First century B.C.

DRAW, Denkschriften der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften.
Delos, Roussel et Launey, Inscriptions de Delos; also, Delos Inscr.
Dendra, A. Mariette, Denderah, Description général (5 Bde., Paris, 1870-1889), Greco-Roman period.
Dendra, Unpublished texts from Dendra, numbered from the catalogue and quoted by D. Müller, Isisarretalogien, p. 95.
Dessau (ILS), H. Dessau, Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, Berlin, 1892-1916.

G., The aretalogy to Isis from Comphoi. See Peek, Andros, pp. 134-5.
H. Ceres, Hymnus Homericus Ceres.
H. Gauthier, Nomes, H. Gauthier, Les Nomes d’Egypte depuis Herodote jusqu’à la conquête Arabe, Cairo, 1935.
Goodwin, Goodwin, Greek Grammar, Cambridge, Mass., 1892.
Goodwin and Gulick, Goodwin and Gulick, Greek Grammar, 1930.
B. van Groningen, De P. Oxy. 1380, B. van Groningen, De Papyro Oxyrhynchita 1380, Diss. Groningen, 1921.
H. Th. R., Harvard Theological Review.
I. Mag., Inschriften von Magnesia.
J. The Isis aretalogy from Ios. See IG XII Suppl. 98; Peek, Andros, pp. 123-5. Second/third centuries A.D.
JEA, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology.
Jahresheft, Jahreshefte des Osterreichischen archäologischen Institutes.
K. The Isis aretalogy from Cyme. See BCH 51, 1927, pp. 378 ff.; IG XII Suppl. 98; Peek, Andros, pp. 122-24. Late Hellenistic (second century B.C.? or
first/second century A.D. For the earlier date see M. Nilsson GGR 2.2, p. 627.


Kees, Göttergläube, G. Kees, Der Göttergläube im alien Aegypten. Leipzig, 1941.


Kühner-Blass, Grammatik, Kühner-Blass, Ausführliche Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache 1.1, 1.2, Hannover, 1892.


LSJ, Liddell and Scott (Jones), A Greek-English Lexicon, 1925, revised 1940.


Manteuffel, De Opusculis Graecis Aegypti et Papyris, Ostracis Lapidibusque collectis, Warschau, 1919.

MDAIK, Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts in Kairo.


Mém. Miss., Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique Francaise au Caire.


Nock-Harder, Karpokrates, A. D. Nock, Harder, “Karpokrates von Chalkis,”
Gnomon 21, 1949, pp. 221-228.
Nock, Otto Bengtson, A. D. Nock, American Journal of Philology 63, 2,
PGE, Preisenderz, Papyri Graecae Magicae.
Otto-Bengtson, Geschichte, W. Otto und H. Bengtson, Zur Geschichte des
Niederganges des Ptolemäerreiches, München, 1938.
H. Oxy., Isis hymn from Oxyrhynchus, Oxyrhynchus Papyrus XI 1380.
P. Yale, Yale Papyri in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,
Peck, Andros, Werner Peek, Der Isis-Hymnus von Andros und verwandte
texte, Berlin, 1930.
Philae, Unpublished Greco-Roman texts from Philae quoted by Müller,
Isisarealogien, 96.
Philae, Pylon, H. Junker, “Der grosse Pylon des Tempels der Isis zu Philae,”
DWA&W Sonderband, Wien, 1958 (Greco-Roman period).
RARG, Hans Bonnet, Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte,
Berlin, 1952.
RE, Pauly-Wissowa, Realenzyklopädie der Altertumswissenschaften.
Roussel, CE, Roussel, Les Cultes égyptiens de Délos, 1915-16.
to the Archaeology of the Western Desert IV,” Bulletin of the John Rylands
Library 39, 2, 1957.
Rusch, Nut, A. Rusch, Die Entwicklung der Himmelsgöttin Nut zu einer
Totengöttin, Leipzig, 1922.
S. The Saloniki Isisarealogy, S. Pelokides, ἀπὸ τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ τὴν
κοινωνίαν ἐπικύρωσε Θεσσαλονίκης, Saloniki, 1934.
Ptolemaic Chronology, Alan E. Samuel, Ptolemaic Chronology, Munich,
1962.
SEG, Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum, Leyden, 1923-.
SPAW, Sitzungsberichte Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu
Berlin.
De P. Oxy., B. A. van Groningen, De Papyro Oxyrhynchita 1380, Diss.,
Groningen, 1921.
Vogliano, P. R., Achille Vogliano, Primo Rapporto degli scavi condotti dalla
Missione archeologica d’egitto della R. Università di Milano nella zona di Medinet
Madi (Campagna inverno e primavera 1935-XIII) a cura di Achille Vogliano,
Milano, 1936-XIV.
Vogliano, S. R., Achille Vogliano, Secondo Rapporto degli scavi condotti
dalla Missione archeologica d’egitto della R. Università di Milano nella zona di
Medinet Madi (Campagna inverno e primavera 1936-XIV) a cura di Achille Vogliano, Milano, 1937-XV.


*YCS*, Yale Classical Studies.

*ZAS*, Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde.
## COMPARATIVE TABLE OF EDITIONS AND COMMENTARY

1. **Editions:**
THE FOUR GREEK HYMNS
OF ISIDORUS
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INTRODUCTION

Roughly a dozen Greek Hymns to Isis are extant. The earliest of these are the Hymns by Isidorus of the Fayum, the first three of which he addresses to the goddess Isis using various titles for her. Each Hymn bears his name inscribed clearly at the end, although ‘Isidorus’ may well be an assumed, or cult, name. His four Hymns are, at the latest, early first century B.C. They were found inscribed, in 1935, in situ, at the south gate of a large Greco-Egyptian temple near a village in the extreme southern Fayum. The modern village is called Medinet Madi, but its ancient name is unknown. Nothing at all is known of the temple’s history or that of the area surrounding it.

The development of the cult and characterization of Isis in Greco-Egypt, the Greek world and later the greco-Roman world, makes a fascinating study. Readers of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* know Hellenistic Isis well. She appears in a somewhat earlier form in Isidorus’ Hymns I-III, in which Isidorus gives her three main titles: Hermouthis, Demeter, and Agathe Tyche; but, like Apuleius, Isidorus also equates her to all the known goddesses of every race.

In an attempt to comprehend the meaning Isidorus’ goddess has for him I have made a study of many of his Greek idioms, comparing them to important uses elsewhere. Fortunately a large number of his phrases are obviously epic-poetic and can be easily identified. I found, in fact, that many of his words, phrases, and sometimes whole lines, come from either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. There is in what follows a particularly close study of the epithets and powers he assigns the goddess.

Epic words and phrases too, I find, are localized in his hexameters precisely as in Homer, Hesiod, and the older Homeric hymns. In other words, one must conclude that Isidorus knows, at least, the technical aspects of the older Greek hexameter. And so, although he does not belong to the direct literary descent of hexameter poets (who can be traced from Homer through Callimachus to Nonnus), his caesurae and localizations do qualify him as a writer of primitive hexameters, like, among others, the composers of Orphic hymns.

From the examination of the possible shades of meaning in Isidorus’ words, interesting results began to accrue. From mounting scraps of information, interpretations would, at times, coalesce suddenly into patches of seeming significance. For example, the chance find of οἵκαρος ἐν in *Iliad* XXIV 67 suddenly illuminated what had seemed to be merely Isidorus’ or the stonemason’s
error. Immediately the phrase \( \phi\lambda\tau\alpha\nu \ \varepsilon\kappa\varepsilon \) (III, 12) leapt into life. Behind the narrative of Isis' love for the Egyptian King, I felt (or thought I felt) the poet's comparison with the yearning love of Zeus for the noble Hector. Another decisive discovery concerned ancient, and little known, Renenutet whom the Greeks called Thermuthis or (Fr.) Hermouthis. She was, I found, much more than a goddess of cereal grain in the form of a snake, as she is more usually portrayed. Long before the Hellenistic age, she had been paired with an impersonified Power (called Shay, Shai, Psui, etc.) and together they were considered to attend each individual from birth to death, controlling together the length of his life-span, and the quality of his life (that is, giving him happiness and prosperity). Hermouthis-Renenutet had, in fact, been (alone and with Shay) the Egyptian equivalent of both a Greek Kourostraphos and Moira Theon. She is shown to have been just such a goddess or power in the fine study of Professor Dieter Müller (\textit{Ägypten und die griechischen Isisarealogien}, 1961). One of Renenutet's two hieroglyphic determinatives, in fact, symbolizes the more sentimental side of her character, for it shows her as a nurse dandling an infant above her lap. Clearly, when Isis is equated to this goddess she is much more than a goddess of cereal grain. Further, there is evidence that Greek Agathe Tyche, in Greco-Egypt at least, and especially when she is paired with the Agathos Daimon (as Shay), is very like the ancient maternal Renenutet-Hermouthis.

The above interpretation of Isis-Hermouthis, and Isis-Tyche (Agathe), points to the underlying theme in Isidore's Hymns, that of the divine nurse-mother and her beneficent feelings for all her human children throughout their life-span. Isis as Hermouthis and Agathe Tyche is the divine nurse and guardian of the child and man from birth to death, and a universal saviour god of the individual. She is shown, in fact, in Isidore's Hymns to be both immanent and transcendent, a helper on earth and a divine judge, great mother, and creator-god, in the heavens.

Some expressions seemed to call for particular scrutiny. The terms \( \epsilon\iota\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\omega \) and \( \epsilon\iota\beta\rho\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu \) invited research. Dated much earlier than Isidore's Hymns is an extant Hellenistic document from the Memphis Serapeum that must be contemporary with the introduction of Isis to the Greeks at that ancient centre of Egyptian theology, Memphis. In it Isis is called: \( \epsilon\iota\beta\rho\gamma\varepsilon\varepsilon\tau\alpha\alpha \ \kappa\alpha\rho\pi\omega \nu \), \( \epsilon\iota\beta\rho\gamma\varepsilon\tau\alpha\nu \) (\textit{UPZ} 81, Somnium Nectanebei 9-10). That is the earliest extant Greek title for her and deliberately equates Isis (= Hermouthis?) with Demeter, the Greek 'discoverer' of cereal grain. In fact, by the first century B.C. \( \epsilon\iota\beta\rho\gamma\varepsilon\tau\alpha\nu \) has been dropped and some form of \( \epsilon\iota\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\omega \) is found in most of the arealogies to Isis.

The Greek concept of a god who 'discovers,' that is, 'seeks and finds' for man (\( \epsilon\iota\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\omega \)) first occurs, as far as I am aware, in Xenophanes (11B 18 Diels). It signifies the creation by divine mental effort, or wits, of something new, be it a device, an invention, or a new skill. The thing discovered is, in its way, a kind of miracle and it causes a succession of good things to happen for man. Aeschylus' Prometheus is the cosmic devisor or saviour of men. Plato speaks of another 'discoverer,' Egyptian Thoth, calling him discoverer of the alphabet and writing.
INTRODUCTION

Euripides knows Demeter and Dionysus as 'discoverers' of cereals and wine, respectively, and Demeter in the Marmor Parium of the third century B.C. is claimed as Athens' own 'discoverer' of cereals. The obvious attempt to cast certain gods in the rôle of discoverer for mankind may well stem from Eleusis.

The terms 'discover' and 'discoverer' as used above could have been given new prominence by the scientific thought of fifth-century Athens. Human invention or innovation was thought to release nature’s δυνάμεις. The belief in a divine discoverer releasing innovations or miracles for man, that is, belief in a divine agent who worked intentionally for men, seems a kind of religious reaction to the scientific thought of the fifth century. Prometheus, the divine discoverer of τέχνα, is strangely outside nature (φύσις). Vastly powerful Tyche too must have continued as a Power in popular fifth-century religion, although men like Thucydides had deprived her of all personality (seeing her only as the author of the unpredictable and inexplicable). In fact, it may be that when fifth-century science and political thought ousted, or tried to oust, the old gods, it provided the challenge needed to create a new type of god. At any rate, the Discoverer-god appears conspicuous at this time.

In the first century B.C. Diodorus Siculus, as well as Isidorus of the Fayum, provides evidence that Egyptian Isis has now surely joined the Greek discoverer-gods. Diodorus associates her and Osiris with Prometheus, Demeter, Themis, and Hestia. Evidently, in the years from the fifth to the first centuries B.C. there had been a conscious attempt to promote the Eleusinian gods to the highest status (of Prometheus) and to add those two venerable goddesses, Themis and Hestia. They appear to have been looked on as a canon of saviours, and initiators of all progress in human civilization.

Isidorus, living on the fringe of the Greek world, echoes almost the same thinking. But to him, understandably, the royal goddess he adores is his Discoverer and he believes all other goddesses are but phases of her. And, while his goddess is like ancient Demeter (εὐρέτρια καρπῶν), she is really far greater, for she is εὐρέτρια ζωῆς. The phrase startles a scholar of classical Greek literature. A goddess who 'discovers' life, must also 'create' it; she must be the Creator who exists outside life, nature, and the cosmos. She, therefore, is essentially non-Greek, and, in fact, an Oriental creator-god.

But had not Plato implied he was giving a non-Greek, Egyptian, significance to the verb εὑρίσκω when he spoke of Thoth as 'discovering' the alphabet and writing? Müller considers that an Egyptian verb (š š) may well have contributed to this new extension of meaning in Greek εὑρίσκω: 'discover' = 'create out of nothing.' Isidorus says his goddess is one of the Olympians; at the same time he makes it clear that her power and range far surpass theirs.

On a somewhat lower plane, it should be noted that Egyptian Isis had always been associated with the literal meaning of εὑρίσκω (seek and find). In the legend, as known at least in Greek times, she 'searched for and found' the parts of murdered Osiris. The act seems to have survived as part of her sacred drama.
But to return to Isis εἰρήνης, Most significantly, ancient Renenutet is
Giver of Life in the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the walls of the small XIIIth
Dynasty temple within the larger Hellenistic complex at Medinet Madi. Very like
the Isis of the later Greek arealalogies, she states in the first person: “I give all life
and happiness eternally. I give all eternity eternally. I give all good fortune
(health?) eternally.” This is the same Egyptian καμωρτρόφος and μοῦρα θείω I
have mentioned above but here she is much earlier. This representation of
Renenutet (known elsewhere as the Living One), had continued for some eighteen
hundred years for all to see on the temple wall. Portrayed with Sebek, she extends
the symbol of life (the ankh) to the king (ibid., 87-88). It is, therefore, no
accident nor indeed the result of Greek association, that Isidorus has entitled his
Isis-Hermouthis εἰρήνης.

If we delve further into the past of this goddess, Renenet-Hermouthis, we see
her associations widen. Turning to the Hebrew Psalm 103 (104), one reads of
Hebrew Jahweh as a God of life, vegetation, and all nature, an all-powerful single
heavenly deity, existing as the real power behind the visible sun. It is commonly
thought that Akhnaten’s Hymn to the sun-god, Aton, had had profound religious
influence not only in Egypt but in the neighbouring, more primitive lands
including Palestine, and that this early Psalm, in fact, shows Jahweh almost like
Akhnaten’s deity. Isidorus’ goddess in the first three Hymns is a close parallel. She
could, for instance, be descended from Aton of the Amarna hymn. Incidentally,
we note the importance of her son, the sun, in the cult. The concept of Renenutet
(with Shay) as divine companion of the individual is thought also to have
developed in the Amarna period.

Although the study of Isidorus’ Hymns leads to the conclusion that they
date to the early first century B.C., their language, metre, grammar, syntax, and
hymn style are not strongly influenced by the Koine of that era; rather their
language harks back to the Greek epic-poetic tradition. Certain Greek Orphic
terms seem particularly significant among the titles of the goddess: πλωτόδοσις,
παυμορότητα and perhaps εἰρήνα. Sokonopis’ titles, πλωτόδοσις,
παυμορότητα, and κρίσις, are also Orphic. But, undoubtedly, the beginnings of
the goddess (and her male partner, whatever his name) in reality go back to
earliest Egyptian times. Behind Isidorus’ Hymns and thought lies a tradition that
is semi-monotheistic and very old. It is essentially concerned with one god behind
the many forms of gods men worship. This is said to be the expression of an old
Oriental concept of one divine Founder-Creator. Isidorus’ founder-creator is One,
and demonstrably very old. She had been, when Isidorus wrote, the
temple-goddess for at least eighteen hundred years. Her husband (for she is one of
a family, or triad, in the typical Egyptian grouping of deities) is Sebek, and later
‘Sokonopis’ meaning ‘Sebek of the Nile.’ Their son is the sun-god, mentioned in
very close association with his goddess-mother.

Isidorus is not a pure monotheist. In fact Suchos, the local Sokonopis,
Anchoes, Apollo, Anubis, perhaps Ammon, surely certain royal divinities, and one
royal folk hero, undoubtedly were also worshiped in the temple. Yet amid all the
synnaoi gods, Isidorus is emotionally attached only to the goddess. She alone, as a
divine person, glows for him with warm motherly care and good will for men.

This is a study not so much of a cult as of the yearning of Hellenistic men
for a divine helper. My examination of the Hymns of Isidorus has let me isolate
and magnify, as it were, one local religious institution in a bi-cultural society, or
rather it has let me isolate and magnify one of the believers. I find Isidorus’
divinity, the early Hellenistic Isis, constituted of many ancient elements, but
emerging in his mind as one distinct, strong, and responsive, Person. In later
Hellenistic representations she may still be a serpent with a human head (Plates
XII-XIII); but she may also be a beautiful young mother with a child on her knee
or at her side. Indeed, at the temple the dark-robed, erect, youthful figure of the
universal merciful Mother is unmistakable (Plate XIV). By Isidorus, at least, she is
worshiped as The Mother and Nurse of all, The One who forever listens to men’s
prayers and exerts saving power in their behalf.
CHAPTER ONE
DATE OF THE HYMNS

Archaeological Evidence from the Site

Isidorus’ Hymns were found by an Italian excavation party in 1935 at Medinet Madi in the extreme south of the Fayum. The region had been superficially examined by several archaeological expeditions in the early twentieth century; and before 1935 Biblical texts (which later became part of the C. Beatty collection) and Manichaean texts (which became part of the Berlin and London collections) had supposedly come from the same region. But the expedition from the University of Milan in 1935 was the first to undertake a thorough excavation of the temple site. They began work in a valley where aerial photographs showed in situ large, projecting, limestone blocks. The photograph of the completed excavations indicates a long series of buildings, constructed on a north-south axis with side-structures fanning out at the south end (Plate I).

In 1935 the excavations began at what proved to be the southernmost portal, and revealed south of that portal an enclosed, rectangular court, almost divided in two by projecting cross-walls (Plates II-IV). I shall summarize Vogliano’s description of the whole temenos, with most emphasis on his account of the rectangular court, in which Isidorus’ Hymns were found.

The cross-walls, which are approximately the height of the south court’s outside walls, terminate in two attached columns or piers (which Vogliano consistently calls ‘pilastri’). On either side of the portal itself stand two lion statues. These and the whole rectangular court appear to be the προάστωμα and the λεωνετίς mentioned in the dedicatory inscriptions which appear on the south faces of each of the two piers in which the cross-walls terminate: ‘On behalf of King Ptolemy Theos Soter, Heracleodorus, son of Sostratos, and Isidora (sic), his wife, and their children, to Hermouthis Thea Megiste and Sokonopis Theos Megalos, the proastion and the lions. Year 22, Pachon (sic)’. The inscription on the east pier is the same as that on the west except that the sigma of Pachons and the final

1. Published by Vogliano, Prima, Secondo Rapporto, 1935-37; see B. Comparative Table of Editions and Commentary, p. iv. For the exact location of Medinet Madi, and Vogliano’s excavations, see Edda Breccian, Rapporto Preliminare delle Campagne di Scavo 1966 e 1967.

2. Recent excavations at Medinet Madi are reported in E. Breccian, op. cit.
beta of the date are missing (Plate V a and b).2 Damage to the right edge of the stone may account for the omission.

The same piers bear Isidorus' four hymn-inscriptions each signed with his name. The Hymns are without dedication or date, but like the dedications mentioned above, Hymns I, II, and III are addressed to Hermouthis, while II, III, and IV also mention Sokonopis and a third οὐρανός god, Anchoes, the latter addressed as the goddess' son (Plates VI-IX). The fourth Hymn is not in honour of the goddess but of a local hero-god, Porramanres (probably Amenemhet III, a XIIth Dynasty Pharaoh) who 'founded' the temple.

The arrangement of the hymns on the surface of the piers is oddly asymmetrical. Hymn I and II are adjacent, on the left, west pillar (Plates VI, VII, and X); III and IV are on the right of the entrance (Plates VIII and IX). Hymn I, facing south, below the west dedicatory inscription, is on four courses of stone (two headers in courses one and three, and one stretcher in two and four). Hymn II faces east and is opposite Hymn III and immediately adjacent to Hymn I. It is on three courses of stone (the first and third formed of one stretcher, the second of two headers). Thus the first course in Hymn II begins at the first course of stones in Hymn I. Hymn III is also on three courses of stone (one and two consisting of one stretcher and three of two headers). The signature appears beneath it on another stretcher. Thus II and III are on the reveals.

Hymn IV is on four courses of stone (one stretcher in courses one and three, and two headers in two and four). Vogliano's report that Hymn IV was on the east pier but 'within the vestibule' suggests that it faced north. Of the two dedicatory inscriptions on the top south face of each pier, that on the west is above Hymn I, and that on the east has no lettering below it (Plates V a and b respectively).

While excavation was proceeding in 1935, and before the rest of the site was uncovered in 1936, the original 'pilastri' bearing the hymns and dedicatory inscriptions were moved to the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria. Thus, reconstruction of the actual arrangement of the inscriptions depends upon interpretation of the excavation reports, and analysis of the facsimiles published by Vogliano.3

Excavations undertaken south of the rectangular court revealed a Processional Way leading to the Temple from the south. On each side, set into tiers of seats, a sphinx and lion paired face a similar pair across the Way (Plates II-IV). Between the sphinx and lion on the east is an altar bearing an inscription of 12 B.C. (Plate III), dedicated to the goddess Hermouthis by a strategos, one Zobalos. The base below the east lion bore an undated dedication to Apollo by a οὐρανός while an undated dedication to Anubis, also by a οὐρανός, was carried by stones in Alexandria in 1963 and reports the inscriptions are now largely illegible because of the continuous deterioration of the pillars' surface.

4. Professor L. Koenen of the Classics Department at the University of Cologne saw the
the base of the east sphinx.\textsuperscript{5}

With the discovery of the altar of Zobalos the excavations of 1935 terminated. In 1936 work was directed north of the south portal. Here a larger court, walled like the south forecourt, was uncovered, along with a complex of buildings lying to the west and east.\textsuperscript{6} North again, on the main axis, were discovered a second portal and a second court. Vogliano dates both these portals and courts to centuries II/I B.C.\textsuperscript{7}

North of the second court lay two successive colonnades leading into the forecourt of a small shrine or chapel. The chapel entrance on the ground level was completely blocked by debris but an upper level was excavated. Here were found another portal, and beyond it three cellae all bearing incised representations of Renenutet, Sebek and Amenemhet III. On the walls were many hieroglyphic inscriptions explaining the pictured representation.\textsuperscript{8}

The 1936 excavations continued to the northern limits of the precinct, where another Ptolemaic temple was found dedicated to Renenutet, Sebek, and Anubis.\textsuperscript{9} Vogliano dates it to III/II B.C., about a century before the complex to the south (see Plate I).

In summary the excavations of 1935-1937 revealed:

1. A fore-court south of the southernmost portal, which Vogliano dates to 96 B.C. from the dedicatory inscriptions (plates II-IV);
2. north of the southern portal a court, with a western and eastern complex of buildings, and north again, a second portal and court, all dated II/I B.C.;
3. north of 2, two colonnades and a fore-court leading to a large, square doorway on an upper level, which opened on a shrine of three cellae. (The lower floor showed massive destruction and so could not be excavated.) The inner shrine was authentically Pharaonic and dated by the excavators to the end of the XIIth Dynasty, that is, about 1800 B.C.;
4. beyond the Pharaonic temple of 3, at the north extremity of the site’s north-south axis, a rather small Ptolemaic temple of III/II B.C. (but not before Ptolemy Epiphanes, i.e., about 204-180).\textsuperscript{10} See Plate I.

In the dedication to Soter on the piers at the southernmost portal, the fore-court was called προαστία.\textsuperscript{11} Herodotus (IV 78) uses ἐν τῷ προαστίῳ to mean ‘in the suburb,’ or ‘close to the city.’ The present court stood before a ‘city’ which was, in fact, the whole walled temenos or temple-city. The actual προαστία, the enclosed ‘rectangular’ court south of the first portal (Plate II), was not quite a regular rectangle. Its two projecting cross-walls were each about 8 m. 85. Between

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5. The three dedications, Vogliano, P. R., pp. 54 and 55, are republished as SEG VIII 543, 544, and 545 respectively. Apollo could be Anches, and Anubis could be equated to Sokaropis. See Hymn II 9, and note.
6. Vogliano, op. cit., Tav. VIII.
8. For the chapel and its hieroglyphic inscriptions, cf. ibid., pp. 10 ff., and 22 ff., and Tavv. XXVI-XXXIV.
9. Ibid., Tav. XXXVII.
11. Vogliano, P. R., II ff.
them (and the hymn inscriptions), on the central axis of the temple, was an opening or doorway, some 4 m. wide. It had no trace of a door. The terminating 'pilastri d’accesso' were 2 m. high, and so only a little higher than the sidewalls of the court. Their materials and workmanship provide some clue to their history. Everything was constructed of limestone blocks, but the stone of the sidewalls was inferior and its workmanship hasty (the blocks being held in place by carelessly mixed dark mortar). The projecting walls, which terminated in the piers, were of much more accurate structure, and their external facade, toward the continuing Processional Way, was carefully smoothed. Also their limestone, although of the same dingy yellow colour as the rest, was of better quality than the side-walls, for here it was relatively free of salt-petre. Its mortar, less dark in colour than that of the side-walls, was finer and more carefully laid. The projecting walls were intended to be impressive.

The inscriptions of the four Hymns were applied sometime after the blocks of the piers were in place, for all the lettering shows that it was inscribed so as to avoid cracks, chipping, and the like, in the stone (Plates VI-IX). Some mortar applied after the inscribing covers or partially covers certain letters.

There were a number of stages of reconstruction of masonry and paving of the Processional Way and court, but not all is clear in Vogliano’s description. He dates them ‘from several periods, some of which are 1 B.C.’ Several distinct periods of repair seem to appear:

1. a reconstruction of the vestibule, after Augustus but contemporary with a mosaic found under the south portal;
2. a later, hasty reconstruction of the west wall of the fore-court and Processional Way;
3. a last hasty, and still more careless, reconstruction possibly at the end of III or IV A.D. (possibly contemporary with 2).

The constant repair implies that the vestibule and fore-court complex was particularly cherished, and so well worth preservation and defence. Obviously it was subjected to several attacks, and finally to deliberate destruction.

Summary and Conclusion from the External Evidence

Since the Hymns were inscribed after the piers were erected, and the piers themselves would appear to have been constructed in year 22 of Ptolemy IX Soter II, or 96 B.C. because of the date of the dedication, it might seem on first consideration that 96 B.C. should be the terminus post quem for the inscribing of the Hymns. However, Soter II was not in Egypt in 96 B.C., his 22nd year. After his accession under the name of Soter II in 115 B.C., reigning with his mother, Cleopatra III, he was expelled from the country three times (in 110, 108, and

13. Ibid., p. 16.
107), and reigned uninterruptedly only after 88 B.C. 15 His 22nd year fell during his absence from Egypt in 107-88. A date in the 22nd year therefore must be retroactive, inscribed later to date a document or a monument to a year earlier than the time of the actual inscription. A number of such retroactive dates appear in the Ptolemaic period, 16 and in the case of Soter II himself, after his return in 88 B.C. scribes in the Thebaid began dating his reign in the 30th year as if it had never been interrupted.

So, although the piers must have been constructed in 96 B.C., which would have been the 22nd year, the dedication itself could not have been put on the piers until Soter’s actual return in 88 B.C. The Hymn inscriptions must then be dated in or after 88. The *terminus ante quem* for the inscriptions is almost surely before 80, the year in which Soter died, although we cannot be absolutely certain about this. Evidence from the mortar etc. suggests it is the first century and before 12 B.C., the date of the altar of Zobalus. 17

Evidence from the Content of the Hymns

There are but two passages in the four Hymns that could give any clue to their date, lines 16-18 of Hymn III, and the use of *σωτέρα*, in Hymn I, 26.

Although allowance must be made for traditional expressions and generalities, III 16-18 states certain facts: that somewhere, contemporary with the King’s rule, there are, or were, wars, massacres, etc.; but this king, in the face of his numerous, powerful foes, with a ‘few’ followers, has been protected by the goddess’ power (*σθένος, ὅβερας*, 17). That is, the king has narrowly won a victory. At least some of this is traditional language, such as the wars, massacres, and the goddess’ defence of her favourite in the face of numerous foes. Previously (lines 12-15), in what could be an especially traditional description of the King and which, incidentally, could also be an older passage, Isidorus says: “This most beloved King rules Asia and Europe (13) bringing peace and other natural blessings to his people (14-15).” The above are but vague allusions at best, but they do agree generally with the history of Egypt during the reigns of Soter II, especially when he returned and ruled for the last time.

Dynastic quarrels within this royal family, chiefly between Soter II and his mother, Cleopatra III, are well known. Upon his expulsion in 107, she and his brother, Alexander I, began a new system of dating. 18 After her death in 101, Alexander I continued to rule with his niece, Berenice III, as Queen. (She was, by the way, the daughter of Soter II.) But throughout his reign Alexander was at

16. Ibid., pp. 11 ff.
17. See note 5 above. The conclusions about dating here are in accord with the usage of certain late words discussed in my analysis of the texts, and fit the palaeography of the inscriptions themselves. Although it cannot be precise, the palaeography is generally considered to fit best a late Ptolemaic or early Roman date. Cf. Vogliano, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
loggerheads with the Greek population, particularly in Alexandria, and in 89 they revolted. Finally, on Alexander’s death in his ‘26th year’ as King, Soter II returned from Cyprus as Ptolemy IX, as it was said, in his ‘30th year’. And if the names were loosely used, he might be said to rule ‘both Europe (= Cyprus) and Asia (= Egypt).’ Judging by Alexander’s unpopularity in Alexandria, a case could be made for that city’s support of Soter. Perhaps the Memphis priesthood also supported him. In fact, there is evidence that after his return in 88, Soter was generally a less unpopular monarch than his predecessor. But almost immediately a serious revolt broke out in the Thebaid. It continued from 88 until 85 when he finally put it down with great severity. Thereafter he ruled with Berenice III until his death in 80 B.C.

Thus at several periods in his career, it could be said that Soter II ‘with a few’ faced numerous enemies, but in the second decade of the first century B.C. he finally prevailed. Obviously he would be ‘victorious’ on his return from each of his three periods of exile; but it would be most appropriate (and safe) to hail his victory either on his last return in 88 when his predecessor was dead, or after his triumph over the Theban rebels in 84. The repeated references to loyalty in III 24-27 suggest that his ‘party’ still suspects disloyalty, and lines 16-18 especially could have been written between 88 and 84 B.C.

Soter II’s interest in temple building and restoration might have brought him popularity with the Egyptian priesthood, with the exception, of course, of the priests of Thebes. Isidorus, it is to be remembered, was a priest. Bevan sets Soter’s greatest building activity in the years of his earlier reigns, from 115 to 107. His policy would, therefore, be well known in the 80’s.

That the Hymns’ content cannot be much later than the 80’s of the first century B.C., that is, later than Soter’s final reign, is proved by the reference to Isis as Queen of the World. Surely soon after the savage destruction of cult-life on Delos in 88, and the eastern onrush of Mithridates’ forces, it would be clear to all that Isis was not Queen of the Aegean World. There is some evidence that Isis’ cult did, in fact, at this time flee to sites in south Italy. The content of Hymn III fits the years 88-84, or 88-80, but cannot well be later.

In Hymn I 26 the goddess is called ιωτέρα. There is a hieroglyphic inscription which Otto-Bengtson dates to 88 B.C., or thereafter, in which the name ‘Soteira’ occurs. They judge it to be a retroactive reference by Soter II to

19. E. Bevan, Ptolemaic Egypt, p. 332; T. A. Brady, Reception of the Egyptian Cult, p. 37.
27. See A. E. Samuel, op. cit., pp. 153-5, for the dating of the death of Berenice III and Alexander II.
Cleopatra II, associating the title σωτέρα with Cleopatra II, Soter’s grandmother. Although they refer to Isidorus’ Hymns as closer in date to the lifetime of Cleopatra III, his mother, they think that the title ‘Soteira’ connoting Cleopatra II, in all likelihood was restored by Soter II after he removed the damnatio memoriae imposed on his grandmother by her rival Cleopatra III. Necessarily this must have been not only after the death of Cleopatra III in 101, but also some time after his return.

Finally, one should heed A. D. Nock’s remarks that the names Σωτέρα and Σωτήρ were ‘a matter of royal policy,’ that is, they are to be understood as directed primarily to the Greek element. In essence, they were propaganda; not a means one ruler took of offending another — although Cleopatra III’s self-assertion against Cleopatra II is well attested.

Therefore, while the title σωτέρα of Hymn I may bear a subtle hint of the end of the struggle between Cleopatra III and her rival, the older Cleopatra II, it is more important to note that the Fayum Hymns were written expressly for Greeks who frequented the Temple, and for whom this title had especial significance. It echoes Soter’s own title which appears immediately above Hymn I in the dedication on the west pier. By his assumed title, Soter, or Saviour, he undoubtedly associated himself particularly with the cult of Isis, which can, of course, be viewed as a political faction. The author of the Hymns is a member of the Isiac party, and supports Soter II; his Hymns are both strong political and religious statements of loyalty. This interpretation of their purpose seems clearly substantiated by the author’s emphasis on ‘loyalty’ in III 24-27. This view also agrees with what we will see in Chapter III to be motivation for the spread of the cult of Isis under the early Ptolemies. It seems a little naive to rob ‘Soteira’ of contemporary partisan significance; these are not the Hymns of a starry-eyed, secluded visionary.

Summary and Conclusion from the Internal Evidence

The Hymns could not have been composed later than the 80’s of the first century B.C., the last years of Soter’s reign, thereafter, they would have been foolishly anachronistic. Hints of disturbances in III 16-18, and stress on loyalty, fit Soter II’s last years as King of Egypt, especially after the end of the revolt at Thebes. For a few brief years Isis might still be called Queen of the World; an Egyptian king, the traditional protegé of Isis, was still on the Egyptian throne; traditional policy and practices were probably still followed at the Court; and the Romans might still be ignored.

Another possibility, of course, is that none of these references may really

apply to Soter II's reign, and that only the actual inscriptions are to be so dated, with the Hymns being considered earlier. Yet the total evidence from the line-by-line commentary fits II/1 B.C. and Soter II's reign; and, although one might argue that the Hymns could be older, and re-edited, their basic tendency toward monotheism, their Orphic association, and their strong relationship to the other Isiac aretaologies of the first century B.C. (and later), would be most remarkable in III/II B.C. No similar aretaologies are known before the first century B.C.
CHAPTER TWO
THE HYMNS: TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARIES

Hymn I (Plate VI)

πλοτοδότι βασίλεια θεῶν, Ἐρμοθέι ἄνασσα,
παντοκράτειρα, τύχη Ἀφανῆ, μεγαλόπωρος Ἐση.
Δερ οὐφιστή, Ἴωθη εὐφρεία πάσης.
παντοῖος ἐργοῦς ἐμελημέος σου, ὁφρ' ἀναδοχής

5

παντοῖοι βίων τε καὶ εὐφροσύνη τε ἀπασί,
καὶ θεομοῦς κατέθεις, ὦν εὐδοκία τε ἀπαρχὴ,
καὶ τέχνας ἀνέδωκας, ὦν εὐνοχήμων βίος εἶν.
καὶ πάστων τε φύσιν εἰσαυδέα εἴρεω καρπίων.

10

Σοῦ τε χάριν αὐνέστης ὁ πόλος καὶ γαία ἀπασί
καὶ ποιοι άνθρωποι καὶ ἤλιος ὁ γλυκοφάτης.
Σὴν δοκεῖ καὶ Νεῖλος στοιχεῖα πληροῖται ἀπασί

15

ὄρη ὑπωρείη, καὶ λαβρότατον χεῖον ὤδωρ
γαίαν πάσαν ἔπι, ὦν ἀνέγλιτος καρπός ἀπαρχή.

20

δοῦοι δὲ θάνων δροτοὶ ἐπὶ ἀπειρον γαίη.

25

Θάνατος καὶ Ἐλλήνες, καὶ οὐκοι βάρβαροι εἶλαι,
ὁινομά σου τὸ καλόν, πολυτιμην παρὰ πάσιν,

30

φωναῖοι φράζοντε νῦν ἰδίας, ἰδίας ἐνι πάρτῃ.

Λυγίνη ἡ Αρτέμις οἱ Σύροι θλήσοι καὶ καλέσοιν
ναβαντιον καὶ Λυκίων θάνατον ἄνενταιν

5

Μήτηρ ἡ θλήσαιν τοὺς καὶ Θρήσεις ἀνδρεῖς

10

Ἑλλήνες δ' ἡ θυραί μεγαλόθερον ἢθ' Ἀφροδιτῆν
καὶ Ἑστίαν ἄγαθην, καὶ Πείναν, καὶ Δήμητρα,
Λυγίνην δὲ Θεωῦν, ὅτι μουὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπασί

15

αι ἐν τὸν ἱππόν Ἰωακεῖμ θεῖαν ἄλλαι.

20

Δυστύτη, οὐ λίγον μεγάλην δυνάμιν σου αἰείων,

25

αὐτεῖν ἄθωστη, πολυποτε, Ἐπικαί ἧμεραι,

30

τοῦ θυραίς μεγάλας οὐκοίπτειν ὀδορναίσ,
καὶ οἱ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ χώρῃ πλανοῦμεν ἀνδρεῖς
καὶ δοῦι εἰ πελάτηι μεγάλων χείμων πλέουσιν.
O wealth-giver, Queen of the gods, Hermouthis, Lady,
Omnipotent Agathe Tyche, greatly renowned Isis,
Deo, highest Discoverer of all life,
manifest miracles were Your care that You might bring
5 livelihood to mankind and morality to all;
(and) You taught customs that justice might in some measure prevail;
You gave skills that men’s life might be comfortable,
and You discovered the blossoms that produce edible vegetation.
Because of You heaven and the whole earth have their being;
10 And the gusts of the winds and the sun with its sweet light.
By Your power the channels of Nile are filled, every one,
At the harvest season and its most turbulent water is poured
On the whole land that produce may be unfailing.
All mortals who live on the boundless earth,
15 Thracians, Greeks and Barbarians,
Express Your fair Name, a Name greatly honoured among all, (but)
Each (speaks) in his own language, in his own land.
The Syrions call You: Astarte, Artemis, Nanaia,
The Lycian tribes call You: Leto, the Lady,
20 The Thracians also name You as Mother of the gods;
And the Greeks (call You) Hera of the Great Throne, Aphrodite,
Hestia the goodly, Rhea and Demeter.
But the Egyptians call You 'Thioutes' (because they know) that You, being
One, are all
Other goddesses invoked by the races of men.
25 Mighty One, I shall not cease to sing of Your great Power,
Deathless Saviour, many-named, mightiest Isis,
Saving from war, cities and all their citizens;
Men, their wives, possessions, and children.
As many as are bound fast in prison, in the power of death,
As many as are in pain through long, anguish, sleepless nights,
All who are wanderers in a foreign land,
And as many as sail on the Great Sea in winter
When men may be destroyed and their ships wrecked and sunk . . .
All (these) are saved if they pray that You be present to help.

35 Hear my prayers, O One Whose Name has great Power;
Prove Yourself merciful to me and free me from all distress.
Isidorus
wrote (it)

Hymn 1, set below the dedicatory inscription to Ptolemy Theos Soter on the south face of the west pillar, is the only Hymn of Isidorus to be so inscribed. It immediately faces those entering the south portal of the precinct from the Ceremonial Way.

1-3. Summary. Invocation of Isis Mighty in Name, as Egyptian Hermouthis, goddess of the Cereal Harvest, and the Greek goddesses, Tyche Agathe and Deo (Demeter).

1. πλουτοδότης: a hapax legomenon. Cf. πλούτωδότης Il 10 and note. πλουτοδότερα refers to Eleusinian Demeter/Ge in D. S. 1 12, 4 = h. Orph. XI 3. In Hes. Erôs, 126, the men of the Golden Age become δαίμονες πλούτοδότες. Isidorus’ epithet appears to have Eleusinian association. Wealth-giving is also a traditional function of Egyptian royalty.

βασίλεια δέων: cf. η βασίλεια, III 12. In the Orphic hymns βασιλεία and παμβασιλεία are common epithets. βασιλεία also is a title of Isis: A. I; D. S. 1 27, 4 (βασιλεία); H. Oxy. 36-37; 218; and App. Meil. XI 4 (regina Isis).

1. Ἐρμοῦθη: see Plate XI-XIV. Hermouthis or Thermouthis (with the definite article θ or τ) was the Greek transliteration of Rnn.wt.t or Rnwt, the old Egyptian nurse-, or harvest-goddess.¹

The determinative of the noun rmn.t (= The nurse, human or divine) is the figure of a seated woman holding a young child in her out-stretched arms. When that word signifies a goddess, that goddess is probably Hermouthis. Josephus speaks of a certain Thermouthis as a ‘nurse,’ and daughter of Pharaoh Amenophis; he associates her with Moses (qua Moses educaverat).²

1. The name, phonetically rēm-nēt, or ermētē, may be transliterated as Renenet or Renenit, derived from the verb rm meaning bring up, nurse. The name belongs to the same word-class as many other Egyptian words: 1. rnt: wet-nurse; 2. rnt: riches, fortune; 3. rm: he who is brought up, a young man; 4. rnt: re; who is brought up, a young woman; 5. rnt: cow, young bull-calf.

The verb-stem rmn is written in the Greco-Roman period as rnt and rm(n)nt (the goddess Hermouthis) as rnt. It is interesting, in relation to Hymn 1, to note that a similar word rnt (as pig?) is determined with the sign of a star and associated with Fara (S3). ²

2. Herrmann, Das Kind und seine Hateria, pp. 172 and 176 note 5, discusses this Hellenistic story and mentions its repetition by Epiphanius some three centuries later. Herrmann associates Hermouthis closely with Heraus (and Isis) and speculates that ‘Leto’ is in reality the goddess Hermouthis-Reinanet (see E. M. 156, and Plut. de Is. e. 38). This indeed explains Artemis and Apollo as children of Isis = Hermouthis (Hist. cred.).
Thermuthis, Hermouthis, Emnunetet, etc. is the Egyptian cereal harvest
goddess frequently shown in snake form. She is a mother-goddess, mother
of Nepre or Nepy, and a fertility goddess. As here, she with her child is often
equated to Isis and the Horus Child. She is very prominent in the Amarna
texts. 3

Renenetet, nurse-goddess of the human infant and goddess of the cereal
harvest, is also the Egyptian goddess of human fate, and in this capacity
associated with Shay and Meschenet. Ancient Renenetet is shown in the relief
of the inner Xllth Dynasty temple at Medinet Madi where, with Sebek, she gives the
king life, happiness, eternity and health (or safety), which, presumably, is his fate.
She is frequently the recipient of a table of food offerings. At least in the late
period, she is assimilated with Isis as 'Isermuthis.'

It may be of importance for Isis' later significance to note also that Renenet
as nurse of the living had a counterpart in the goddess Mert Seger, nurse of the
dead. These names seem, moreover, to represent two aspects of the same goddess,
for Renenet and Mert Seger have the same epithets.

Hermouthis may have had Mysteries in Egypt into which worshipers were
initiated. The ninth month, Pachon, saw the celebration of the birthday of the
corn-god, Nepre, her son. The previous month, Pharmuthi, bears her name. There is
evidence that a Synod of Thermuthis took place on July 13, A.D. 24-25;
Aelian refers to her here as worshipped in the form of a snake and closely
associated with Isis. We know she had been worshiped in the Xllth Dynasty shrine
at Medinet Madi as a snake together with Sebek the crocodile god. See Plate XI.
Cf. XII a and b, XIII and XIV.

But Hermouthis' greatest significance by far seems to have been her
association with Shay as a symbol of man's life-span or human fate. Isis and her
family were said, like the other great gods in the late Egyptian period, to control
the two Powers. Shay may have some connection with Sebek, perhaps as the
Agathodaimon. See Sokonopis II 9. 4

3. Cf. e.g., N. de Garis Davies, "The King as
Priest of the Harvest," Bulletin of the Metropolitan
Museum of Art, The Egyptian Excavation 1920-29,
pp. 48-49, Tomb 48 and 57: "Within a shrine with
a Hat-Hor (literally, House of Horus, i.e. Mother
of Horus) column, are two snake-goddesses, one,
Emnunetet, Lady of the Granary, human-bodied
and nursing the young king on her lap; the other a
crowned snake on the cushion-sig and with in the
symbol of the upraised arms, with a figure of the
grown-up king standing under her chin, as if in her
care. Presumably this is only a second figure of the
same goddess, portrayed in a similar rôle to the
first. The picture of Emnunetet with the child in her
arms we know to represent the birth of Nepy, the
corn-god, which was celebrated on the first of the
ninth month; here the child bears the name of the
reigning king so that identification of the king with
the corn god is made extremely clear . . .

Although the goddess was the recipient of
gifts at the popular Thanksgiving, the occasion of
harvest touched the nation's welfare and royal
functions too closely for any but a cosmic-god to
suffice . . . The rite enacted by the king (in this
ceremony) seems quite simple as if we have to do
with a plain return of thanks to the Creator . . .

4. For Renenet's ancient name, see V.B., vol.
II, pp. 435-7, and in the Greek-Roman period,
Ibid., pp. 438-9. For Renenet in the Xllth Dy-
nasty, see A. Vagiano, S. R., pp. 22 ff. For
Hellenistic Renenet as Isermuthis, see SEG VIII
528 (Medinet Madi); Ibid., 635 (Antinoopolis). Cf.
ibid. 653. For the harvest festival in Pachon, see
Parker, The Calendar of Ancient Egypt, p. 38. For
Renenet-Hermouthis associated with Shay, see S.
Morenz and D. Muller, Schichakoi, pp. 20 ff.;
It is used of Isis also in Oxy. 15; 19; 121 and Anil. 9.

2. ἡ παρελθόντως: this epithet is a title of Isis in Oxy. 20. Cf. its use in H. Orph. X of Physis, and XXIX of Persephone. Suchos is παρελθόντως in IV 23, and Isis is παρελθόντως at Megapoli (IG V 2, 472). For Ἐἰς (Isis) as παρελθόντως see III 1 note.

3. ἡ τῆς ἐνανθή: cf. II 1, III 19. In Oxy. 51 Agathe Tyche is equated to Isis. A particularly early Hellenistic inscription from Miletus speaks of an Agathe Tyche that must in its association with Osiris be Isis. See Welles, RC 5, 22 = Pouilloux, Choix d’Incarn. Gr. 37. The inscription is dated 288/87 B.C. And the image of Isis-Tyche-Panthea appears on one side and the Mother of the gods on the obverse of a Roman coin of the first century B.C. (Alföldi, Isiskult.). τῆς ἐνανθή was inscribed on the Nilometer. See Danielle Bonneau, La Crie du Nil, Plate VI, p. 314.

3. With this line compare III 2, IV 4.

Δροί: Isis is identified with Demeter, Hdt. II 59, 156. Cf. D. S. I 134, 96, V 69 (cf. ibid. I 22-23); Porphyrius apud Eusebium, PE 3, ii, 50, Leon ibid., 10, 12, 23; Clem. Al. Strom. 1.21 (106) p. 139 Stühlin = FHG II, Frgt. 2; Aug. Civ. Dei VIII 29 = FHG Frgt. 4; Tertullian, Apol. 16. In the arateologies to Isis, she is equated specifically with Demeter: Chalkis 2: Καρποκράτης ἐμὴ ἡγω, Σαράπιδος καὶ Ἡρῶς ὁ Ἀριστωρος καὶ Κόρης καὶ Διοκλῆν καὶ ἴδα χέων κτλ.; App. Met. Xl 5: Eileusini vetustam deam Ceresem ... me ... appellant. (Cf. ibid., 2.) Like Demeter, Isis may be entitled simply: θεομοδόρος. See IV 4. Cf. Hdt. IV 4, VI 91, 134; D. S. I 14, 25, V 68-9, and M. 52: ἡ γυνὴ ἐμὴ ἡ θεομοδόρος καὶ ἡ Μοῖρα. The association with Demeter persisted. A coin of the reign of Hadrian shows Sarapis on a barge, centre, with Isis Pharia on his left and Demeter on his right (Poole, British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins of Alexandria, 88b). For further discussion of Isis = Demeter, see 8, καρπῶν and note.


5. Tyche is frequently associated with Isis in inscriptions. Cf. SIG 1133 = Delic Insgr. 2072, 1154 = B.C. = ἡ παρελθόντως καὶ ἡ ἠναπόλου καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ... η ισεῖς τέχνης πρωταγωνίας (Berg) SIE VII 657, A.D. 160: ἡ ἐνανθή παρελθόντως ισεῖς τέχνης (Rome) IG XIV 1006 = Dassau 3687 (twice) = CIL XIV 2867 = ἐνα

τῆς τέχνης.
ψωτη: cf. IV 4 where the epithet also qualifies Deo. This adjective may stand by itself as a title. See OGi 96-7; SIG 1181. δψωτος refers to Hebrew Jahweh in the Psalms: e.g., Lxx, ibid., 106 (107). See also Paus. 9.8.5.

ξωη: πατη: cf. II 3, 8, 20, III 5, IV 25. ξωη includes meanings ranging from human livelihood to human existence. Life, Happiness, Eternity, and Health (or Safety) are grouped in a constant Egyptian formula: they are the chief gifts of Egyptian gods to man. The formula also occurs at Medinet Madi. For the expression, see Frankfort, Kingship, p. 56, also Hymn I, Hermouthis, 1, above.

ειρέτισα: see also II 3, and 8, εἴρης. Cf. IV 6. The title ειρέτισα seems to qualify Δεμετ. This noun is not known before Isidorus' Hymns where he relates it specifically to ξωη and καρπων. Cf. an analogous expression: αρηθγον της ξωης, Acts Ap., III 15; cf. ibid., V 31, and Heb. II 10.

Isis herself appeared in a cult for Greeks early in the Hellenistic era, bearing the title ειρηγέτειν καρπων, ειρηγέτα (UPZ 81.9-10). The title portrays Isis in the role of Giver of Cereals, the staff of life, and therefore probably as Egyptian Isis-Hermouthis deliberately equated to Demeter. The equation Isis = Hermouthis must be understood, for Isis in more ancient times had not been a vegetation goddess; she had become such when she syncretized with the Egyptian cereal goddess. The equation Isis = Hermouthis lies behind Herodotus' Greco-Egyptian equation: Ισί = Δεμετρι, for Demeter is, like Hermouthis, preeminently the Greek goddess of cereal grain.

By the first century B.C. ειρηγέτα had been apparently replaced in Greek cult by πρωτη ειρηκαω and ειρέτισα. In I B.C., after Isidorus, Diodorus is first to use ειρετισα (1.13 ff.) when he ranks Isis and Osiris with Greek Discoverer-gods (ibid. 62.2 ff.). Harder's M. 3ε (which may in part be first century B.C.) also uses ειρηκαω and associates Hermes-Thoth with Isis: και γράμματα εύφωνε μετα 'Ερμου (see Plate XIV for the full text). M. 7 quotes Isia: ενω εμι η πρωτη καρπων αθηρων ειρηκαω. Hermes-Thoth is associated as a Discoverer with Isis and Horus in the Song of the Kor Kosmou (Nock, Fr. XXIII 66 ff.). Again Kyri uses ειρηκαω (of Isis): αποκα θαρ ευρον παντα και ειλομεν πονον; and H. Oxy. 81 and 185 calls her: ειρητισα (πιθηρω). It is interesting to find Apuleius translating ειρηκαω etc. by Latin 'repturus' and 'inventio' (Met. XI 2). Cf. Horace Sat. I, III 104.

For Isis in statuary as ειρέτισα καρπων, see Klaus Parlasca, Ein Isiskultreife in Rom, Taf. 56-57.

Both Zetesia and Heuresis are words of central importance in the Eleusinian Mysteries. They express one phase and perhaps the chief one of Demeter's saving power, her power to seek and find for mankind. In the Eleusinian legend, Demeter had searched for and found her daughter, and she discovered cereal grain. The doctrine of divine Discoverers seems well known by the first century B.C. when Diodorus gives what appears to be a canonical list: Prometheus, Demeter, Themis, Hestia, Isis and Osiris. His words, incidentally, are evidence that the two Egyptians have by now been accepted among Eleusinian Discoverers.
The doctrine of Discovery seems to be expounded first in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* where Prometheus discovers τέχνη for men. It is important to remember that Aeschylus was also a native of Eleusis. Aristophanes does not mention εὐρίσκω etc., but addresses the Eleusinian goddess as Saviour: (Ra. 382) νώτερα καρποφόρων βασιλεὺς ἄγνων ὑπέσεων. While Euripides uses εὐρίσκω to refer to the Eleusinian pair, Demeter and Dioneus, as Discoverers (Bà. 275-9). Plato ignores Eleusinian Demeter, recognizing only Greek Prometheus and Egyptian Hermes-Thoth as Discoverers (Protagoras 321 ff.; Phdr. 274 ff.). But the Marmor Parium officially proclaims Eleusinian Demeter's Discovery (for Athens).⁶

Greek εὑρίσκω, meaning be the first to discover, invent, devise, that is, create out of nothing, is essentially not a Greek concept. It may be the Greek translation of Egyptian Šḥ, which means begin, be the first (WB IV, pp. 406-7). Cf. D. Müller, *Isisrealtologien*, pp. 33 ff. This verb describes the activity of many Egyptian major gods, among them Thoth (see Edfu II, 80; Dendera II, 17e) and Isis (see Edfu I, 149, 151). Cf. *RARG*, pp. 699 ff. Plato's selection of Hermes-Thoth as a Discoverer-Creator may indicate specific knowledge of Egyptian cult language and perhaps of this verb. And Isidorus' and Diodorus' references to Isis as a Discoverer noticeably agree with, for instance, the Edfu inscription.

4. έργα: έργα is a characteristic term in Hellenistic hymns indicating works, deeds, miracles, the evidence of a god's δύναμις or, less frequently, his ἀρετή. ἀρεται (plural) is sometimes used as a synonym for έργα.

έρωτος: the verb is used of Persephone: ἀναδοθεὶς ζυγὸς τάλῳ (Pl. Fr. 133, 3). It is also used of Ge 'yielding' καρπῶν (Plu. Cam. 15). Cf. II 21 below: πλατύν... αὐξᾶσι. Quite possibly it is an Eleusinian terminology.


ένυμμαν: ενυμμα is one of the daughters of Themis in Hesiod's *Theogony* (902):... η τέκεν ὄρασ ενυμμαν τε δόρου τε και εἰρήνην. Cf. Pi. O. 13 61; h. Orph. XLIII 2, etc. In Orphic hymn XL 18-20 Eleusinian Demeter is asked for

⁶ Nor all poets refer to this aspect of Demeter; for instance, Callimachus and Theocritus know the Eleusinian goddess as goddess of cereal grain but they do not use εὑρίσκω (cf. Call. Cer. 2; Theocritus X 42). Nevertheless, the doctrine of Discovery-Creation (and the divine instructor) was well established, and Diodorus, as we have seen, defined it: πρῶτον... συγκωπών καὶ τῆς κατοργήσεως οὖσα καὶ φανερών ὠπωθεσι καὶ οπεῖρον κατακελάω (V 681. Cf. ibid., 134).
The goddess had put an end to immorality, that is, cannibalism, by providing men with cereal food. In D. S. I 14.1 this explanation is made: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ παύοι τῆς ἀλληλομαγίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων γεννότα ἐφρούσι τῶν ἱερών τοῦ τε πυρός καὶ τῆς κρύσης καρπῶν... ἤδη τοῖς μεταθετοῖς πανταῖς τῆς προφήτας διὰ τὴν ἠδονήν τῆς φωσώς τῶν εἰρήνηστων καὶ διὰ τὸ διαφηματίζον ἱπόχρεον ἀπέκτεινα τῆς κατ' ἀλλήλων ωμότητος. Cf. ibid., 2 ff. and V 68.3: θέναι δὲ φασὶ καὶ νόμους τὴν Ἵω. M. repeats the same theme (21; Isis speaks): ἐγὼ μετὰ τοῦ ἄδελφου Ὀμπιδός τὰς ἀνθρωποφαγίας ἐταυσάμενος, and (52): ἔτη δὲ εἰμὶ ἡ θεωροδότης καλουθημένη. Hermetic literature knows Isis and Osiris as the teachers of ἐπιτίμεια and δικαίωσις: οὕτω πρῶτοι δείκταις δικαιώματα ἐπιτίμειας τὰ συμπαθητὰ καὶ δικαίωσιν τριήμερον. Aelius Aristides assigns a very similar role to οὐδαμά in a hymn to Sarapis (45.15) where εὐρέω and ἐθέλω occur prominently. See on the above, Müller, Isisaretologien, p. 26, note 1.

6. θεωραῖς: cf. IV 4 where is is ‘theosophicus’. See Δημήτριος, 3 above. The title is often used referring to Eleusinian goddesses. See Jane Harrison, Prolegomena, pp. 136 ff.

In M. 54 and H. Oxy. 119-120, Isis bears the title which she probably took from Demeter (cf. Müller, Isisaretologien, p. 43, note 8). In H. Oxy. 83 Isis is ἥμης and in A. 20 she is ἕμης/θεωραῖς.

κατεδέικται: cf. ἐθέλεδεν II 14, below. The verb is used of Demeter in, for example, D. S. V. 68.1 (see 3, εὐρέω, above). Cf. the use of this verb to predicate a civilizing god in Ὁρ. LXXVIII 3 (Themis), and LXXVI (the Muse: ἀνεθέλεται).

ἐθέλεδεν: Isis is closely associated with δικαίωσις, δίκη, δίκαιος, etc. On Delos she is, for instance, ἱερὸς Δικαίωσις (Délōs V 2079 and note = Rousset, CE, p. 147; and Délos, op. cit., 2103 = Rousset, CE, p. 122 = Ditt., SIG 1131, 114/13 B.C.) and ἵστος Ἀριστοτέλης δικαία (Délos V, 2158 = Rousset, CE, p. 162, 92/91 (?). B.C.). Isis is also Δικαίωσις at Hermopolis (Plu. de Is. C. 3, 352b). Diodorus (I 14.3) associates Isis with nomoi and to dikaios: θέναι δὲ φασὶ καὶ νόμους τὴν Ἵω καθ’ αὐτός ἀλλήλους διδάσκαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τὸ δίκαιον καὶ θρίαμβες παναθεαί. Cf. also Chalkis 8 and Harder’s note (ibid., Karpokrates, p. 14). The concept of νόμος and δίκη as a god’s gifts to men is Greek. It is found first in Hesiod (Op., 276 ff.) where Zeus gives these gifts only to men. For the concept of law and order among the Egyptians as symbolized in Ma’at, see RARG, pp. 430 ff.: Egyptian Ma’at came into being fully perfected at the time of Creation. Cf. Müller, Isisaretologien, pp. 42 ff.


7. τέχνας: in K. K. 68 Isis and Osiris become τέχνοι... εἰσήρχηται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. Cf. ibid., 64. In the preceding passage on Creation and Civilization, i.e. Discovery (lines 3-7), it is to be noted that not only the creation of animals, fish, birds, etc., but also the creation of man is condensed in line 3. Cf. Hymn II 3. It would seem really to be a hymn about progressive development or civilization after the creation of mankind.
the word has the meaning of well to do, comfortable, in Acts Ap. XVII 12 and XIII 50.

8. (φυσικά) εισαχθέα: cf. II 19: εισαχθεὶ... καρπός. εισαχθής is a poetic adjective used with, for example, ἄγροι (Thgn. 1200). It occurs in the initial hymn (to Demeter) in Aristophanes’ Frogs (373): ές τοὺς εισαχθέεις κόλπους. It may be Eleusinian for it is closely associated with the cult of Demeter (Ge) and Persephone. Cf. Hes. Th. 878: κατὰ γαῖαν ἀπειρίστος ἀνθεμόσσον. The phraseology refers to the flowering nature of all vegetation; like Plato’s Demiourgos, the creator-discoverer goddess of Isis is the artificer of the whole physical universe.

εὐρέος: see εὐρετρία, 3 above and note.

καρπών: cf. 12, II 3, 19, III 14, 15. In h. Cer. 4 Demeter is ἀγαλκάρτος, and ibid., 471 it is said of Demeter: καρπῶν ἀνήκεν. The term καρπός is closely associated with the Eleusinian circle of gods: (Demeter) Hdt. 1 193; Ar. Ra. 384; Ar. Pl. 515; Ar. Ec. 14; Paus. 8.53.7; CIG 4082; IG 12.5.226; SIG 820.5; h. Orph. ad Museaum 6; ibid., XI 18; (Bacchus) ibid., L 10, LIII 8; and (Persephone) ibid., XXIX 10, 17.

Herodotus’ equation of Isis to Demeter indicates that by the sixth/fifth century B.C. at the latest, Isis must have usurped something of the character of Hermouthis, in her capacity as goddess of harvest (see 1 above). Cf. Müller, Isisaretalogien, p. 3, notes 9, 10, and p. 31, notes 3 ff. By early Hellenistic times Isis was officially presented to Greeks at the Memphis Serapeum as THE goddess of karpos (UPZ 81). Isisouris is apparently following Memphite doctrine, fully equating her to Demeter, discoverer of cereals. He also adds Hermouthis and Tyche Agathē to the equation. For Isis as (Ceres) abna frugum parens originalis, see App. Met. XI 2.

9-13. Summary. Isis is the creator of the physical universe, and therefore giver of the Nile flood. The Nile flood (= the Egyptian New Year) and the birthday of the world are dated Thoth 1.

9. συνέστησις: the verb in the Timaeus predicates the Demiourgos (Pl., Ti. 32b): συνέστησαντο ἐνδώταν. σύστασιν can be used of the ‘settling’ of an inert mass or mixture, as in K. K. 30, 50, 52. Cf. Ovid, Meta. I 54: consistere ‘take (their) place in creation.’ Isis here is the creator of the world (like Sokonopis, Hymn II 11). Cf. M. 12 ff., App. Met. XI 5, IV 30 (Venus-Isis), and Plu., de Is. 77. Both Isis and Osiris are said to be creators of the physical cosmos in PGM V.98-101, 460 (τῶν κτισμάτων). In the Oath of the Mystae of Isis (lines 10-12), PSI 1290, the following oath was sworn by the creator, ἵψις κατά τῶν διάσωστός καὶ κρίς | [σε]ντος τιν ἁγι ἀπ’ ἐμμαν τοῖς ἑκατότοι | [ἀπό] φωτός καὶ ἡμέραν ἐν νυκτίς] et al. Cf. PSI 1162.1-3.

6 πόλος: the polos is the dome over the atmosphere (ἀθίρ and ἐφίρ). Cf. Stob. 1.41.45.

10. πιστικὸν ἀνέμων: cf. IV 13, III 22: Εὔμοι πνεύματι. Isis is often said to be goddess of the winds, rivers, and sea. Cf. M. 39: ἐγὼ πνεύματι καὶ ἀνέμων καὶ
θαλάσσης εἰμὶ κυρία, H. Oxy. 237; σοὶ ἀνέμων ... τὸ κράτος ἔχεις. Luc. D. deor. 3: (Iisis-lo) τοὺς ἄνεμους ἐπανειλήφθη, App. Met. XI 25.4: Tu nutu spirant flame; and PGM V.137 (Osiris): οὖ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστω ὧν οἱ ἄνεμοι φοβοῦνται. Compare with the above Lxx Ps. 103.3-4.


Isis herself is the goddess of the sun and light in H. Oxy. 246-9: σοὶ καὶ τοῖς φωτός καὶ τοῖς φανεραῖς κυρία: ibid., 295: σοὶ καὶ τοῖς φωτείας, the Song of Mesomedes 14 (= Powell, Collectanea Alexandrini 197 = Peck, Andros, 145): πάντως, τέλεος ἄρρηταν et ibid., 9) πάντως Ἀδών. In the last, as in Apuleius, Isis is in the underworld.

11. δυνάμεως: cf. 25 (below). Hymn II 17, and IV 9, 40. The word is used specifically for the miraculous power of a god. See C. B. Welles, RC, note 38. Divine power, δυνάμεως, is equivalent to ἀπεργία, as in Plu. de Is. II 360c. Cf. Lxx Ps. 20.2a; Ev. Matt. XI 21; Ev. Marc. V 30; Ev. Lu. VIII 46, VI 19.

 νεῖνον ποταμοί πληροῦνται ἀπασάς: cf. 117-20. From the time of the Pyramid Texts, Isis had been associated with Sothis, who was Greek Sirius or the Dog Star. Sothis’ heliacal rising ὑπάγεται, 11 coincided approximately with the rise of the Nile flood. See R. Merkelbach, Isisfeste, p. 28. Numerous passages from Egyptian texts testify to Isis’ close astrological association with the rise of the Nile. Plutarch (de Is. 21) explains the star Sothis as the ἑξική of Isis and says the Egyptians think Sothis is her star precisely because it ‘causes’ the Nile flood (ibid., 38).

The arcotoglogies speak in the same way. Cf. M. 9: ἔνα μέρος τοῦ κυρίου ἀστρον ἐπετελεσθαι, D. S. I 27.4: ἐν τῷ ἀστρῳ τῷ κυρίῳ, and H. Oxy. 140: ἵππον. See also PGM II 23, RARG, p. 329, illustration 84, and Müller, Isisaretaglogien, p. 33, note 10. The ποταμοί of the line may be the Nile’s numerous canals, or the plural may occur metri gratia. In H. Oxy. Isis controls the Nile, the Eleutheros, and the Ganges. See also M. 39, and Luc., D. deor. 3, where, as in 10 above, she is goddess of rivers generally.

12. ἐνῷκων: ἐνώκων is that part of the Greek year which occurs between the risings of Sirius and Arcturus, that is, the last days of July, all of August, and part of September. In Greece, as in the temperate zone generally, it is the ripening and harvest season, and from early times the Greeks associated it with Demeter and the constellation of Orion. See Hesp., Op. 597-9; A. Fr. 304.7. Greek Sirius is the star of ἐνώκων (II. XXII 27 ff.). Furthermore, the Nile flood in July is also
associated with Sirius (and Orion). Isidorus is obviously misusing the Greek ὄσωρα, for in Egypt, July to September was not the period of the harvest season, but rather the time of the Nile flood and subsequent planting. Isidorus is using a Greek epic formula which refers to a period of the year in Greece which is quite a different part of the agricultural year in Egypt. Cf. II. XVI 385 (of Zeus): ἡματία ὄσωρῳ άπελεβάθην ξέει ἱδώρ. This line refers, of course, to the destruction of the harvest. Cf. too Hes., Op. 676-7: ὅ τε άγριες θάλασσαι θαρτήριας Δώκι οὔμπερ πολύς ὀνηρίως.

The Greek harvest season ὄσωρα is also associated with Persephone’s marriage, and its symbolic equation to ζωή καὶ θανάτος . . . θητείας. Cf. H. Orph. XXIX 14: λέεις μετοικουσα λαμπραισισά. Isidorus may really have this in mind for the Egyptian new year, which began theoretically with the coming of the Nile flood, was also celebrated as the marriage of Isis. His apparent confusion may be merely a conflation of the two marriage festivals at ὄσωρῃ.

Isidorus’ epic localization of ὄσωρη is to be noted.

13. ἀνέγερσον: an hapax legomenon, meaning continuing without end, unfailing, that is, annual. The metre of the line is faulty; the last syllable by position is long, but must be scanned as short.

14-24. Summary. The names given Isis Polynomys by the different races of men are: Astarte, Artemis, Nanaia, Leto, Mother of the gods. Hera, Aphrodite, Hesta, Rhea, Demeter. Only the Egyptians know her true name which is simply Thoitis, meaning The One.

With Isis Polynomys (18-22) should be compared Zeus Polynomys of h. Ceres 18. Lists of different names for deities are not unparalleled in Greek hymns.7 Isidorus says the same goddess’ true name, known only to the Egyptians, is not Isis’ but The One.


The Thracian element, after the Macedonian, was the largest national group in Ptolemaic armies, a fact shown by Alexandrian epitaphs. (Cf. Archiv 6, p. 385; Otto-Bengston, Geschicthe, p. 83, note 1; Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, Vol. 1, p. 146; and Bevan, Ptolemaic Egypt, p. 107, note 1). Under the third and fourth Ptolemies Thrace had been part of the Egyptian empire.


Danam, Sicili cringues Stygiam Proserpinam, Ecelvisl velutam dean Cererem, Iononem ali, Belonam ali, Hecatam isti, Rhanniasan iili, et qui nascentis dei solis inchoantibus illustratur radis Anthiopes utriusque priscasque doctrinae pollentes Anagypis castrimontis me propriis perpetuas, appellant vero nomine regnum Isidem.”

16. οινομα ον το καλον: cf. H. Oxy. 126-7: το καλον ζωαν. The true name of Isis has immense magic virtue. See Θεοποι, 23.

πολυτύμπνον: the adjective refers to Demeter and Persephone (Hes. Th. 594), Rhea (h. Orph. XIV 5) and Persephone (ibid., XXIX 3).


In M. 31 Isis claims to have caused the differences in languages. See 15 above and note.

18. Αστάρτην: Isis was assimilated to Astarte = Aphrodite/Atargatis on Delos (before 167 B.C., by a Delian citizen): Παύξις Θεωτείας Αστάρτης Αφροδίτης (Dittenberger, SIG III 1132 = Roussel, CE 194 = Délos V 2132) and to the mother of the gods/Astarte by a Sidonian (ca. 130/129): Παύξις Μηρίδι θεών Αστάρτης. See CE 82 = Délos V 2101. Long before, there had been an Astarte cult at the Great Serapeum at Memphis (Hdt. II 112, Strabo XXVII 907c, RARG, pp. 55 ff.); and in the second century B.C. there was a shrine at Memphis to Astarte (UPZ 119.21; 120.6. By the time of the Oxyrhynchus hymn (H. Oxy. 116) Isis is η Μεθόδη Αστάρτην. Cf. H. Oxy. 95-6. An inscription found in Rome repeats Isis' equation to the mother of the gods and Astarte (Vermaseren, Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae, vol. I, p. 634, and pp. 635-9). In it Mithras has joined the cult.

Αρτέμις: Artemis and Apollo are called children of Demeter and Dionysus by Herodotus (II 156). He must be equating Leto with Demeter (cf. line 1, Hermouthis, pages 19-20). Within Egypt Herodotus also equates Artemis to Egyptian Boubastos and says the latter’s festival at Boubastis is the largest festival of a goddess in Egypt (II 59). But in the Greek world generally Artemis is often equated to Hecate who, in turn, as Hecate-Isis is paired with Sarapis (IG XII 1, 742): Εκάτας Σαραπίδι χαριτήριων σωπείας. Cf. H. Oxy. 83-4: Αρτέμις | ἐν ταύς κυκλάμα τήν θέρμου άρτέμιν. The same pair Isis-Sarapis appear in CIL iii 7771: Serapidi lovi Soli Isidi Lunae Dianae diis deabusque conservatoribus; Artemis here is the moon = Isis. Statues of both Isis-Tyche and Hecate (Artemis?) were found in a Mithraeum on the Esquiline (Vermaseren, op. cit., p. 356).

The metre is faulty. The initial syllable of Artemis, although long, is scanned short.

Nana (ia) is a very ancient goddess of the Near East, who incidentally is often equated to Artemis (cf. above). Nana is known at Alexandria (Wilcken, *Grande-Rose*, pp. 129 f. Cf. M. Vandoni, *Il Tempio di Madinet Madi e gli inni di Isidoro*, 1953, p. 122, note 12). ‘Anat’ seems to have been another, possibly more ancient, form of Nana (ia). *RARG*, pp. 37-8.

19. Αγρούς: the goddess Leto to whom Isidorus here refers is, as he says, the great Lydian (and Carian) goddess. Cf. Nilsson, *GGf* 2 (1), pp. 500, 562. The same goddess, in *H. Orph. XXV*, seems to be called *Λυκία Αρηόποινα*. Isidorus makes no mention of Leto of Buto.8

In the great Oxyrhynchus Hymn (*H. Oxy.* 7) Isis is identified with two Letoes, i.e. Leto of Buto (*H. Oxy.* 27 in van Groningen’s restoration) and Leto of Lycia (*H. Oxy.* 78).

20. *μητρά... θεοί... θείας*: a Delian inscription (SIG III 1138, before 166 B.C.) states: *καύτα προστατήμα του τεμελίου καὶ μεγάλη τοῦ συμμορίου, Λεβαντία καὶ Καλλίπολες*. The Magna Mater here is probably equated to Isis; Dis is probably Sarapis/Osiris. In *IG XII 4*, 1233, the same dedication presents a gift to Isis and Osiris. Cf. Roussel, *Mélanges Holleaux*, p. 237. Otto-Bengtson speculate that ca. the mid-third century B.C. Isis had been completely assimilated in Thrace to the *μητρά... θεοί...* and thence as ‘*Ἰσία Μήτηρ θεῶν*’ she had been brought to Delos. From there she eventually returned to Egypt as Meter Theon. Isis Meter Theon was, Otto-Bengtson think, the same syncretistic goddess whose title Berenike II bore: ‘*Ἰσία Μήτηρ θεῶν*’. Cf. *OGIS* 739.8: *Ἱεροῦ πολιτου Ἰαλδοῦ* [θέα] *μεγάλης μητρὸς θεῶν*. See also Nilsson, *GGf* 2 (2), pp. 164 ff. There is evidence for the assimilation of Isis to the Meter Theon on Delos, 130/129 B.C. See note on Astarte, 18, above. For the Thracians, cf. 15 above. The similarity of Isis-worship in Thrace and Delos seems implied in *H. Oxy.* 101-2: *ἐν Ιορδάνῃ κρύς* Δήλος πολυκύκλον. Finally in Rome, Isis-Panthea is equated to Cybele, Mater

8. And yet he must have known of Leto of Buto and her close association with Isis. Leto of Buto is Egyptian *W djit*: that is ‘Wadjet,’ the cobra-goddess. She may have been equated also to the goddess Renenet-Hermouthis. Herodotus equates her to Uto-Buto (‘of Buto’), II 37, 156, and to Demeter. This Leto had a temple and oracle at Buto near Hemma, a floating island which itself is associated with the birth of Isis’ child (Hdt. II 155, and 83, 111, 133, 153). For Leto’s temple and oracle (at Buto), see also Hecataeus Milinkas *Περίδοκος γῆς*, Frg. apud Stephan. Byzant. = *Herodian I. I. IV*, pag. 86, 26 = *PGLG*, Frg. 284 = Hephaist, *Fontes S. Thumor*, πόλεως Μυσίων... ἐστι καὶ Χάδης μῆνες δεί τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν διεσκειν, εἰς τῶν Ἀπόλλωνων* ἐστι ἡ ἵππος μεταφέρει καὶ περιλέει καὶ παραστάτα ἐκ τοῦ βετοῦ. Cf. Hdt. II 156. See too Strabo, *Geog.* XVII (802) = Hesych., *Fontes S. Thumor*, 156. For a recent article on Pe and Dep = classical Buto(s), see *AJA* 19, 1966, pp. 208-13. Plutarch also refers to Greek Leto as Uto the nurse of Horus (de Is. 38): ‘*Ἠσυράκ* ἐν τοῖς Άγιοι πεσέντων Ἰσία Λυκία παραστήθη. Obviously the Greeks believed Greek Leto had her origin in Egypt.

The hieroglyphic inscriptions and reliefs from the most ancient temple at Medinet Madi portray ‘Uto’ as goddess of ‘Buto and Dep’ (*Megalio* 5: B.S.). Here she is not Renenet but together with her Uto symbolizes the whole of Egypt. These two protect the king exactly as Uto in serpens form is said by Plutarch to protect the infant Horus (and Isis). It is easy to see how she (Buto-Uto) and Renenet became confused.
Deorum, about 55 B.C.  

21. Ἡρα: for Isis as Hera, see A. 7: χρυσάθροσας Ἡαι. Cf. II. 1 611: χρυσάθροσας Ἡρα. Isis is equated to Hera in H. Oxy. 26: Ἡρα, 32 ἕν Σαῦρος Ἡραν ἀνασαλαγέει, 34 ἐν τῇ Σεβασίνῃ Ἡραν ἦμαν, 59-60 ἐν Τάνι Ἡράδρα, 68 ἐν Ταρσοῖς. Ἡράδρα, 110 ἐν Σάμῳ Ἡρα. Perhaps significantly, in H. Oxy. 22-27, Isis-Hera is grouped with almost the same goddesses as those to whom she is equated here, Leto (of Buto), Aphrodite and Hestia. In h. Orph. XVI, Hera is like Isidorus’ universal Isis: (Ἡρα) παραβάλεια Διὸς σύλλεκτρα μακάρια (lines 4-10). Throughout this Orphic hymn, Hera is remarkably consistent with the characterization of Isis-Hermouthis in Isidorus’ Hymns (see Δωματία, 11 above, and note). With Ἰωνῆς φόδος, h. Orph. XVI 5, compare especially 1 8. Syncretism involving Isis-Hera, a royal throne, and nature, underlies all the above references. This is Greco-Egyptian and not Eleusinian. 

In App. Met. XI 5, Isis equates herself to Latin Juno: Junonem aliī (me appellant).

μεγαλάθροον: a hapax legomenon. Cf. Ἡρα above and note. Forms of μεγαλή are commonly used of the goddess; at the Medinet Madi temple she is simply θεᾶ μεγαλῆ or θεᾶ μεγαλην. 

As το θρόνος, Isis always had a literal and close association with the King’s throne in Egypt. Originally she may have been a personification of either the throne or its cushion. The throne itself, appearing as a high-seated chair, is the hieroglyphic determinative for her name. See RARG, Isis, p. 326, fig. 83; and H. Kees, Gottenglaube, pp. 98, 101 and note 5. She is always the mother of Horus who is equated with the King. See H. Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 32, 41 ff. Isidorus must at least have known the determinative, a throne, for the name of Isis, and he would have been steeped in temple lore. The term ‘throne,’ moreover, appears in other Egyptian religious expressions; compare the Great Throne as meaning ‘Memphis’ (in Memphite theology), and ‘Pe’ = (Greek) Buto. See Frankfort, Kingship, p. 43.

Ἀσροδέτης: cf. 11 15-16, 30. See also Ἀσροδέτῃς, 18 above and note. It is known from epigraphical evidence that Aphrodite was worshiped at Naucratis before the Ptolemaic era (SB 187-194; 353; 1696-7). She appears on coins from Naucratis dating from the era of the tyrant Cleomenes. (Poole, Coins of Alexandria in Brit. Mus. 38, p. 349). Like Aphrodite, Isis is a goddess of love. Cf. M. 6, 10, 17, 20, 27, 30; A. 36; G. 12. She is equated to Aphrodite in H. Oxy. 9, 35, 45, 67, and App. Met. XI 2 (Venus Caelestis) and 5 (Venus of Paphos).

22. Ἐστία: cf. H. Oxy. 23 (Pephremis) Ἐστίαν ἄνασαν Ἐστίαν [[ἀνασώκαν]] ἐν τῇ ἔρειν πάσης χώρας, and 73 (Plinthe) Ἐστίαν; IG XIV 433 (in a temple of
Sarapis at Taormina) Ἐστίαν ἄγων βωμών. For the temple of Sarapis and Isis at Taormina see CIL X 6989: Ἐστιαί ἄγων βωμών Ἐστία κουρστριὰς. Diodorus knows Hestia to be a Greek Heuretria and groups her with Themis and Demeter (and Isis and Osiris), τουτών δὲ λέγεται τήν μὲν Ἐστιαύ τήν τῶν οἰκίων κατασκευήν εὗρεν κτιλ, in 67.4-5 (Themis) and 68.1-3 (Demeter). Hestia, does not occur in App. Met. XI 5.

With 21-22 compare Hes. Th. 453-4: Ρέιθε δὲ δημητριάν Κρόνων τέκε φαίδωμα τέκνα Ἐστίαις Δημητρίας καὶ Ἡρας χορεύουσεῖν.

Ῥέιθε: see the reference to Hes. Th. 453-4 above. (Ἐστιά). In the Hymn of Mesomedes (Peck, Andros, 145, lines 15 ff.) Rheas' Kourêtes dance for Isis: οἱ Ρέιθε κουρήτες... ταῦτα δὲ αὐτάκτωρον Ιουδα χορεύειται.

Δημητρίας: see Ἄρω, 3 above and note. Cf. III 2, IV 4.

23. Ὀθόνω: the name Ὀθόνω = Coptic ΤΗ-ΟΥ = Egyptian ΤΗ-Ω. This is Latin 'unica' and English 'the one.' Cf. SEG VIII 514, p. 98 (Hondius); CIL X 3800 = Dessau 4362: Τε γαίς ἡν τοι αἰεν οὐδενὶ dea Isis. See Vogliano, P. R. pp. 42-43 (Kuentz). H. Oxy. 6 also names Isis τήν μιαν, App. Met. XI 4 refers to her Nomen unicum, and the Cyrenaean aratelog (Peck, Andros 129.5) calls her Εἰδώς... μοῦν. According to Apuleius it is, as here, the Egyptians alone who know the truth about her verum nomen. See App. Met. XI 5 (quoted above at line 15). As the verum nomen had immense magic virtue, the Egyptians had an ineffable advantage over others, for Isis was the great goddess of magic. The mere mention of her name could cast a spell.10

24. ὑπομαζόμεναι: cf. App. Met. XI 2: quoque nomine, quoque ritu. quaqua facie tuus est invocare; ibid., 4: nomine multiuigos tuctur aboris; also ibid., 'appellant.' All three verbs are ὑπομαζόμεναι.

25-28. Summary. Isis is saviour of 'devout' (= loyal) people in time of war. Even against great odds she can and will aid the divine king (= the King of Egypt) and through him bring peace and plenty (III 12-15, 16-18).


λήξιο: cf. II. IX 191: ὕποτε λήξιον ἀείων; Od. VIII 87: λήξει... ἀείων. This is another epic formula. Cf. h. Hymn III 177-8 (to Apollo): εἰς λήξιον ἐκθύβολον Ἀπόλλωνα ἱερῶν.

26. σῶλεω: σώλεω is a frequent Greek epithet for any goddess who is...
protectress of men, e.g., Hdt. II 156: Λήστειας; Pi., O. 12.2: Τύχα; Pi. O. 8.21: Θέμας; Pi. O. 9.16: Ευθυμία; E. Med. 628: Κύριος; Ar. Ru. 379: Δεμπήσα; IG II 1343.24.40: h. Orph. XXXVI 13: ΄Αρτεμίσις; SIG 3827: ΄Εκατόμη; SIG 4695 (Egypt) and h. Orph. XIV 8: ΂έλες; SIG 1158.5: Κορίς; h. Orph. II 3, 14: Πρωθύπωλη; ibid., XXVII 12: θεόν Μήτηρ. Most of the above goddesses designated Ένικεια are found equated to Isis in Isidorus’ first Hymn. Frequently Ένικεια occurs of Isis herself in inscriptions of the second century B.C.¹¹

Both Αρτέμις and Ένικεια appear to have many synonyms. Cf. ἡ σελήνη (of Isis and Osiris, Stob. 1.41.44; 978). Cleopatra II assumed the title (Ἰος) θεᾶ φοινικῆς Ένικεια; while her rival, Cleopatra III, was entitled: Τόις μεγάλην μήτηρ θεῶν. For a discussion of Αρτέμις and Ένικεια as titles, see A. D. Nock, “Soter and Euergetes,” Studies in Honour of F. J. Grant, pp. 127-148. Ένικεια seems not generally to be used as a title before the second century B.C.

πολυάνωμος: see θυσιασμός, 16 above and note. Also θυσία...μούσα, 23 above and note. πολυάνωμος occurs frequently of Isis: H. Oxy. 97 (Sinope), 101-2 (Thrace and Delos); Pap. Lond. 1.121.503: Ισιδορίδας Νέμωνις Πολυάνωμε πολύπερφορε and App. Met. XI 4: Sunt contra multae eiusdem imaginibus quis varia specie et mutato nomine aliis loco vereruntur. Numerous magic papyri, moreover, testify to the power inherent in a god’s verum novem. A synonym, μηθρώμοι, also often occurs of Isis: see Plu. 2.3724, OGIS 695 (Philae), SEG VIII 657 (Thebaid, A.D. 160).


CIL IX 3144; 5179; and (Isis) Saviour in war with Sarapis, UPZ 20: τὸ μεγάστερον ἑωρ Σαράπεως... δὴ διδότω σοι μετὰ τῆς Τοιω νικήρ κράτος τῆς ὑσυμμέτρης ἀπόστασις; see also M. 21: ἐγὼ εἰμί πολέμου κυρία; Archiv IV 182 (Rome): Isid. Victctri, Isis invicta; and H. Oxy. 83: ἐν Παρμῆς στρατιῶν; 102-3: Αμάθως στρατιῶν; 30: ἐν τῷ Σαμήν ἡμέραν Ἀθηνῆν; 239: Σιο στρατιῶν καὶ ἱγκρονιῶν κυρία; 48: ἐν Χοετείῳ μεγάληρων; 71: ἐν Μεροέφω στρατιῶν; 69: ἐν τῷ Νήσῳ ταχύτητάς; 78: ἐν τῷ Νησιωτικοῦ ἱερωμοσεροφαίου.

Isis is a goddess of victory in Egyptian texts. Cf. Philae, 470, Photo 54 (re Cleopatra and Ptolemy IX Soter II): Fill your heart with Isis for she is as useful as a vast number of soldiers. Cf. Müller, Isisarealogen, p. 72, note 4. The ancient war between the Isis-family and Seth is well known; Isis and Horus are the traditional victors in that ancient struggle (a struggle which could, moreover, be repeated whenever the King of Egypt fought a battle).

29-34. Summary. Isis can be a Saviour in other human calamities if men but call on her, in imprisonment, illness, a journey or exile, and seafaring. These saving acts are her aretae, or erga, that is, her miracles which, generally, are the theme of her aretaologies.


Moirá here means death, the end of ζωή/βίως, that is, the termination of man's decreed life-span or lot. Isis as Tyche Agathe wards off, or saves, from an untimely termination of ζωή, for she can prolong life. Cf. II 8. In App. Met. 6, she says: Sei παλαιότατα τουσ τοὺς τιμητὰς, quodque tibi prórogare mihi tantum licere. That is, conversely, exactly as here, she can save a suppliant from death (μοίρα or μοίρα θανάτων).

ἐν εἰρήκησι: for Isis as Saviour of prisoners, see M. 48: ἐγὼ τούς ἐν δεσμῶν λύω. The thought occurs often in the magic papyri. It is not the cliché 'bonds of death.'

30. See II 7-8, A. 24, and K. 10, for Isis' power to heal. Sarapis and Isis were both healing gods. Sarapis is thought to have acquired his power from her. See D. S. I 25.2 and (of Horus) ibid., 7; H. Oxy. 177, and C. 11. Cf. RE Isis IX, p. 2119 (Roeder); Harder, Karpokrates, p. 16; Brady, Reception, p. 12, note 7; BCH 6, 1882, 339, 423: Ισίδης Τυγιά.

32. πελαγικός μέγας: for Isis πελαγία, an epithet Isis shared with Aphrodite, see Paus. II 4.7. Isis 'Pelagia' is contrasted with 'Egyptian' Isis (at Corinth): ἐν τῷ μὲν Πελαγίαν τῷ δὲ Λευττόπιος εὐπρομάξιαον. For the similar title, (Isis) Εὔπλοια, see Roussel, CE, p. 147, 107/6 B.C. This, incidentally, is the first evidence for Εὔπλοια as a title of Isis. But compare M. 15: ἐγὼ βαλάσσω τῆν ἐφάνη ἐφόν; 39: ἐγὼ στημάζω καὶ ἀνέμων καὶ βαλάσσωσ καί κυρία; 43: ἐγὼ πραξόω
καὶ κυμαῖς βάλλοντα; 49: ἐγὼ καυθιλίας ἐμι κυρία; 50: ἐγὼ τὰ πλοῦτα ἀπλώτα ποιῶ δὴ τών ἐμοὶ δόξῃ; Λ. 34-5: ἀοὶ βαλλόσας πράττον ἐν ὑποτεύχουει περάτομον ἥραλα μοῦδον; καὶ Λ. 145-157; Ἡ. Οὐχ. 61: πελάγος κυρίαν; 99: εὐπλέαρ; 121-3: εὐ̣προσπον καὶ ἕβροιν βαλλοῖκως καὶ πογμαίνους στομάτων κυρία; Ἀνθ. 9: πάντων διὰν ἄνασσαν πεντεδεσκῆ. Perhaps Λευ, goddess of the sea, is entirely Alexandrian.

33. This line is almost identical with Ὁδ. X 123: ἄνωθεν τ’ ὀλλυμάτων νυκῶν θ’ ἁμα ἄρπημεντος. Cf. II. XVI 769. Isidorus omits the epic τε and substitutes κατὰ (= θ’ ἁμα). His κατὰ is best understood as an attempt at epic tmesis.

34. οὐκ εἰσοδοθ’; cf. σαστερά 26 above and note. cf. Ἡ. Οὐχ. 76: Τοιοῦ σαστεράν.

ἐπευκόμοι: cf. II. 8, 16, III 34, ἐπευκόμοι occurs in h. Hom. III (to Apollo) 370: ὃς ἄλλ’ ἐπεύκομοικ εἰς καὶ τὸν ἕραλα τὸν θεῖον. It is an epic-poetic formula for prayer.


Although lines 27-33 are syntactically not one sentence, together they portray five successive typical calamities from which Λευ can save: war, 27-28; prison, 29; illness, 30; exile, 31; the stormy sea and shipwreck, 32-33. Miracles were wrought by Λευ and Σαράπις for suppliants who prayed to them. The quality of εὐάλεια (= loyalty) is stressed as a requisite in II 6, III 4, 27, but not in I. The saving acts of the goddess are ἄμετον: for a somewhat similar grouping of human disasters see Hes. Op. 240-47; and a close parallel, Lxx Ps. CVI 4-7, 10-14, 18 ff., and 23 ff. For pertinent commentary on this Psalm see Kraus, Psalmen, pp. 738-41. Cf. also Lxx Ps. CXLV 7-9; CXLIV 14, LXXVII 6a. It would seem these are the ‘topoi’ of a common Near Eastern literature.

35-36. Concluding prayer: be merciful; bring me happiness.

35. μεγαλοποιεῖν οἴνομα: see οἴνομα 16 above and note. The adjective is used of Horus, K. Κ. 64. Cf. πολυκόλπε, 26.


**Hymn II (Plate VII)**

χεῖρε, Τιθή Άγαθή, μεγαλώνησε Ἰσι μεγίστη,
Ἐρροῦθε: ἐκ’ σοι πάνα γέγονε μέλις,
ζωής καὶ καρπῶν εὐρήγων, οἵ τις τὸν πάντως
τερπνοῖ τι βροτοὶ σον χαρίσαν ἑνέκα.

5 δοσιν σοι εἴχωντο σε ἐμπορήν τε παρεῖνα,
Hail, Agathcythe, greatly renowned Isis, mightiest Hermouthis, in you every city rejoices;
O Discoverer of Life and Cereal food wherein all mortals delight because of your blessing(s).

All who pray to you to assist their commerce,
prosper in their piety forever;
all who are bound in mortal illnesses in the grip of death,
if they (but) pray to you, quickly attain your (renewal of) Life.

How truly the Agathodaimon, mighty Sokonopis,
dwells as your temple-mate, that goodly Bestower of wealth,
Creator of both earth and the starry heaven,
and of all rivers, and very swift streams;
and Anchoes your Son, who inhabits the height of heaven,
is the rising Sun who shows forth the light.

All indeed who wish to beget offspring,
if they (but) pray to you, attain fruitfulness.
Persuading the gold-flowing Nile, you lead it in season
over the land of Egypt as a blessing for men.

Then all vegetation flourishes and you apportion to all
whom you favour, a life of unspeakable blessing(s).
Remembering your gifts, men to whom you have granted wealth
and great blessings (which you give them to possess all their lives),
all duly set aside for you one tenth of these blessings
rejoicing each year at the time of your Panegyrie.

Thereafter you allow them, as the year rolls round (again),
everyone to rejoice in the month of Pachon.
Joyful after your festival, they return home
reverently (and are) filled with the sense of blessedness that comes
only from you.

Grant a share of your gifts also to me, Lady Hermouthis,
Your supplicant, happiness and especially the blessing of children.

Isidorus
wrote (it).

Hearing my prayers and hymns, the gods
have rewarded me with the blessing of great happiness.

1-2. Summary. Invocation to Isis as Greek Tyche Agathe and Egyptian Hermouthis.

2-8. 15-16. Summary. All should worship Isis, the creator of life and cereal food. She can enrich merchants engaged in commerce; she can heal the sick though they seem about to die, and with her synnaoi gods, Sokonopis her partner, and her son, Anchoes, she can grant a child to those who pray to her for offspring.

2. Ἑρμοῦσσεν: cf. 1.1 and notes above.

πάσα πάλιν: cf. D. S. I 27.4: ἔγώ Ἰσίω καὶ ἡ βασιλεία πάσης χώρας; M.
3a: Εἴοικεν ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ παρανά πάσης χώρας; Chalkis (to Karpokrates): πάσαν ἐκαθορά γῆν; H. Oxy. 219: πάσαν χώραν; 244: πάση χώρα; 125-6: ἐπὶ πάσαν χώραν and App. Mez. XI.5: Toton . . . orbis. Isis is a universal god.

γένητε: for joy in the Isis hymns see also ἔθοργον 28. Cf. H. Oxy. 31-2: ἐν
καὶ ἐν φροσοἴνων. For joy associated with the Isis-circle of the gods, see D. S. 1 18.4. ὁ τιμὼ φλυγγέλωσεν. Cf. too the epithet of Ῥως: ‘Joy of the heart’ (Vogliano, S. R. p. 23). For gaiety at the Egyptian Panegyris of Isis-Demeter, see Hdt. II 58.

3.4. With these two lines cf. I 3 above and notes.
ἐφέτιτα: see εφέτιτα ἡμῶν 1 3 above and note. In this Hymn it may well be closely associated with 15-16, and 32-33. See notes below.
ἐνεκα: an Attic and Koine word.
παρευπά: see also I 34. Cf. III 28. The verb means be present, come (to help), appear.
6. πλοῦτος: merchants going into foreign lands to trade may pray to Isis for wealth. If they are pious, that is, loyal to Isis the royal goddess and the King, (= ἐναίθες), she will reward them with riches. There are affinities here with the third Hymn, where by miracles she rewards her devout and loyal followers (see III 26 κατατείχεσσα and note). ‘Ploutos’ was an Eleusinian god and in Hellenistic Egypt he was equated with Sarapis, Isis’ husband (cf. 10). See also Ps. Kallisthenes I 33; H. Oxy. 209; Athenagoras 22.6; and PGM 13.71; 4.1170 equate Sarapis to Aion Ploutonius. Hermotrichis-Remenec’s own name in Egyptian means ‘riches’ and ‘good luck’. Ermán-Grapow, WBB II, p. 436, 17 ff.
ἐναίθες: the adjective means godly, pious, devout, blessed by the gods, and (in Egypt) loyal. See note above. The Egyptian gods expected such all-encompassing ‘piety’ of men. See D. S. 1 49.3. A state of material blessedness followed men’s devotion to King, god, and country (and the deity’s consequent benevolence). Isidorus implies that a man’s response to his Creator (and her mediator, the King) should be emotional and whole-hearted. Only then do the goddess and her people experience reciprocal ‘love.’ The hymns imply, of course, that the King is the mediator between Isis and men.
Early Greek authors also state that men must be ἐναίθες to prosper, but they do not have that same sense. Cf. Solon, Fr. 13; h. Hom. XXX 7, 11-17. Greek gods always are said to honour pious folk, but loyalty to King and country is not stressed.
7. ἡμερίδες: indicating death.
μοῖρα: cf. ἡ μοίρα I 29. It is a cliché meaning ‘in the grip of death’; μοῖρα
appears to be in strong contrast with ἡμῶν, 8, below.

8. οἱς ἡμῶν ἔτι χνῖνα: see note on ἐπερήμην ἡμῶν, 3, above. For a somewhat similar expression cf. C. C. Edgar, Selected Papyri from the Archives of Zenon, Annales du Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte, Vol. XXIV, no. 94. τιχεῖν ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν καλῶν. Like other Egyptian gods, Isis has the power to lengthen a man’s life. Here she extends to those who pray to her a renewal of her basic gift of life. On ‘to make alive’ = ‘to heal’ in Semitic thought see W. W. van Baudissin, Adonis and Ismen, pp. 397 ff.: οἷς appears to be emphatic. See Müller, Isisentologie, p. 83, and notes. For Isis ὸμεία see I 30 above and note.

9-14. Summary. Two male gods are temple-dwellers with Isis and very closely associated with her: her husband, Sokonopis, the Agathos Daimon, Creator of the Cosmos, and Anchoeis, the goddess’ son, equated with Helios.

9. ὁ ἐγαθὰς δαιμόνιον: ὁ ἐγαθὰς is to be read ἐγαθὸς, with the first syllable scanned as short. The article is unpoetic.

The Agathos Daimon is Σωκονόπις. Cf. IV 5, Δαιμόνιον is often used for θεός.

For a full discussion of ὁ ἐγαθὸς δαιμόνιον, see M. Nilsson, GGR 2(2), pp. 202 ff. This god is often equated to Egyptian Š j (= Shai, Psai, Psil, Shay, etc.). The Agathos Daimon is, of course, equivalent to the second of the Egyptian pair Renenet and Shay, that is, equated to Sokonopis as Agathe Tyche is to Hermouthis his wife. For Shay, see Kees, Göttagebene, pp. 57, 294, 440, etc., and for τύχη, I 2 above and note. The basic theology appears to be Isis-Renenet-Hermouthis or Agathe Tyche, and the Agathos Daimon, are the personal divine spirits attending men, and outlasting them. The Greeks associated τύχη ἐγαθὸς and ὁ ἐγαθὸς δαιμόνιον as a pair (Plate XI). Cf. Aes. 3 III; Lys. 13.16; Ar. Av. 544. See also Nilsson, GGR 2(2), p. 470. Under these names in the Fayum surely are adumbrated certain vague but continuing concepts of ancient Egyptian theology, which are intimately associated with each man’s human destiny.¹²

Σωκονόπις: cf. III 33, 35, IV 5, and SEG VIII 566-7. See Plate XIV.

Sokonopis, as the Agathos Daimon, is here the temple dweller (διαμόνιος) and male counterpart of Iermuthis (= Agathe Tyche). He is mentioned as ‘synnaus’ also with Anchoeis, the sun god. Sokonopis and Hermuthis are the divine pair worshiped in the temple, just as Šebek (Šbk) and Renenutet (Rnm.) had been in the Xllth Dynasty (Plate XI). The hieroglyphic inscriptions in the temple’s innermost shrine name that ancient pair. See Vogliano, S. R., pp. 22-28. The

¹² Relevant is the phrase in H. Oxyg. 164: ὁ ἐν Μιδί ιερὸν άνοιγμα ἔχων οἱ δύο θεοῖς παραγόντες. Isis is specifically associated with ὅ ἐγαθὸς δαιμόνιον in H. Oxyg. 189: ὁ ἐν Μιδί άκτω δαιμόνιον καὶ Ἐσκ. B. v. Groningen mentions a cult of the Agathos Daimon and (Θ)ermuthis as synnaus gods in Alexandria.

One might conjecture that the serpent form of the Greek Agathos Daimon came from his association with Hermouthis. But Nilsson (GGR I, p. 214 re Zeus Meilichios) thinks otherwise. At Medinet Madi, in fact, the Agathos Daimon (Sokonopis) was represented in crocodile form (Šebek). See Vogliano, S. R., Tav. XXIII, and P. R. Tav. XI 2. Hermouthis was represented by a serpent (Plates X-XI). For evidence of a snake-cult at the temple, see Vogliano, S. R., Tav. XLIV. There is also strong (pictorial) evidence from this temple that she was known as a young, attractive mother-goddess shown seated with her child on her lap (Plate XIII = Vogliano, P. R., Tav. XI b).
dedication of the Hellenistic temple's latest forecourt is to Sokonopis and Hermuthis (SEG VIII, 566-7). And Suchos (Hymn IV 23 ff.) grouped with Ammon (= Zeus) is said to be one of the greatest gods of Egypt. Presumably both Suchos and Sokonopis are in some way assimilated to Osiris-Sarapis = the Nile.

Suchos is, of course, really a local name of Suchos, the ancient crocodile god Sbk, variously called in Greek Sokb, Sebek, Souchos, Suchos, etc.13

Almost certainly the latter half of the word, Sokonopis, is related to Osiris and probably, in general, the name means 'Suchos of the Nile.' Cf. Sok (nepatios), Sok (nebunis). Suchos in very early times was associated with the Isis-family especially in the Delta. In Greco-Roman times and afterwards he was the crocodile who represented the Nile. See ZAS 61/2, and Plate IX a. The name Sokonopis is not known from any other sources as that of a god, but is found as a private name. See Preisigke, NB p. 390, and P. Petr. II 140, 141. The genitive is Sokonopis, the dative Sokonupi.

The cult of Suchos, like that of Isis (and Sarapis), shows continuous spiritual development. In one of his latest forms, at the late Egyptian temple of Ombos, he is shown as Sobek-Re, founder of temple-worship, creator of the various languages, father of the gods, lord of the sea, saviour of sailors, and thus a god of universal power. He is finally both a fertility god and a god of light.

Herodotus (II 148) gives Crocodilopolis as the chief city in the Fayum. After the mid-second century B.C., great numbers of Greeks in the Fayum seem to have resorted to the worship of Suchos. His native temples had acquired a considerable amount of land (P. Teb. 62.5-6). He and Isis were healing gods (P. Amt. 35). In 118 Euergetes accorded Suchos' native temples greater privileges and immunities (P. Teb. 5 = Wchr. 65). Papyrological evidence shows in detail the religious life of Kerkeosiris, a small village of about one thousand inhabitants (of which one-fifth were Greek), lying some twenty miles southwest of Arsinoe (Crocodilopolis). There were, rather oddly, neither Greek nor first class Egyptian temples; Isis, for instance, had two third-rate temples. There may have been a shrine to the Dioscuri, and some think there was a temple to Zeus (P. Teb. 14.18.39). Suchos

13. The name Sokonopis is Sokonop-epetos (or being the genitive particle 'of', and (or a Greek ending, om) is either (1) ωννος (Wp-Wm), i.e. Egyptian Upawt (Upawat)/Wepawemet, for which see RARG p. 842; or (2) ἐπίναι (Hyp.). i.e. Egyptian Hapi/Apis (see RARG, pp. 45 ff.). The former is shown with the head of a wolf or a dog (see A. H. Gardner, Egyptian Grammar). Both, however, can be considered forms of Osiris, and so of the Nile. Upon being originally a wolf or jackal god is very like Anubis, with whom he is associated and even confused. He is thought to have been a war god, or defender god, associated with Horus and the Pharaoh. (See Frankfort, Kingship, p. 26.) And in all periods he was closely related to Osiris. From the time of the Middle Kingdom he also had close affinity with the sun-god Re, and was a scribe. See note, below. In his connection with Osiris, Upawt or Ophis is known also to have been associated with Isis. Apis-hapi, on the other hand, was a Memphis vegetation god but was also equated, at least in the late period, with Osiris and the Nile. Cf. D. S. I 85; Plu. de Is. 209, 43. Apis too, like Ophis, has some association with the sun god, and with Horus and the Pharaoh. However, Egyptian Hapi/Apis is always elsewhere transmuted into Greek απής or apes and never ωννος, Cf. Apollo (RARG, p. 23) and Sokonopis (SEG 756).
had no temple there but most of the land (at Kerkeosiris) was owned by the
temples of Suchos of Arsinoe, and Soknebtunis of Tebtunis. These lands,
incidentally, seem to have been water-logged (P. Teb. 82; 88).

Generally, Greeks belonged to what were called the ‘Synods,’ that is,
‘congregations,’ of major Egyptian gods (P. Teb. 119). For instance, in 98 and 95
B.C. groups of Greeks dedicated their places of meeting to Suchos (WChr. 141;
142). In fact, under Ptolemy Alexander I, at the beginning of the first century
B.C., native temples flourished (OGIS 175; 177; 178; SB 1269; 4623; P. Teb. 59,
temple of Soknebtunis). See also ἐνθωμία III 31 and note below. The worship of
Suchos in the Fayum surpassed in importance that of any other god or goddess.14
The present Hymn belongs to an old temple establishment of Soknopis, i.e.,
Suchos of the Nile, and of the heavens (equated to the Agathos Daimon) and of
Isis-Hermouthes, harvest-goddess and Pantocrateira (equated to Agathe Tyche).
They dwell with ‘Anchoes,’ a god of light (the sun-god), their son.

The last syllable of Soknopis is scanned as short in spite of the following
consonants.

κραταίος: cf. ὁ μέγας τοις κραταίοις θεοῖς Σωκνοπάτως WChr. 122.1, first
century A.D.]

10. συννας: cf. σύννασι, III 35. σύννας with or without σύμμακος is a
common cult epithet. It means ‘fellow-dweller in the temple.’ Cf. CIG 2230
(Chios), SIG 1126.5 (Delos, second/first century B.C.), P. Teb. 281.5 (second
XLI, 1930; HThR 1930/2.

The Synnaos concept was possibly an ancient one in Egypt. Synnaoi gods
need not be a divine pair or family, but they could be. Here Soknopis apparently
is the husband of the goddess. Cf. the dedicatory inscriptions at the temple (SEG,
VIII 536-7). Furthermore Isidorous in Hymns II-IV speaks of the divine ‘family,’
Isermothis, Soknopis, and the child Anchoes. Soknopis is undoubtedly
assimilated to Osiris-Sarapis (see II 9 and note); and Anchoes to Horus (cf. II 14
and note, below). Further, it is almost certain that, at this temple, as in other
Ptolemaic Fayum temples, there were additional cults and statues of the early
Ptolemies and their queens (Ptolemy Euergetes, Berenice, and their daughter
Berenice, Ptolemy Philopator and Arsinoe, and Ptolemy Epiphane and Cleopatra,
his wife). European medieval cathedrals show the same profusion of high altars,
chapels and side-chapels.

πλούτωτος: cf. πλοῦτωτος, I 1, and πλοῦτος', 6 above and notes. For the
wealth-giving Nile (= Osiris) see χρυσοφρόν, 17 below.

11. κριτηρία: see εὐφερία I 3, and 3 above. PGM 5.98-101 states (of

οὐρανόθαυμον is a well known Greek formula, especially associated with νάσα. In K. K., Isis herself is made to explain a cosmic system composed of four parts: (1) οὐρανός abode of the gods, controlled by the ἀγιομεγαλός; (2) ἀέρ, the upper air and abode of the stars, controlled by the sun; (3) ὑδάτι, abode of the ψυχαί δαμοσίναι, controlled by the moon; (4) γῆ, the abode of men and other living creatures, controlled by ‘one who from time to time becomes king’ (meaning one who has the finest ψυχή). In this system of Isis, ψυχαί are sent downwards to ἄρη and γῆ. Indeed, all these elements except ἀέρ are mentioned in Isidorus’ Hymns: οὐρανός is the creation of a κτιστής (= the Agathos Daimon); ἀείθαρ (13) is inhabited by ἱλιος; and γῆ is the realm of men; οὐρανός, above ἀείθαρ, is an immaterial realm. The κτιστής of Isidorus has many Egyptian precedents: Ptah, Schu, Atum, Osiris-Ptah-Sokaros (the last a form of Sebek), Haroeris-Schu, and Wepwawet (cf. II 9 above). See RARG, pp. 71-74, 276-272, 568-576, 614-619, 685-689, 723-727, 842-844. As to the starry heavens, certain Egyptian deities are known as Lord, or Mistress, of the Stars, for example Hathor, Satis, Sothis, Isis, Re, Amun, Amun-Re, and Chnum. Cf. Müller, Issaretalogien, p. 39, notes 13-15.

12. πομακω ... κωκυτάτων τε ἱστοντο. Of course, after καὶ the following τε is redundant. Sokonopis, related to Sbk, is god of the Bahr Yussuf, and Lake Moiris.

But in the arealogies from Cyme (K.), los (J.), and Saloniki (S.) (=M.), Isis, not Sokonopis, is the Creator (cf. K. 12, J. 9 = M. 12): ἑγὼ ἀκούσαν τῆν ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ; (K. 13, J. 10 = M. 13): ἑγὼ ἀκόρην ἰδεῖ νῦν ἔδειξα; (K. 14, J. 11 = M. 14): ἑγὼ ἱλιοῦ καὶ σελήνης πορείαν ὑπεταμίαν. She is the same in H. Óxy. 183-185: ὑπὸ πάντων ἱερῶν καὶ ἱερῶν καὶ ὑπὸ ὠρχήσων; εἰ γὼ ἀκόρην σελήνης τοι. ἥθεσα παῖς αὐτὴν ἐτέντης. Isidorus I 3, 8-9 and II 3 also speaks of Isis-Hermouthis as Creator of all. Obviously, in Hymns II 11 it does not matter to him whether the goddess, or her mate, is Creator. It seems otherwise in his Hymn I which, like the arealogies from Cyme, los, and the Oxyrhynchus Hymn, praises only the goddess.

13. Ἀγχῶς: cf. 32-3, 111 33, 35, IV 5. See Plate XIV. This god is unknown. Ἀγχῶς is, however, a Greek transliteration of ‘ἡ’ Egyptian ‘η’ means ‘The Living One.’ See Erman-Grapow, W/BAS I, p. 201. Of course, words beginning with η, i.e. ‘ἡ’, are common. For example, a god Άγχωρπος (dative) is associated with Isis: Ταῦδε θεόν μεγίστην καὶ Σαραπίδα καὶ Τίριν καὶ Άγχωρπος καὶ τοῖς συνῆραντος θείοις πάνι καὶ πάνι καὶ λατρέα. (Archeus 2, 1902, pp. 552 ff.). Perhaps, by analogy with Άγχωρπος, Άγχως is equivalent to ἡ ημι = His name lives (Vogliano, P. R., p. 44 note 2); or it may be a short form of Άγχωςθ ις = Isis lives. Cf. ημι = The goddess Mut lives. A derivation from an adjective, anki,
(‘nīh= The living) would also be a suitable name for Isis’ son and the sun-god. In fact, ‘The living’ is a known title of Horus; cf. RARG, Horus, p. 308.

Whatever its exact meaning, it seems certain that ‘Ἀγγελός’ is related to the root ankh (‘nīh) i.e. 𓊀𓊀= Life. See 3, ἁγιμ and note. Cf. Vogliano, P. R., pp. 87-8. In any case, Anchoes stands here for the son who is always an essential part of the Isis myth.

To recapitulate, Isidorus states of Anchoes that he is as hermaphrodite’s son, his dwelling-place is the aether, he is the rising sun ‘that brings the day.’ In other words, he is either Re or very like that god, i.e. probably the sun-child, associated with Horus. See οὐρανός above.

αἰθέρα ναί(ε)ι: for a similar phrase, similarly localized, see II, II 412: Ζεῦ . . . αἰθέρα παῖων. Here αἰθήρ is contained by οὐρανός (but in II, XV 192 οὐρανός is εν αἰθέρη). For the later system of οὐρανος, αἰθήρ, ὑπό, γῆ, see οὐρανός, 11 above and note (quoting Stob. 1.41.45) and πάλαις 19 above. Cf. θ. Orph. XXXIV (to Apollo) 11 ff.: ὥστε γὰρ λειτουργεῖ τὸν . . . αἰθέρα γαῖαν τε . . . ἐν αἰθήρι . . . ἕχως δὲ τοῖς παράγων κόσμου παντός. Isidorus’ cosmos agrees in detail with the later system.

14. ἡλίος ἀνέλλοις: for ἡλίος see I 10, III 25, IV 13, 32. For Isis’ association with ἡλίος see M, 14: ἓγα ἡλίον καὶ ἐξήλεψεν πολέμων κυνηγήματα; 44: ἐγὼ ἐν ταῖς τοῦ ἡλίου αἰγαι σεῖς; 45: ἐγὼ πορεύμενος τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου πορείᾳ; H, Οὐρ. 112: ἐν Τενέβδο καὶ ἡλίον ἱκανόν; 157: ἡλίον ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς μεχρὶ δέκας εἰς ἐπιφέρει[ε]; 233: Προσεῖς εἰς ἡλιον. The terms ἡλίος, φῶς, etc., when used of Isis and her son, have strong associations with early Egyptian myths of Re. Plutarch (de Is. 52) equates ἡλίος with δόμα ... φῶς ἔρως. Isis’ son was, in fact, considered both the physical and the true sun. As part of this theology, the rising sun could be portrayed as the Sun—a child standing or sitting. See RARG, Horus = Sonne 731-2; J. Schubart and S. Morenz, Der Gott auf der Blume, and B. v. Groningen, de P. Oxy., pp. 112, 157-9. There are many Egyptian legends concerning the infant Sun-god rising from the primeval sea, sometimes as a lotus flower (καρὺς ?), sometimes as a crocodile (Σφκ?). Always it is a symbol of emerging life and light. The various legends of Re appear to have become assimilated to several young gods and especially to Horus who, at least with his nurse-mother, seems always to have been largely an anthropomorphic god. He is both the King and the sun. The Egyptian verb for the rising of the sun (ḥēt) is depicted by a hieroglyph showing the sun rising over the primeval hill. It is a verb used to mean also the rise of the stars, and, what is important here, the appearance of Pharaoh at his accession, at festivals, and on the throne. See Frankfort, Kiinghip, pp. 57, 150.

As usual, Isis here is shown to be one of a triad of gods, a member of the family by whom she was always attended. It is claimed that she was, in fact, inseparable from them, and that the holy family moved with her wherever she went.14

15. See S. Morenz, "Ägyptische National-religion und sogenannte Isismission," Zeitschrift
έδειξε: see 16 and notes above. Cf. καταδείξει (used of Demeter), D. S. V 68.1; (of Orpheus, Museaus, Hesiod, Homer), Ar. Ro. 1032; and ἀκολουθεῖ (of Hestia) h. Orph. LXXXIV 3. Showing-teaching is a role of the Greek Heuretes-god.

φώς is frequently associated with Isis. Cf. M. 18, 53; Ank. 7; H. Oxy. 148.
These lines are a continuation of 5-8 above.

15. γενέω ... ποιησα. γονή is an epic noun. Cf. II. XXIV 539. Also Aeschin. 3 III: κατά φῶς γονᾶς ποιθεῖναι, and h. Orph. II (13, to Prothyraia): δῆδον δέ γονᾶς κτλ.

16. εὐσκεπτοῦς. For a similar expression, see h. Hom. XXX 5 ff. (εἰς γῇν; ἀνέμοι) ἐκ σεό βίοι ἐκταίνετε τε καὶ εἰκαριοί τε θέλοντα, πάντως Cf. h. Orph., XXX 8: εὐσκεπτοῦς. Plutarch (de Is. 52 E) equates Isis to Venus Caellestis. Cf. App. Met. XI 2,5 (= Venus Paphe). If a man and wife in Egypt had no children, they might resort to a temple of Isis and pray for offspring; and by the miraculous power of Isis the wife might bear a child. The reference is again, as in 1 27-34, to an Isis-miracle. Of course any Egyptian family of gods (here the triad Ismuthis, Sokonopis, and the child Anchoes) is the prototype of the families of men; just as Isis bore her husband a son, so by analogy might any Egyptian (or Greco-Egyptian) wife.

17-20. Summary. The chief Isis-miracle is the rise of the Nile flood which marks the Egyptian religious New Year. It is an annual miracle, repeating the one-time primeval creation of the world and symbolizing the ancient legend of Isis’ resurrection of Osiris. Here, by the help of the Nile, Isis is shown to create forever cereal food for her creature, man. The lines appear to state basic Isis theology.

17. χρυσόρροιας: cf. IV 12. The double rho is common in poetry, only one being scanned.

χρυσόρροιας is a poetic adjective, commonly used of the Nile. Cf. Athenaeus V 203, C: μύνως γὰρ ὥς ἀληθῶς ὁ χρυσόρροας καλοῦμενος Νεῖλος μετὰ τρισὶν ἄδειθοις καὶ χρυσοῦ καταφέρει ἀκάμώσως γεωργοῦσιν. See also Joann. Antioch, FHI 451, Fr. 2: τὸν Νεῖλον τὸν λεγόμενον Χρυσόρροαν. Cf. Joann. Lyd., de Mens. IV 68, Gr. Naz. = Migne 21, p. 1116. A canal, or branch, of the Nile in the Delta probably was called Χρυσόρροας; the word is preserved in its Coptic name. See Sethe, Geogr. de l’Eg., p. 303. Recurring references to
πλούτος = wealth seem part of the underlying theme of Hymn II (cf. 6, 10, 21). If Sokonopis’ name means Sebek of the Nile, it too is closely associated with Osiris-Sarapis, god of the Nile and giver of wealth (see II 9). χρυσορρός, a traditional epithet for the Nile, therefore is part of the theme of wealth, that is, the Nile’s ‘gold,’ or the fertile earth, source of all riches. This Athenaeus explains (see above).

ἀνάγεσ... ἐκ χρύσου. In Thgn. 1347 ἀνάγεσ means lead up, lead back. The verb may also mean bring (up) to life again, i.e. cause to awaken, revive, resurrect (cf. Hes. Th. 626). ἀγω and ἀνάγεσ are used frequently of Isis (and the Nile). Cf. the following: Lucian, dial. deor. 3 (referring to Isis-Io): καὶ τὸν Νείλον ἀναγένει καὶ τὸν ἀνέμοις ἐπιμελεῖται καὶ σωσίζει τοὺς πλέοντας; H. Oxy. 126 (referring to Isis): τὴν καὶ τὸν Νείλον ἐκ τῷ ἐλασμῷ χώραν ἐπανάγοναν; 187 (of Isis): οἵ τόν ἀδελφὸν σοι ἐπαρνάσσεις μόνη κτλ.; and 222 ff. (of Isis): οἵ τῆς γῆς κυρία ἀπό τῷ νεφελώμα θανάτων τῶν τόμων τις... τῆς μυρωδεις ὑποτροφίας τις. ἀγω, ἀνάγεσ. Isis’ power over the Nile was portrayed in the cult by the sistrum and pitchcr, both traditionally associated with her Hellenistic cult.16

References to Isis ‘bringing back’ the Nile, causing the Nile to rise, were related both to her own resurrection of Osiris and, later, generally to Greek resurrection legends relating to Demeter and Persephone.17 ἀνάγεσ, ἀγω, καρμοδέεις, etc., when first applied to Isis, might have been a deliberate adaptation from Eleusinian language.

κατά ὀφαλὶ: the restoration of Hondius in SEG VIII 549. Cf. κατά γαμαν of Vogliano and κατὰ χρυσέω of M. Vandoni, Prolegomena, II, 1953, Il Tempio di Madinet-Madi e Gli inni di Isidoro. With κατὰ ὀφαλὶ (‘according to seasons,’ that is, ‘yearly’) compare H. Hom. XXVI 12: ἐκ ὀφαλὶ. Also κατὰ ὀφαλὶ would be suitable (meaning ‘at the right time’). κατὰ καρυῶν is similar to the last.

18. εὐθείᾳ: a hapax legomenon. See LSJ Add. etcorr. With Isidorus’ frequent use of the stem ἔτερν, compare 4, 27, and notes.

The scansion is faulty: a mute followed by a liquid may produce a short syllable; a liquid followed by a mute, as here, may not.

19. εἰσαγείον: cf. εἰσαγείον 18. Isidorus considers Isis to be the cause of both the blooming of vegetation (καρποί) and man’s flourishing (19-20). ἀνάγεσ becomes καρποί and by analogy πλούτος produces human ἀρτη. These are the outward evidence of healthy growth in the natural realm, that is, the realms that partake of generation. Cf. Plutarch, de Is. 33 ff. Like Plutarch later, Isidorus sees the union of Sokonopis-Osiris and Hermouthis-Isis (or the union of fertile land


17. ἀνάγεσ occurs also of resurrection in Ophic hymn XLIII 7 ff. describing the bringing back of Persophene to life: ἐστὶν καὶ Νείλῳ καὶ χάρυτις κατακλύσσει χερσάς καὶ διὰ δούλων λαμπρὰς χαραβρέφες καὶ μαθὴ καρποδετριῶν. ἀνάγεσ implies that what is led is alive. Cf. W. C. Greener, Moira, p. 340.
and the Nile) as ultimately producing all human well-being. At least, the human and vegetable worlds are related.

καρπος: see ἰῶσ ται καρπῶν, 3 above and 18. See also ἐδωκει, and note above. καρπος is, of course, intimately associated with ἰῶσ. Cf. ἰῶσ παντοκράτων ἀγαθῶν 20. It is part of the progression ἰῶσ = καρπος = πλοῦς = ἀρετή.


παντοκράτων ἀγαθῶν: cf. III 15, παντοκράτων ἀγαθῶν. This is formulaic language. Egyptian Sarapis, for instance, is ‘giver of all good things’ (Aelius Aristides 45.17, a Hymn to Sarapis).

21-28. Summary. These four couplets concern the Thanksgiving festival in Isis-Hermouthis’ honour, held annually in the month of Pachon. The farmers of the district gather at the temple to celebrate a Thanksgiving festival for the harvest of the past year (21-22), and to pay their annual tax to the temple (22-24). The following year the goddess rewards them for their piety with a similar harvest (25-26) and they again celebrate her festival (in the succeeding year, 27-28). The process is unending. Lines 21 ff., addressed to the goddess in the name of the local citizen-farmers, are in fact a reminder at the temple gate to those farmers who honour the goddess to set aside their tax; only thus will their prosperity be unending. The Hymn was undoubtedly written for the harvest festival of Isis-Hermouthis in the month of Pachon.

With the language, compare the Hebrew harvest festival in LXX Ex. 23.16; 34.22a; Lev. 23.17, and Num. 28.16. See also h. Hom. XXVI 11-13: καὶ οὐ μὲν οὖν χαῖρε πολυτάφων ὁ Δίας ὅσος ἤμεν χαιροντας ἐς ἔσορας αὕτης ἰκέθαιν έκ δ’ αὖθ’ ωραίῳ εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς εὐαυτούς.

21. πλοῦτον: the whole hymn presents a picture of plenty enjoyed in rural peace. The enjoyment of the annual temple festivities and the goddess’ gifts is part of such a picture.

ἀνέδωκες: for the same form see 17. The compound ἀναδιώκωμι occurs three times as predicate to Isidorus’ goddess. It could be Eleusinian, associated especially with Ψη and καρπος. Cf. Plu. Cam. 15.

Undoubtedly the same harvest festival is mentioned in the dedication inscriptions. Compare too the opening lines of the present Hymn.

22. χάριται: see 4 above.

A divine grant making for proper possession is an old Greek theme. Cf. Hesiod, Op. 320 ff.: wealth is properly god-given, and not to be seized. When it is obtained by violence, it cannot be kept.

The infinitive depending on διώκω, while classical, may have become more common in the Koine. See Mayser, Grammatik 2(1), p. 151, sec. 2a: die Konsekutiv-finalen und explikativen Infinitiv. Cf. for example h. Cer. 372.

οὗτοι: meaning ‘always.’ For the spelling διώκω see J. Powell and E. Barber, New Chapters in the History of Greek Literature, p. 8, note 1; and p. 11, note 2.

23. τούτων: the genitive case carries on the genitive of σοι δώρου 21.


The portion of produce was set aside at the time of the harvest and was, from our more secular point of view, a church-state tax. See below.

μοίραν δεκάτων: this due tenth must be the so-called ‘apomoria.’ See especially C. Préaux, L’Economie Royale des Lagides, pp. 171-187, and J. A. S. Evans, YCS 12, 1961, pp. 217 ff. The apomoria was a national levy on orchards and vineyards of a prescribed portion of the harvest, to be paid to certain temples. After 264 B.C., and probably before, the portion was generally one-sixth of the produce or one-tenth on less fertile land. The tenth, therefore, which was paid at Medinet Madi, indicates almost certainly that the area was thought less fertile than others. And indeed, when excavated, the temple lay immediately on the edge of the desert. See Vogliano, P. R. and S. R. and E. Bresciani, Rapporto Preliminare. All the towns, in fact, on the edge of the Fayum are really in the desert. Their fertile land lay in the portion irrigated. Irrigation projects of the early Ptolemies are known to have temporarily rendered the region fertile. Undoubtedly XIth Dynasty irrigation had done the same. Cf. IV 35-6.

24. Χαλαντίους: in the worship of Isis Doteira, a man ‘rejoices’ to give back to the goddess a tenth part of her gifts to him. The setting aside, or giving, of this thank offering, in reality the apomoria or produce-tax, belongs to one Panegyris, but is thought to contribute to the success of the next year’s crop. It is to be given willingly, even gladly. Our aretologist appears interested in assuring local support for the temple.

οἱ τε παναγιρίσι: παναγιρίσι is a hapax legomenon for Panegyris. The festival was a social gathering for the exchange of wares, Herodotus tells us. For the Panegyris in Egypt, see Hdt. II 58-63, and 171. He tells of the frequency of such festivals in Egypt and names the chief centres: Boubastis (a festival to Artemis); Bubiris (to Isis, a lamentation and feast); Sais (to Athena); Heliopolis (to the Sun-god); Buto (to Leto); Paphremis (to Ares). Obviously they are all held at cult centres. Herodotus also associates the Egyptian Panegyris with the Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis (II 171). In his view, the Egyptian Panegyris included δεόνθη, i.e. μυστήρια, which were the enactment of the god’s sufferings (II 171,
58-9), and τοπαί καὶ προσαγωγαί (II 58). Cf. the Rosetta inscription (OGIS 90.42): ἐξοδεύει εἰς ταῖς μεγάλαις πανηγύρεσιν εἰς ἑξοδεύει τῶν παῖων γύτοντα. and the Canopus decree (OGIS 56.60): ἐκα τοι ἐξοδεύει καὶ πανηγύρεις τῶν λοιπῶν θεῶν γύτονται. The above references, however, make no mention of the paying of the produce-tax.

The Panegyris, then, or ‘Panegyric’ (if they are the same) was a religious procession from the temple and back, during some part of which the populace joined in the celebrations.18

The whole festival is understood to include the gift of the tenth in produce (21:4) which will ensure a successful harvest the following year (25:26). Presumably the sacrificial rites (incense and first-fruits) mentioned in III 29 are performed at the temple. There is an altar at the Medinet Madi temple only a few feet before the south portal (see above, page 10, and Plate II, right). Next, in all probability, a procession from or about the temple area takes place, but it is not mentioned by Isidorus. The Heorte or feast finally is held and the crowd returns home tired but happy (27-8). For the site of the Festival see 27, πανηγυριστέρας, below. For the feast as a ‘common meal,’ see 28.

For another Panegyris in honour of Isis in Egypt, see H. Oxy. 133:3-4: τό γε τε τῆς πανηγυρίστερας βόταν τροφήνω. Cf. v. Groningen, de P. Oxy., notes on lines 132-5.

25. ἐκδορήσω: the verb δορέω is used especially to predicate benefactor-gods. With the language of 21-25 cf. h. Hom. XXVI 11-13 (to Dionysos) quoted 21-28 above.

περιτελλομένου ἐναιτίω: cf. II. II 550-1: περιτελλομένων ἐναιτίων. The process goes on eternally.

26. γενί Παχών: cf. III 32 below. Pachon is also the month given for the dedication of the πρόσωπω of the Medinet Madi complex. The dedicatory inscription on the west, furthermore, gives the day β, the second, of Pachon. In the other, that of the east, the σιγα after Pachon and the β have either been broken off or were never inscribed. Both month and day of the dedication of the forecourt and lions, therefore, are approximately the date of the Egyptian Harvest Festival to Hermouthus which Isidorus’ Hymns II and III celebrate. 19 See Plates

18. For the festival at Elfa, see W. H. Fairman, “Worship and Festivals in an Egyptian Temple,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 37, 1954-55, pp. 165 ff., especially pp. 182 ff. For the Sacro Ludus or Mystery Play, see Hilt. II 59, 63, 171; KARG, pp. 494 ff.; B. v. Groningen, de P. Oxy., p. 133; and Miller, Iconetologia, p. 49, and note 3. From III 32-33 we learn that the festival referred to by Isidorus perhaps also had a feast or ἄφτερα. This could be the reference in II 27-28, a sort of cult common meal.

19. Several of the Egyptian month’s were closely related to festivals and thence had got their names, for example, Phaepaithi = ‘The one of Renn.’ See ‘Ερμοείς I 1, and note. Whether the Harvest Festival of Renn originally fell not in Pachon but in Phaepaithi, the Harvest goddess’ own month, does not concern us here. Eventually this festival presumably had become fixed in the civil calendar, on Pachon 1 (= Soew 1, the first month of the third season, the first day), or perhaps it was late on Phaepaithi 36, really on the eve of Pachon 1, and was followed by a Harvest Festival the next day. See R. A. Parker, The Calendars of Ancient Egypt, p. 35, and Merkerch, ‘Anfite’, pp. 42-44. The Harvest Festival of Hermouthus was the third great festival of the ecclesiastical year of the Isis cult.
IVa, and Va and b.

It will be noted that in Hymn II no day in Pachon is mentioned. In III 32, on the other hand, Pachon 20 = Thoth is given as the date of the Harvest Festival. See III 32 and note.


27. εἰς οἴκαι: possibly Isidorus wrote metrically: τεραθώντες δ' οἰκών; later the stonemason substituted the unmetrical, but poetic, εἰς οἴκαι. See A. Wilhelm, *Witmer Studies* 61/62, 1943/7, p. 175.

πανήγυρισσα: the festival may have been held in the spacious environs of the temple. Various outer temples, or temple-buildings, were the scene of festivities at Edfu. See W. H. Fairman, “Worship and Festivals in an Egyptian Temple,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 37, 1954-55, pp. 165-203. For the temple-complex at Medinet Madi as an ἀντί, see Plate IV; the forecourt is called προοίμιοι.

28. εὐθύμως: piously, reverently, as in A. Eu. 287. Cf. Pl. Phdr. 265c, Ar. N. 263, and S. Aj. 362, where it means respectfully and silently. It is tempting to see in the line some implication of the effect of μυθήως or δεικνύω (see 23-4 above and note). But the celebrants may have merely partaken of a festive ‘common meal.’ Cf. ἐνοχή III 33.

τρυφή: the common poetic use of τρυφή ranges from ‘daintiness,’ ‘lightness’ (E. Pl. 1491), and ‘fastidiousness’ (Ar. Pl. 818), to ‘licentiousness’ (Ar. Ra. 21). But under the Ptolemies, τρυφή apparently attained a specific meaning, the ideal type of abundant life those monarchs lived (ideally) at court, or a peculiarly blessed or lucky life. It appeared, euphemistically, in royal surnames. See Alfredo Passerini, “La τρυφή,” *Storiografia ellenistica*, *Studi ital. di Filol. Class. N.* 11, 1934, pp. 35-6; Otto-Bengtsson, *Geschichte*, pp. 4, 47-51; and J. Tondrau, *La Tryphè*, *Philosophie royale Ptolémaïque*, 1948.

Isidorus’ τρυφή echoes a little the above Ptolemaic meaning of the word. It implies a feeling of special favour arising from the celebration of the Panegyric and the feeling that the god was satisfied, a state of peculiar harmony fostered perhaps by the cult meal and the Mysteries. The festival celebrated, undoubtedly, the mutual regard or love of the deity and her worshipers.

It is impossible to read lines 21-28 of this Hymn without seeing its close similarity, in language at least, to Lxx Deut. XVI 10-15.

29-30. Summary. The second hymn concludes with a request to the goddess to continue to share her gifts with her suppliants, and to grant him in particular the gift of a child. After the signature there appears a postscript, undoubtedly written some time later, stating that Isis and her Synnoe gods heard the poet’s prayer and granted him his heart’s desire.

29. ἀπὸ δώρων ... μετάδος: μετάδος means ‘give a share.’ Cf. Thgn. 104, 925; and H. Hom. XXX (to Ge) 6-9: οὐδὲ ἐξεταί θεῖαι βίοι ... φερέσθως. The whole line, and 18: βιοτον θυμήρε διατε, is not unlike the concluding prayers of
Orphic hymns. Cf. especially XXXII 15: κλοῦι μου εὐχαρίστην, δός δ’ εἰρήνην πολύλογον.

30. ἰκέτης: cf. M. 36. ‘Suppliants’ in Greek hymns are simply those who pray to the deity.

διάβον: see III 6. Cf. h. Hom. XV 9 and XX 8: διὸν δ’ ἀρετῆν τε καὶ διάβον.

33. ἀνταπάδωκας: Isidorus’ meaning is theological, concerning the relationship between a man and the divine. The ‘gift’ is a divine reward in return for proper worship. The goddess and her ὄνομα: gods at Medinet Madi judge of a man’s actions, and bestow their rewards in his lifetime. Lines 32-33 are obviously personal. It could be that the goddess has given the poet the child he sought. Cf. 15-16, and 3. The postscript reveals many qualities in the writer, awe, humility, faith and spontaneous personal thankfulness. His feelings seem to well up and pour forth in his praises or arcotologies; cf. εὐθυμίαν below. His response to the goddess is very close to Lucius’ emotion in App. Met. XI 25: Nunc mihi voces ubertas ad dicenda quae de tua maiestate sentio sufficit, nec ora mille linguasque totidem vel indefessi sermonis acterna series.

εὐθυμία: gladness, happiness, as in Pi. I. 1.63; and Pi. Pac. 1.2. Cf. Ep. Jac. 5.13; and P. Amh. 133.4. εὐθυμία, as a cult term, refers to the emotion inspired by that cult’s deepest mysteries. See R. Merkelbach, Roman und Mysterium, p. 110, note 2, and p. 333, note 2.

Hymn III (Plate VIII)

Τριστόμων μεθέουσα θεὼν, Ἐρμοθύδι άνασσα, Τοῦ ἄγαθον, ἄγαθα, μεγάλα, μεγαλάζωμε Δήμοι, οἰκονομάτη δότεις ἀγαθῶν μηρόποιοι ἦτανοι εἰσαρδέουσε μεγάλας χάριτας καὶ πλουτὸν ἐδόκας, καὶ ζωὴν γιλεκρὶ τε ἔχεσι καὶ τέρτων ἀριστην Ὀδῦν, εὐχαρίστην καὶ σοφροσύνην τε ὁλίσκειν.

Οὔπω δὲ ξύσανι μακάρτα τοι, ἄδρες ἀριστοῦ, οὐκοπροφορίᾳ βασιλεὺς τε καὶ οὐσιον κοινωνία εἰσι, οὔτοι οὐ επέχοντες άνδρόσουσιν ἄχρον τε γῆρος.

5 Λαμπρὸν καὶ λεπτόν γαλαούσιν πολὺν ἕλεσε υἷός τε οὐσιν τε καὶ οὐδέποτε γεγονένει σαρκίην, εἰρήνην τε ἔδωκεν, καρτοπρόθυμον ἐπ’ αὐτό ὁ ταῦτων ἀγαθῶν, καρποὺς τε φρέντως ἄριστον.

10 ὅπως δὲ τοῖς τε πόλεμοι τε ἤρθενται τε μάλιστ’ οὐράνιοι δῆλοι τε τὸ σῶν ἐθένος, ἡ δύναμις σου, πλήθος ἀπημαύρωσι, δέλεσαι δὲ ὅρασιν νεότερος ἐδώκει.
klóði émio, 'Agathé te tóchí, icéntov sou, ánawatl, 20
et pou ét Líūnfrn ét Nígnov emfípêkíals,  
'ét òpêléov pérrata naíves édповfóv ailei,  
'é péðrnu prwósa, òkì ãntolalí ýéllóo,  
'é kai Óloýamv õkarev õpov ðbhravíwtes enêíaliw  
hê kai en òíhpaví óív ñev met álnavtííu ðukázíí,  
25
'é kai ýéllóo ékípìfíomv áprama bás,  
'éázov nývo ñígówv ðukzówv bás,  
'é áçav ópov vngówv ékípìfíomv áprama bása,  
és év dé kai ódve práéi, ídówv dçéip vfróvówv,  
'tepópmén thísav, õdçabalí te õède thépìaítí,  
30
âdhvóv naívov Sódcvov nýmo 'Apaòvov 'óv  
pavóúlwv ðbívów, bósov kat' òtov te párvei  
eîkáí mií Pácvwv kai Òovv dçéítraí ouv õagwítjíív  
kal 'Açóv, Sókóvówv, thèoí [aí] õagwóv, éòortí,  
póvmení évívów, melapípòv 'tòi õíhííív,  
kal èmeí, megalóv te thèvai másvvoi èmì 'abhí,  
35
'têípsi' èm í Pavia', õhê[vó]v õíproa pántwv,  
'ioùòtro '  
'égráfe.

O Ruler of the Highest Gods, Hermonthis, Lady,  
Isis, pure, most sacred, mighty, of might Name, Dev,  
O most hallowed Bestower of good things, to all men  
who are righteous, You grant great blessings: to possess wealth,  
5
a life that is pleasant, and most serene happiness:  
material gain, good fortune, and happy soundness of understanding.  
All who live lives of greatest bliss, the best of men:  
sceptre-bearing kings and those who are rulers,  
if they depend on You, rule until old age,  
10
leaving shining and splendid wealth in abundance  
to their sons, and sons' sons, and men who come after.  
But the one whom the heavenly Queen has held the most dear of princes,  
rules both Asia and Europe,  
keeping the peace; the harvests grow heavy for him
15 with all kinds of good things, bearing fruit . . .,
and where indeed there are wars and slaughter
of countless throngs, Your strength, and godly power
annihilates the multitude (against him); but to the few (with him) it gives
courage.

Hear me, Agathetyche, when I pray to You, Lady,
whether You have journeyed into Libya or to the south wind,
or whether You are dwelling in the outermost regions of the north wind ever
sweetly blowing,
or whether You dwell in the blasts of the east wind where are the risings of
the sun,
or whether You have gone to Olympos where the Olympian gods dwell,
or whether You are in heaven above, a judge with the immortal gods;
or whether having mounted the chariot of the swift-driving sun,
You are directing the world of men, looking down on the manifold
deeds of the wicked and gazing down on those of the just.
If You are present here too, You witness (men’s) individual virtue,
delight in the sacrifices, libations and offerings,
30 of the men who dwell in the Nome of Suchos, the Arsinoïtes,
men of mixed races who all, yearly, are present
on the twelfth of the month of Pachon and Thoth, bringing a tenth for You
and for Anchises, and Sokonopia, most sacred (of) gods, at Your feast.
O Hearer of prayers, black-robed Isis, the Merciful,
35 and You Great Gods who share the temple with Her,
send Paean to me, healer of all ills.

Isidorus
wrote (it)

1-6. Summary. The invocation is to the great and holy Isis as goddess of the
Harvest, that is, as both Hermouthis, goddess of cereal grain and the human infant
(Egyptian) and as Greek Deo, Giver of all good things (= Agathe Tyche). Isidorus’
royal goddess is complex.
1. ἐν ὑστοῖο μεθοῦσα θεῶν: with ἐν ὑστοῖο cf. I 3 and IV 4. The title means
Ruler of the Greatest Gods. Cf. the elaborately superlative expression in IV 23
qualifying Suchos: μεγάλεων μεγάλου τε μεγάλου, and Osiris (App., Met. XI 30):
deus deum magnorum potior et maiorum summus et summorum maximus et
maximorum regnator. In A. 45, μεθεύσια also refers to Isis. Cf. Anthol. Palat. VI
231: Αὐτόπτου μεθεύσια μεγαλεύλου λαοπετει, and PGM 4.2774: Ἱω
παυκράτεια και Ἱω παυμέθευσα Ἱω παυτρεφείσσα (Io = Isis).
2. ἀγία: see I 1, II 2, and Plates IX-XIII.
3. ἀγία: cf. IV 1 ἀγίαν . . . ἱερόν.
4. ἀγία: cf. Paus. X 32.13: ἱερών Ἱωδίκ ἀγιώτατον; also IG XII 694.14, and
SIG 3.768: τῶν ἐρωτῶν τῶν ἀγαθώτατων. For the use of ἁγίος with Egyptian and Syrian gods in the Hellenistic period, see OGIS 620.2: Δι' ἁγίου, OGIS 590.1 ff.: θεῷ ἁγίῳ βασιλείᾳ. Both ἁγίος and ἡγεῖος signify taboo and vereration; ἁγίος, in particular, is thought basically to be a Semitic word (Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum neuen Testament, vols. I-VI, 88). ἁγία is used of Isis etc. in H. Oxy. 34-5: Ἡμᾶς ἁγίαν; 35-6: Ἀφροδίσεις βασιλείᾳ δέον ἁγίαν; 89: ἐν τῇ Χαλκοῦνδη ἁγία, 256: καὶ ἁγίαν; and IG VII 3426 (Chaeoneia): τῆς ἁγίας Εἰσίδου.

μεγάλη: cf. IV 23 and note.
μεγαλώσσα: cf. I 2 and note.
3. οἰσμοτάτης: Demeter especially is qualified by οἰσμός. See h. Cer. 1.486 (cf. 478). Isis' battlements are οἰσμοῖ (Kyr. 13): τόπλει τε οἰσμοῖς περιβάλλεις ἔτεικες.

δώτερα: the title is used of Isis in H. Oxy. 68, and 13 (δώτερα), and possibly Λυκ. 10. The δώτερα ἁγαθῶν is almost equivalent to Ἁγάθη Θέης.

μερόπειος: cf. Λ. 20: μερόστατα.
4. εδέσθεν: cf. 27 below, and II 6; εδέσθην may contrast with ἀπάστο. In line 3 all men receive gifts from Isia-Tyche, but in line 4 there are special rewards for the righteous, meaning those who are loyal (both to Isis and the King):

5. ξών: Vogliano, P. R., p. 37 reads: ξών: SEG VIII 550.5 reads: ξών. The facsimile shows a blurred letter that could be Σ or Ξ (see Plate VIII = Vogliano, P. R., Tav. XVI).

ήευ: see II 22, above and note.


7. ΰτημνή: sent by τύχη ἁγαθῇ; τυχή is a most desirable kind of ἐτύχεια. Cf. II 28. The present Hymn concerns the ἐτύχεια of royalty, or their τυχή. See 7 ff. ἀφελούσθην: a peculiarly Greek word showing that Isidorus' goddess is Hellenized.

8. Summary. Isis is special protectress of kings; she grants them more blessings than other men: prosperity, length of days, and, most important, children to succeed them. And to one great King, the Egyptian Pharaoh who is King of Kings, she gives her highest favours. Indeed, through her, (through his traditional power over nature and the Nile) he can bring his people peace and a bountiful harvest. He has foes and his own forces are less numerous than theirs,
but the goddess will protect him in battle and bring him victory as she has always done. For the possible reference here to Soter II see Chapter I.

8. σκαπτροφόροι βασιλεῖς: σκαπτροφόροι is Doric, here simply poetic colouring. The whole Andros Hymn (A.) is in the Doric dialect.

9. ἐπέχωντες: relying on, depending on (with the dative). In Plato, ἐπέχω means set one’s mind on (Lg. 926b; cf. Plu. Aem. 8), yield oneself to (R. 399b). The participle, as used here, has religious significance.

ἀρχὴ . . . γῆρος: Isis, as protector of the King, grants him a long life and reign, that is, she prolongs his days.

λαμπρῶν καὶ λεπαρῶν: the alliterative use of these common epithets seems peculiar to Isidorus.

καταλείποντες: leaving behind (of the dying), bequeathing.


τοῖς μεταβίτις: the Ionic form μεταβίτις is restored in preference to the Attic μεταβίτις.

12. φιλτατοι ἐσοξί: the facsimile shows ἐσοξί. Cf. II. XXIV 67: φιλτατοι ἐσοξί θεοί θρόνων οί εἰν ἔλαυνεί. The line from the Iliad speaks of Hector, whom Zeus could not save though he loved him most of all mortals. Isidorus may be thinking that the King of Egypt is as beloved of Isis as Hector was of Zeus. The error may, however, be that of the stonemason for surely the poet cannot mean the goddess can only grieve for her favourite.

ἐσοξί, the iterative form of ἐσοξί, as in the Homeric line, is obviously misused here.

(φιλτατοι) ... ἀνάκτων: if ἀνάκτων has its epic significance, it means of princes, of kings. φιλτατοι ... ἀνάκτων must be similar to βασιλεῖς βασιλεώς, an epithet of the King of Egypt (who here is the ruler of ‘Asia and Europe,’ 13).

ἀνάξ: in the plural, the noun is defined (Arist. Fr. 536): νιάτης τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ οἱ ὑδροφόι καλούμεναι ἀνάκτων. Cf. Od. 1 397. ἄναξ is also a well known title of gods, for example Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, the Dioscuri.

13. Ἀσίας τε καὶ Ἐφροίτως τε ἀνώσοετο: the sweeping exaggeration of this statement is reminiscent of the formulaic ending of petitions to a Ptolemaic king, for example: θεῷ δοῖν αὐτῷ βασιλεῖς πάσας χωρὰς ἔπεμψε ἡ ἄρωμα εἰσορφή. It is the language of an imagined universal monarchy.

14. καρποὶ: the interesting suggestion is made by R. Merkelbach that Isidorus wrote κάποι (= gardens, Doric) and that the reading καρποὶ, echoing line 15, is the stonemason’s error. See “Note Critiche e Filologiche, Osservazioni Critico-Testuali Agli Inni Isiaci di Isidoro, La Parola del Passato,” Rivista di Studi Antichi, Fas. III, Napoli, 165, pp. 298-9.

βραδύνων: βράδυ is used of fruit trees, vines, etc., meaning be heavy, be heavily laden, bend down. The verb is epic-poetic. Cf. II. XVI 384, Od. XIX 112, Hes. Op. 465-6. See also I 12 on ὑποσφέρῃ.

ἐνι αἰνῶ: cf. 9 and II 2. ἐνι (with the dative) may mean because of. See II.
XXI 585: X. Hg. 3.11; Pl. Ph. 342. It implies strong affection.


ἀπ[ω]τ[οι] is the reading in SEG VIII 550; ἀπ[ω]τ[οι]ς is that of Vogliano, P. R.

Lines 11-15 assume a mystic relationship between the moral quality of the King and the bounty of the harvest. It is more than the fact that a bountiful harvest is the probable result of good government or sound leadership. Cf. Od. XIX 109-14. It seems odd, incidentally, that lines 12-15 speak of the goddess in the third person while 1-11 and 19-36 directly address her (and her synaedic gods). The lines show other peculiarities, harshness, lack of coordination (14), extraordinarily naive repetition (14-15), and the solecism ἡσκε = ἄσχε (12).

16. ἄνθοκτασια: means 'carnage.'

17. μυρίάκων: the thought that one king is more than thousands of men has many Egyptian parallels.28

δῆλοι: δῆλοι are vast crowds. It is much like πλήθος, 18. Cf. Th. IV 126, and Plot. 6.6.12, of a multitude at a festival: δῆλοι καὶ ἡρηνὶ καὶ στρατόκακ ρηχλίδος. For the genitive δῆλοι, see Goodwin and Gulick, Greek Grammar, section 11.33 ff.

τὸ σῶν ἔθνος: ἔθνος is an unusual word for a goddess' power; it is followed immediately by the more usual ὁδίμας.

ἐνίμπεις: see I 11, δοῦμεν.

18. πλῆθος: signifies a nameless crowd.

ἀπαμαρσκόν: the verb means cause to vanish, obscure, remove from sight, blot out utterly. Cf. A. 20-21: τῶσον δὲ δαμασκάει τὸ ἄνθρωπον ποιοὶ κρύφοι κτλ. See also A. 106.

The language in 16-18 is strongly suggestive of Hes. Op. 225 ff. (especially 238-45, 274-85, and 319-26) where people perish through no personal fault. Compare with Isidorus' language, the similar terms in Op. 284: ἀπαμαρσκάθη γεφευρα, 318: δάρκος, 325: μαστός τεθαύι and 243: ἀποθάνον τὰ δαίμονα. For Isis as Destroyer-Avenger see M. 25, 41, 46-7; A. 158-160, and H. Oxy. 239-42. Lines 16-18 of the present Hymn re-assert more strongly than 4-15 the royal goddess' protection of her favourite, the Pharaoh. The poet supports the 'rightful' King and his goddess. A reader might well surmise from lines 16-18 that massacres are being carried out by, or in the name of, some 'pretender' (12-15). The rightful King is seriously threatened and (in traditional language) is supported only by the 'few' (18). Yet he is 'most dear' to the powerful goddess (12) and therefore he, not his opponent, can bring the country prosperity (14-15). The

language is vague but perhaps intentionally so. It could date to the early years of
the restoration of Ptolemy IX, when his success was in doubt. From other sources
we know his position was doubtful until 84 B.C. The completeness of his
subsequent destruction of Thebes betrays to us his fear of the Theban priests who
had led the revolt. Lines 16-18 could well have been written between 88 and 84.

19-33. Summary. The second half of Hymn III begins with a new invocation
of Isis-Hermouthis as Agathethecle, Giver of all good things. It reflects the era
of peace succeeding the rebellion and strife of 16-18, and seems to continue lines
12-15. Here one cannot but catch the stress on Isis' observance of the citizens'
morals; the 'good,' those loyal to the King, she easily distinguishes from the 'bad.'
Moreover, she will perhaps attend the Thanksgiving festival when she can watch
men's behaviour at close hand, and rejoice with them in their Panegyric on 'the
twentienth of Pachon and Thoth.' At this time they will pay their 'tenth' to
the goddess and her family (and by implication their homage to the King).

19. κλίθει: cf. ll. 1. 1 37: κλιθέ μεν ἀργυρότητε. See note below.

20. ἄμφιβολη: cf. ll. 1 37: ἄργυρος ἐκ Χρύσην ἀμφίβολην. Isidorus' meaning
of ἄμφιβολη, of course, is different. In the Illiad it is 'bestride,'
meaning 'protect'; here it means 'go,' or 'move about.'

20-22. ἄ... ἄ... ἄ... ἄ... ἄ... ἄ... and 23-25: ἄ... καὶ... ἄ... καὶ... ἄ... καὶ. For ἄ repeated,
see ll. 1 138, 145, and Od. XV 84-5. Cf. also h. Hom. Apollo 208: ἄ, 211: ἄ... ἄ... ἄ... 212: ἄ... 214: ἄ... ; Sappho Fr. 35: ἄ Ἐκδωο οἱ Πάρος ἄ
Πάνωρος (an invocation to Aphrodite); h. Orph. XLIX 5 ff.; and especially h.
Orph. XXII 5 ff. (to Mise a 'daughter' of Isis), and h. Orph. LV 15 ἄ. See too
Horace Carm. III 21. Such formulae are epic-poetic and found very often in
invocations. See 23 and note, end.

21. βορέω... ἡνυπνων: the adjective means sweet-smelling. The
description of the 'pleasant' north wind betrays the Egyptian provenance of
Isidorus' Hymn. Cf. l 12. Incidentally, the north wind blows all year long in
Egypt and is cooling. For instance, an Egyptian inscription from Edfu asks
Renenute (Hermouthis) to come in a 'good north wind (Edfu, VII 243b). The
annual northern or etesian winds in Egypt were thought to cause the Nile flood.
The Ete CNs are equated here to 'Boreas,'

πέρατα: 'outermost regions.'

22. πίωνας: see πίναι l 10 above.

αὐτολαὶ ἡκλῶν: an epic formula; cf. Od. XII 4, and E. Ph. 504. h. Oxy.
157-9 says of isis: ἦ ημῶν ἐπ' ἀνατολῆς μέχρι ἄνασκο ὡ εἰσφέρεται.

23. Οὐλομιτων: cf. IV 3 below.

For Isis' association with the mountain Olympus, the traditional home of the
Greek gods, see A. 26-27: Ἓνω ἐγὼ τελευταλος ἐξ[ω]ρισε τέρμας Οὐλομιτων
κοτ χθόνα μηδελαίαν σκοτεινοί, h. Oxy. 129-30: τὴν ἐν Οὐλομιτων τενων
Cf. too M. 5: ἐγὼ εἰμι Κρόνου τυγάτηρ πρεσβύτατη and D. S. 1 27: 3: ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ
τοῦ νεωτάτου Κρόνου θεον τυγάτηρ πρεσβύτατη.


διανέως: is epic-poetic and means 'reach.' Cf. Solon 13.21-22: θείων ἑδοκ
αἰώνιοι διανέωι οὐρανοῖ. See also Od. XVIII 217, XIX 532. The imperfect tense is
odd.

Lines 20-22, introduced by ἃ, refer in rather whimsical order to the west,
west, south, north, and east. A new series of three introduced by ἃ καὶ seems to begin,
καὶ: Ὀλυμπον., 24: ἐν οὐρανῷ..., μετ᾽ ἀδανάτου (διάκειται), and 25: ἄρα καὶ
ἄνωθεν (ἀνακεῖται). The purely Greek side of the goddess’ mythology is apparent. The
lines sound formulaic; cf. Ovid, Metamorphoses, I 61-68, for a similar topos.

24. οὐρανῶι. The whereabouts of Olympos, Uranos, and the Uraniones (23)
is unimportant. All that matters is that the goddess can go anywhere, passing
freely over all cosmic boundaries.

ἕσις: an epic adverb. See e.g. ll. XX 155: ζεῖν δ᾽ ἡμενος ἤσις. Cf. ll. XIII 140,

μετ᾽ ἀδανάτους: it would seem that Isidorus has in mind some cosmic system
such as that described in Stob. I 41.45. See II 11, οὐρανόν ἄτανάτους and note
above. In his Hymn certain ἀδανάτουs, among whom is Isis, judge in οὐρανῶι,
Παιος, Isis’ son, is expressly located in ἄθροι (II 14) through which he daily
journeys (with his mother) and which he can be said to control (cf. 25 below). All
the living creatures of Isis-Heuretria (I 3, II 3) live on Ge, where men are
controlled by a King whose soul is partly divine, and therefore closely associated
(9) with the goddess-Heuretria who appears both on earth and in the
supra-terrestrial realms (20 ff). It may well be that Isis is actually thought of as a
Greek, motherly, Demiourgos controlling the whole system from without and
encountering men especially through the King and his ψυχή (12-15). Cf. Stob. I
41.45; Pl. Ti. 40c; Pl. R. 530a.

24. διανέως: see 1 6, εἰδικέ. In Isidorus’ Hymns. Isis-Hermouthis-
Agathethece-Deo, as the One, has entirely usurped the functions of the old Greek
deities traditionally concerned with δικη. She created justice (I 6); she presides
over it from her place among the Olympians (III 24); during her daily
journey with the sun, she constantly watches over and judges human actions, that
is, she judges their δίκη and εὐθεῖα (III 27). In fact, she has become the heavenly
judge. Her earthly house, her temple, incidentally is called ὅρμος δικαστάτου IV
6.

With the foregoing cf. M. 16: τὸ δίκασμον ἱερόν ἐπισάλλει; 35: ἐγὼ ὁ τῶν ἄδικων
πράξεως χειρὶς ἐπιπίπτει, 37: ἐγὼ τῶν δικαίων ἀμφιθετῶν τειμῶν; 38:
παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ τὸ δίκασμον ἱερὺν, and H. Oxy. 50: ἐν κυρίῳ πάλιν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τούτῳ
πρᾶξει, ἐν χειρὶ ἥκερ. See also H. Oxy. 34.

In 24-27, Isis watches from heaven over men’s δίκη, that is, their relationship
to other men, and their ἐθελεία, or their relationship to the gods. See 27 and
note below. This is a judgement of the living. But in Egyptian mythology Isis had
always been associated with a last judgement of men’s souls after death. And
indeed she appears sometimes in Greek and Latin hymns also in her Egyptian role
strange that in her homeland, in Isidorus’ Hymns, her interest throughout is in life and the living, in men’s welfare and their behaviour. She judges them like a parent, and a King, watching over them from above (24, 26); she rejoices with them, in person, participating in their festivals (28), and, most important, she comes instantly and in person to each whenever he calls on her in his human emergencies (134). The only condition is that they must be loyal to her and the King, her ‘son.’ Constantly she listens and answers prayers (135; II 29-30, 32-33; and III 35-36). She can, and does, prolong life for she can ward off death by helping the sick (I 29-34; II 7-8). But nothing at all is said by Isidorus about her power over, or judgement of men after, death.

25. ἡλιον . . . ἀρματα βίας: Plutarch, commenting on the sun’s journey by chariot, contrasts Egyptian tales of the sun’s journey by boat (de Is. 34): ἡλιον δὲ καὶ σελήνη σῶν ἀρματων ἀλλὰ πλαγιάς ὀχύμας χρωμένων περιελθὼς φασιν. Relying chiefly on Plutarch’s quotation, Müller (Isisaretaologie, p. 73 and notes, and p. 39, note 8) takes Isidorus’ line (25) to be purely Greek. Evidence for the belief in a daily journey of the Egyptian sun-god by boat is well attested; and it is also well attested (especially in late texts) that Isis, as here, accompanied him in his daily journey. Isidorus’ expression, therefore, is only partly Greek.

In the other aretaologies, Isis is similarly associated with the sun: M. 45: έγοι παρέβρεων τῷ τοῦ ἡλιον πορείᾳ. Cf. Harder Kypriakates, p. 27 on III 25. See also A. 137-9: ‘Ἄεινω παπτησόμενοι εἰς τὸν θεσμὸν θραίμοις καὶ με καλέωι παρέβρεων ἑλαθόντος δέ ἐν τοιοῖς συμφέρον ἄκτενεν κατ’ οποιοδήποτα ἀναδιερχόμενα, H. Oxy. 248: οὐ καὶ φοινίκῃ καὶ φλεγμάτων κυρία, and 157: ἠλιον ἰππότισις μέχρι δύσεως ὡν ἐπηρεάτες καὶ θεοὶ ἄκτενεν τῶν ὀι διώκοντα[ν] ὀι δεόνται. Isis is said to be car-borne in G. 17 (δισθάλαι). Delatte refers to coins of the Roman Empire which show her in a chariot. See Roscher, Lexikon II, p. 424. Cf. A. 30-32: . . . καὶ παραθέουσα Αἴλων πολέων ἀγήτορα δαίμονα κυκλοῦ τοῖς ἐλλήνουσις. Auleius has a more cosmic, less visual, image of her (Met. XI 14): τῷ ὀλύτορος ὀρθομένῳ, lumina solaein.

26. κόσμου: κόσμου, τό (cf. ἄγαν) is not found elsewhere. The late meaning of κόσμος (the whole inhabited world of men) is meant here. Cf. OGIS 458, 40; IG Rom. IV 982; Ev. Matt. 16.26. Men, not the physical world, are the goddess’ real concern.

κατοστοιχία: the sun is frequently mentioned as watching men’s acts from above. See ἐφόσον, 28 below. Zeus also keeps a like watch. In the aretaologies Isis has replaced Zeus. See deicēs, 24. Isis watches men from above: M. 44-45: ἕγοι ἐν ταῖς τοῦ ἡλίου αὑραῖς εἰς, ἐνωποφόρων τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου πορείᾳ. In M. 16-30, 32-38, and 52, she is essentially a goddess of men’s moral life, over which she can watch as she journeys daily in the sky. See H. Oxy. 87-8 for similar titles: ἐν Σαλαμώνιο κατοστία (cf. v. Groningen, De P. Oxy. on 87-8); 93: ἐν Λασκάραλος παντοτό(βο) 129: τῶν τολουσβεθαλῶν; Ανθ. 10: παντω[ρ]κοτο, and Kalbel, Epigrammata 985, 3-4 (Philae); ἐνθα παντω[το]τοις . . . Εἰς τὸν ό[λον ε[φ]] η[μ] κόσμου ϑητομένην.
The traditional formula in Egypt for the rebel against the (divine) King was ἀοσθῆ...θεὸν ἐχεῖτο. See L. Koenen, "Ein Einheimischer Gegenkönig in Aegypten," Chronique 34, 1959, pp. 110 ff., and C. B. Welles, JRS 28, 1938, pp. 41-9, P. Yale Inv. 1528. Impiety and treason always had been considered synonymous in Egypt. Conversely, loyalty to the King was 'piety': ἐνθαίμα. Cf. ἀνερῆν, line 28. There is not the precise distinction between δίκη and ἐνθαίμα in Egyptian thought that there is in Greek. See 24, ἀοσθῆς above. When Isidorus speaks of men's ἐνθαίμα, he is probably speaking as an Egyptian subject and means both loyalty to the King and to the royal goddess, Isis; δίκη to him may be much the same.

καθισμός: cf. κατοπτάνους 26. above. Isis' watch from above over men's morals is stressed in lines 24, 26, 27. See M. Vandoni, Prolegomena I, 1953, II Tempio di Madinet-Madi e Gli Inni di Isidoro, p. 118 notes 26-27. One strongly suspects that what Isidorus really means is that Isis watches to see who is loyal and who is not. For her watch also at close hand, see line 28.

28. ὧτα: 'in this place.'

πάρει: cf. I 3 above and note. It is an epic term for a god's presence at feasts, etc. See II X 217. Cf. II. 11. 458. It has the additional meaning, of course, of 'be present and help.' Cf. ll. XVIII 472; Od. XIII 393; A. Pers. 235; E. Or. 1159, etc.

ἰδεῖν ἀνερῆν: individual virtue, individual goodness, i.e. loyalty to the King.

The expression is very strange if it refers to the goddess' own ἀνερῆν (= vis divina). If it does, she observes her own 'virtue' as she attends the festival. This (to us) is mysterious language following what is singularly clear. Conceivably it could mean the annual 'miracle' of the harvest as evidence for her arête. At that time there was tangible evidence of a power at work, producing men's prosperity and good luck (μεγάλα χαρίτες, πλούτους). Cf. 4-6. Apuleius also refers to the 'miracle' of prosperity bestowed on adherents of the Egyptian cult, Met. XI 30: liberalis ... providentia.

The phrase, however, is much more simply taken as 'individual goodness' or 'virtue.' This meaning is also entirely appropriate to the context where it echoes lines 24 and 27. In the first century B.C. ἄρετη most frequently means 'belonging to an individual' as opposed to κοινός; and the usual meaning of ἀνερῆν (of an individual) is 'moral excellence, virtue' (see Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 1949-1952). ἀνερῆν here is probably equivalent to ἐνθαίμα and possibly δικαιοσύνη.
εφοράω: cf. κατοπτρίζω. 26. εφορᾶω is used in epic-poetic formulaic language for observation (of humans) by the sun. Cf. II. 111 277: δε πάντ’ ἔφορα ἱπποτικός καὶ πάντ’ ἐπακόειν. Zeus also watches men: . . . δε τε καὶ ἅλλες ἀθρώπους ἐφορᾶ καὶ τίνητοι δε τις ἀμαρτητος, as does Dike (Od. XIX 260) and the gods generally (Od. XVII 487). The verb is also used of keen human observation (Hdt. I 10).

29. τερπομένη: cf. τέρπω 5, τερπομένης II 27, and notes.

θυσλαίνει: the θυσλαί here, which Isis-Hermouthis' delights, probably therefore are first-fruits and incense, that is, the customary sacrifice to Renenet-Hermouthis, goddess of the cereal harvest: Cf. Macrobius, Satr. I.7.15, and V. Tran Tam Tinh, Le Culte d'Isis à Pompéi, Plate XXIII. The μύρα δεκάτη (II 23) and δεκάτη (32), in reality a tax and not a sacrifice, would have been presented at the first of the Panegyris and paid probably directly to the temple (see II 24 and note). The λαβάι τε καὶ θυσλαίας (29) were a later part of the Thanksgiving rites. The words are an archaic Greek formula; the δεκάτη (32) is noticeably not part of it. The offering of the tenth (as stated above) was delivered directly to the temple granaries. See II 23 and note.

This is the only mention in Isiac Greek hymns of libations and, in fact, of any offerings. Even prayer to Isis is not mentioned in any other artelogies, although we know from Apuleius that it was a natural response of the initiated. Apuleius, however, does not mention offerings; rather Lucius' gifts seem to prepare him for the goddess' service and for the trappings and general show of his initiation. There is, however, evidence for sacrifices to Isis/Hermouthis of Medinet Madi in the large altar of the first century B.C., situated south of the latest portal.

And V. Tran Tam Tinh, Le Culte d'Isis à Pompéi Plate XXIII, shows a priest attending a large altar in the foreground. It is garlanded and bears what appears to be flaming incense and fruit. Plate XII(4) shows another altar of burning incense, and Plate XXIV shows another large altar in the midst of worshipers. Something is heaped thereon, but it is difficult to make out.

30. Σύνοι: see IV 23, II 9. Συκονώμενες. There is much evidence to show Suchos' continued association with the area about the town of Arsinoe. In Greek accounts, the Fayum is η Ἰάμη and δ' Λυμνής (νομίς). The term 'Fayum' is Coptic: Phion' means sea; the district was considered to be the site of the great primordial sea. (Cf. Kees, Ancient Egypt, pp. 214 ff.). Herodotus says its chief city was Κροκόπερα τῶν Πυκνῶν, which is shown in Egyptian texts to be famous for its very ancient sanctuary of the crocodile god Sbk. (See H. Gauthier, Nomes, n. 7, and references; D. S. I 89; and Str. XVII 1, 35.)

Crocodilopolis was renamed 'Arsinoe' by Ptolemy II. (See H. Gauthier, Nomes, n. 7, Brady, Reception, quoting U. Wilcken, Zeits. Gesells. für Epikumde,
22, p. 85, and Otto, Priester und Tempel, 1.2, n. 2.) At Arsinoe F. Petrie found frequent references to Sebek and a cemetery of innumerable mummified crocodiles. (See Petrie, Hawara, Bubastis, and Arisinoe, pp. 9 ff.) Not one but numerous crocodile cults existed. In the Hymns of Isidorus, Sokonopis is more or less a local form of the great god Suchos. These cults must have also flourished throughout the whole Delta region (particularly in the west), but the centre of Such's worship seems always to have been in the Fayum.

Ἀρσινώεις: the city, Crocodilopolis, although re-named Arsinoe by Ptolemy II for his second wife, continued to be known by its ancient name as well. Cf. Pliny, H. N. V 61. One of the greatest national projects of the Ptolemies was the second Ptolemy's reclaiming of the Fayum, which had reverted by Hellenistic times to a large marsh called Lake Moeris. See Bell, JEA 29, 1943, pp. 37-50. Under Philadelphus' influence, many new Greek towns were built and settled throughout the enlarged Fayum, and its periphery which was chiefly desert. See Σωκρ., 30. The Medinet Madi Hellenistic temple-complex stands in the remote south, and is later than Philadelphus. The ancient name of the immediate south area and its history are unknown.

This whole district was not originally independent, but part of the 21st Nome of Upper Egypt. And it is not known if, when it was re-organized by Ptolemy II, the newly enlarged area became a separate Lake District or remained part of the old Nome XXI of the Pharaohs. Probably some change occurred for δ' Λαμη (or δ' Λαμητής νομός) disappeared completely in the last years of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (ca. 246 B.C.) and became instead (b) 'Ἀρσινώεις νομὸς or, as here, Σωκρ. νομὸς 'Ἀρσινώεις. See H. Gauthier, Nomos, n. 7.

31. παλίκλα: εἶθεν: mingled, or mixed, tribes or races. For the εἶθεν of the Arsinoite Nome after 148 B.C., see J. F. Oates, YCS 18, 1963, pp. 72 ff. By the first century B.C. it is abundantly clear that few families would be of unmixed descent. Intermarriage had been taking place; probably an entirely new ethnic group and culture was emerging in the Fayum. See below, εἴθεν.

εἶθεν: Ptolemy II had colonized the cities of his newly reclaimed Arsinoite Nome with soldiers. When Egyptian natives settled with them, the institutions of the two peoples flourished side by side. Foreigners and natives entering the newly reclaimed land of the Fayum together (cf. Brady, Reception, pp. 13 ff. and 30) did not face, as in the rest of Egypt, an old established civilization. The effort to preserve a XIIth Dynasty chapel within the Hellenistic temple at Medinet Madi undoubtedly reveals the newcomers' efforts to associate themselves with authentic relics of Egypt's remote past. And, of course, at or near Crocodilopolis a native settlement with an elaborate temple had also endured.

After the middle of the second century B.C., large, prosperous temple establishments, as in the rest of Egypt, became in the Fayum religious focal points for all inhabitants. By 145-30 B.C. Greeks seem generally to have accepted the native deities (see Brady, Reception, p. 16). That is (by implication), the foreign population and their descendants in this area resorted to the worship of the
crocodile god, Souchos, Hermouthis the harvest goddess, and hero-gods like Pormarres and Amenophis. (See Brady, Reception, p. 34 quoting Aegyptus 7, 1926, pp. 113-38, and Festschrift Ebers, pp. 107-116. For Pormarres, see Archiv 4 p. 211). There was emerging with the new, mixed ethnic group, a religious culture that drew from both Greek and Egyptian cults.

32. εἰκατὰ μήνα Παχών καὶ Θότ: for μήνα Παχών see II 26, above.

εἰκάσθη: for the 20th of a month in the Greek calendar as a great, or lucky, day, see Hes. Op. 792-3. This, however, may have had little or nothing to do with the fixing in the Fayum of Pachon 20 as a festival.

Pachon 20 and Thoth are to be taken here as one fixed date. Cf. II 26, above, where only the month is given. Isidorus states there that tithes are paid and the harvest Panegyrie is celebrated in Pachon. For another reference to Pachon 20 at Medinet Madi see Vogliano, Mostra delle Antichità, Tav. 27, quoted by M. Vandoni, Prolegomena II, 1953, il Tempio di Madinet-Madi e Gli Inni di Isidoro, p. 118, n. 32.

We know from the dedications on the pillars at the south portal that the proastin and its lions were dedicated on Pachon 2. Thoth, traditionally the first month of the Egyptian year, is joined here to Pachon by καὶ; like Isidorus' nouns joined in this way, it is probably in the same case as Pachon. It is therefore equated to Pachon 20 and to be translated: on the 20th of the month of Pachon and Thoth. The date in Thoth is not given; μήνα almost surely goes with both month-names.

Isidorus must be following a practice elsewhere attested in references to calendars and religious events — designating a day of observation in terms both of the civil and religious calendars. With both an old temple lunar calendar and a lunar schematic calendar as possibilities for one aspect of the double date, and the civil calendar the probable reference in the other, it is difficult to make firm determinations.

The date of the harvest festival of Hermouthis seems to have been Pachon 1 (of the civil calendar; see also M. Vandoni, Prolegomena II, 1953, il Tempio di Madinet-Madi e Gli Inni di Isidoro, p. 118, n. 32, quoting Alliot, Les Cultes d'Horus à Edfou, p. 227), but Isidorus, contrary to what we might expect, does not mention either this traditional date, Pachons 1, or even 2, the date on which the proastin and lions were dedicated to Hermouthis and Soknopaios. Yet his 'Pachon 20 and Thoth' must be related to that well known date, Pachon 1 (or 2), for one can hardly suppose the 'Pachon' of Hymns II and 'Pachon 20' of II are festivals not connected with the well known ancient Harvest and Thanksgiving event.

As to Thoth, the first day was traditionally the Egyptian New Year and associated with all sorts of Isisic celebrations: the heliacal rise of Sothis-Isis, the coming of the Nile flood (Osiris), and Isis' marriage. Hymns II and III are, however, not at all concerned with any of these. Rather, they were written specifically for the goddess' Harvest Festival eight months later and the
presentation to her at that time of the apomoria tax. See II 23 and note. Reference to the New Year when the Nile flood had just arrived at the Fayum Lake would be quite inappropriate. Therefore, Thoth must be not a Thoth-festival but merely a date which is equated to the given date in Pachon.

**δεκάτην:** cannot be taken with Θεώθ. It would have to be δεκάτην. It must refer to the (μείωσ) δεκάτην of II 23. Here it is the direct object of ἀγαθής (32). See below.

ἀγαθής; see δεκάτην above. For the meaning, ‘celebrate a festival,’ i.e. ἑορτή or ἐορτή (33) ἄγεω, see Hdt. I 147, 150. (Cf. ἑορτή ποιεῖν of LXX Ex. 23.16.) The participle probably governs both nouns. It is an instance of zeugma: bring (their) tenth and celebrate the festival. Literally, the tenth itself and the Feast may both be thought of as offerings to the goddess and her symnoi gods.

33. 'Ἀγχώτει Σοκονόπιτι: cf. II 8-14, 32-33, IV 5-6. The goddess’ festivals, like the temple cult, are shared by Anchones and Sokonopis, her ‘family’ of gods. The local forms of Suchos were frequently associated with the harvest-godess, Hermouthis (see II 9 and note); and Anchones may represent Hermouthis’ son, commonly called Napre, the corn-god (see II 13 and note). The great goddess Isis is, in fact, equated here to three goddesses, Hermouthis, Demeter, and Agathe Tyche, and Isis’ ancient association with Osiris is hidden in Sokonopis’ name. (See Sokonopis, II 9.) Anchones — The Living One — is undoubtedly related more closely to Horus than Napre. (See II 13.)

34-36. Summary. In the conclusion to Hymn III, Isis-Hermouthis and her family of gods are asked to send Paean, the divine Healer, to Isidorus.

34. **μελανθησαρέ**: the same epithet is used to describe Isis’ priests at Delos who dedicate gifts to her and her family (second century B.C.). See SIG 977a.2; IG XI 4 1249, 1250 = SIG 1134 (cf. IG XI 4 1226); and Bull Inst. 1874, p. 105. **μελανθησαρέ** ἄνθρωπος occurs in h. Orph. XVII 9 (to Mise, a daughter of Isis). Apuleius translating and elaborating on **μελανθησαρέ** says: palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore (Met. XI 3-4). Cf. Janus 1, 1896-97, pp. 194 ff., 205, ‘Das Gewand der Isis.’ In the last, her robe is said to be ‘Egyptian.’ Hermouthis wears a dark robe, Plate XIV.

35. **ἀμήνος**: cf. I 36, ἐκαθαρσίνος. The adjective seems to be a synonym for ἀμήνος, which is frequent in Orphic hymns. See h. Orph. XVIII 9; XVIII 19.

36. **Παίαν**: Παίαν is Homer’s physician of the Olympian gods. For ‘Pajawon’ as a healing deity in Linear B, see Ventris and Chadwick, Documents in Mycenaean Greek, p. 126; and J. Chadwick, The Decipherment of Linear B, p. 124. Mycenaean Pajawon is obviously Paian or Paeian of later Greek; and Apollo’s antecedent, or ‘son.’ Cf. E. Alc. 121-126 and 220-225. Later, Paian could be a title of other gods and meant generally ‘Healer.’ But in Egypt, Paian himself seems still to be a god and is addressed as Giver of the Nile; or he is Apollo as at Ptolemais, in a hymn to Asklepios (see Powell, Collectanea Alexandrina, p. 138. In the present passage, he is probably the Greco-Egyptian
Hymn IV (Plate IX)

tόδε ἂγρον ἔδειξεν ἴδρὼν Ἐρμοῦθι μεγάτην;
ποίκ θεός ἐμφάνισεν πανερέος μακάρων;
Ὡς αὐτῶν καὶ ἄδετων ἐπιμηκώσατ' Ὀλυμπον
Δηρὶ βήσατα θείας θεσμοφορως.
καὶ Ἀγάση νῦν καὶ ἄμωμον ἄγαθικός Σωκοῦρα, ἄθανατος ὄρμον εὖρε δικαιῶταν.
Ἀγάπτω ταῦτα φασὶ γενέσθαι θείαν ἄνακτα,
διὰ πάσης χώρας κύριος ἐξεφάνη,
πλοῦσιν, ἐβοσέθα, διώκει τά ποίημα τε μεγάλητα
διὸ κλέος καὶ ἀρετὴν ἔχειν ἱσορρόπων,
τοῦτοι γὰρ καὶ γαῖα ἄστικος ἤτοι τὸ δίκαιον καὶ ποταμῶν πάντων χάματα καλλιρρόης,
καὶ προκαὶ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἡλίος, ὡς ἑλίκι φέγγος
ἀντέλλων φανεῖ τάσιν ἄρτηρετέα.
καὶ πτημῶν τε γένητ' ἰμαθίμασθαι ἐκλεῖν αὐτὸν
καὶ τὰς ἐπιστέλλων πάντα ἐπικοινώνης ἐν.
Δῆλον τούτῳ εἶναι ὅτι ἄρθρα ἐκλεῖν αὐτῷ
ὡς οἱ τῶν ἱερῶν γράμμα ἀναλεξάμενοι
φάοκουσι ποτὲ τοῦτον ἐπιστελλαντα, κορώνην,
οὗτος τε ἐκεῖνου τε ἐνθεός φάοιν,
οὐ γὰρ ἐν δειούς τε ἐν δικαίος,
ἄλλως θεοῦ μεγάλος ἐγχώρος ἄξιος,
Σοῦχον πανκράτορος μεγάλον μεγάλον τε μεγάτων
δαίμονας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὅταν ἀνάξ ἔφασιν.
Μετροπάτωρ τούτοις δ’ εἴστω ὑψηλὸς ἡ μεριστήσης,
Ἀμων, δοὺ καὶ Ζεὺς Ἐλλάδος ἡ δ’ Ἀσίας,
τοῦκα καὶ τοῦ πάντα ἐπικός, δοῦτ’ ἐπὶ γαῖαν
ἐρτέτα καὶ πτημῶν ὑβριστῶν τε γένη,
οὐναμα δ’ ἢ παταπτί πτοίκων, καὶ τίς τόδε ἐθήκε
κοίρανος ἡ βασιλεύς ἡ τοις ἰδανάστοις;
δ’ ὑβρίσας Σεισμόνας, δοὺ οἰνοποιοῦ ὑπερ’ ὀθάντας,
οὐναμα ἐθήκε καλώς ἡλίον ἐφεγέγερσιν.
‘Ερμηνευκάμενοι δ’ Ἀγάπτω τοῦτον ὅσοι
Who built this holy temple to greatest Hermouthis?
What god remembered the All-Holy One of the Immortals?
He marked out the sacred shrine as a high Olympos.
For Deo Highest, Isis Thermophorus,
for Anchoes the Son, and the Agathosdaimon, Sokonopsis,
Immortals (all), he created a most fitting (or most just) haven.
A certain one, they say, was born a divine King of Egypt;
his name, yes, and virtue that rivaled the gods’
for to him the earth and sea were obedient,
and the streams of all the beautiful-flowing rivers,
and the breath of the winds, and the sun which shows sweet light,
and on his rising (is) visible to all.
The races of winged creatures with one accord would listen to him
and he instructed all who heard his voice.
The fact is clear that the birds obeyed him
as those who have read the Sacred Scriptures
speak of this king once entrusting a written message to a crow
and she flew off with the letter, bearing his utterance (?)
[or: she returned bearing a verbal message together with a written reply].
(It is so) for he was not a mortal man, nor was he son of a mortal man
but as offspring of a god, great, and eternal,
even of Souchos, all powerful, very great, omnipotent,
and the Agathosdaimon, he the son appeared on earth as a King.
The maternal grandfather of this god is the Distributor of Life,
Ammon, who is Zeus of Hellas and Asia.
For this reason all things heard his voice, all things
that move on earth and the races of winged heavenly creatures.
What was the name of this one? What ruler, 30 what king, or who of the Immortals, determined it?  
(Why) the one who nurtured him, Sesooisis, he who has gone to the Western Heaven,  
gave him a fair name, ‘Son of the Golden Sun.’  
When the Egyptians say his name (in their language) they call (him)  
‘Porramanres, the Great, Deathless.’
I have heard from others a miracle that is a riddle: 35 how he ‘navigated on the desert by wheels and sail.’  
Reliably learning these facts from men who study history,  
I myself have set them all up on inscribed pillars  
and translated (into Greek) for Greeks the power of a Prince who was a god,  
power such as no other mortal has possessed.  
Isidorus wrote (it).

Hymn IV is a sacred story from Egyptian scriptures retold by Isidorus to enlighten the Greeks.


1. ἔδειξεν: an epic-poetic verb for constructing large projects.

ἰερόν: the temple-complex, manifestly Greco-Egyptian in origin, is referred to as Olympus (3) and as an anchorage or haven (6). It included a XIth Dynasty chapel, several large Hellenistic temples, and a priestly community engaged in the cults of at least three gods (5) as well as of the divine founder. τὸ ἱερὸν here means the temple-community rather than merely the material structure.

Εὐχαριστή: see I 1; II 2, 29; III 1, above; also Plates IX-XIII. For her Thanksgiving festival at the temple, see II 21-28 and III 28-33.

2. ποίει: a puzzling reading, possibly for ποιέω. A parallel seems to be: Προεδραίας for Προεδραίος. See P. H. Wiss. 23. 19. 29 (165 B.C.) and P. Teb. 24. 81 (117 B.C.). Wilhelm thought of reading τίνα instead of ποίει; from this he conjectured τίς (κ) was meant (Sitz. Ber. Wiener Akad. 224, 1946 (1) p. 47). But the photograph shows ποίει with a clear five-bar sigma. However neither the pi nor the iota are entirely clear in the photograph, while the omicron seems deeper, clearer, and smaller than these letters. See Plate IX.

θεός: the photograph shows the final letter clearly as Ζ, which could be an incomplete five-bar sigma. The god is the Egyptian king, Porramanres. of 34. On the divinity of the Egyptian King, see Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 26-35.

ἐπιτίθη: cf. ἐπιτίθετος II 21 above. The act of recalling, or heeding, implies a gift to the deity.

3. The line is to be best construed as: καὶ ἰδοὺεν ἔκτισικεν· ως αἰρὼν
νειν: it is interesting to note that the innermost XI1th Dynasty shrine was on an upper level. See Chapter I, note 14. For the cliché, aηειν ορφανοί, see Solon 13.21-22 (quoted at III 23).

Ολύμπος: see III 23; also aηειν immediately above. Like Olympus, any Egyptian temple was considered an earthly dwelling-place for gods. The temple-community could also be viewed as an ‘image’ of the world, a microcosm. See Rochemontois, Oeuvres choisies (1897)?.

4. Δησί: cf. I 3; III 2, above and notes. Here as in I, Δησί is qualified by τύπτη.

ψύστη: see I 3 above. Cf. III 1.

θεομοφόρος: cf. I 6, θεομοφός, above. See also I 3, Δησί. For a bibliography of Thesmophorus, see Müller, Isisaroslagen, p. 26, note 2. θεομοφόρος is a common Greek epithet for Demeter. See for example Hdt. VI 91, 134; D. S. I 14. It is used also of Persephone (Ar. Th. 83; Pl. fr. 37) and of Dionysus (h. Orph. XVII 1). Isis has obviously been given an Eleusinian title. Müller considers the epithet Thesmophorus came directly from her assimilation with Demeter, and not from Egyptian theology, although several of the Egyptian gods in the New Kingdom were ‘law-givers’ (Müller, Isisaroslagen, pp. 26-7).

M. 4 also states (of Isis): άγα τε άγα ή θεομοφόρος καλομένη.

5. The scansion of the line seems to be:

καί Αγατόνιον και δαμάων, άγαθον Σοκονώτι.

Άγατος: see II 13-14. Cf. ibid., 32-33; III 33, 35.

δαμάων άγαθόν Σοκονώτι: see II 9-12; cf. III 33, 35.


For Hathor (perhaps equated to Isis) as a saving goddess of the sea, see Morenz. Ag. Religion, pp. 247 ff. Isis herself is entitled δρόμοπε, H. Oxy. 15-16, and 74; and Isis’ priest tells Lucius: Ad portum quietis . . . venisti (App. Met. XI 15.1).
eōpe: founded, created. Cf. I 8; also eιρέτρια I 3; II 3. This is a non-Greek meaning assumed by the verb. Cf. LFS, ειρίκω III.

δικαίοτάτου: for Isis associated with δικαιοσύνη, δίκη, δικαίος, κτλ. see I 6 (δικαιοσύνη) and III 24 (δικαίος). For the later meaning, see LFS δικαίος B. But see also note on III 24.

7-36. Summary. These 30 lines tell the story of the miracles of the god-king and folk-hero, Porrancmarres (34), son of Sesosisis (31). He is usually considered to have been the Xliith Dynasty Pharaoh variously known as Amenemhet III, Amenemes, Ameres, Lamanis, Lamabes, Moiries, and Moiris. In the late period the folk-hero's name appears as Porrancmarres, Pormarres, Prenmarres, Premarres, Pormarres, Pormarres, Pormarres, Pormarres, and Pormarres of the magical texts. These names seem all to mean 'Pharaoh Maeres.'

Traditionally Porrancmarres was associated with the successful control of the waters of the Fayum lake, Lake Moeris; and so his name had continued to be remembered in the Fayum where, in the late Ptolemaic era, he was the object of the popular folk-cult. Some suspect it was fostered by Ptolemy II Philadelphiaus (see III 30) who had built a new irrigation system and planted many colonies of Greeks and Egyptians in the newly reclaimed land. Isidorus ignores Philadelphiaus' works. The statue of Porrancmarres had been set up in Fayum temples beside those of the royal gods and local divinities like Hermouthus and Sokonopis. A synod of Pormarres had been established by Soter III's predecessor.

From the evidence of the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the walls of the Xliith Dynasty chapel at Medinet Madi, both Amenemhet III and Amenemhet IV were remembered at the temple. Isidorus does not use this Dynasty name nor does he mention Porrancmarres' successor, but he does correctly name Sesosisis (= Sen-Usert, Sesostiris) as the Dynasty name of the King's father. Sesostiris III immediately preceded Amenemhet III. See W. Helck, Untersuchungen zu Manetho und den Agyptischen Königslisten, 1956, pp. 60 ff. Cf. the incorrect surmise of Herodotus (II 101-2) and Diodorus (I 51.5).

Although the name Porrancmarres is well known in the Fayum, at the Medinet Madi temple Isidorus' Hymn alone mentions him. Moreover, his story of Porrancmarres' pet crow (19-20) is corroborated by Aelian's tale of the tomb and stele of Pharaoh Mares' pet crow at Arsinoe-Grokolopolis (Ael. de Nat. An. VI 7).

7. ἄνακτα: see III 12, above.

8. πλατὸς χώρας (κύριος): cf. III 12-13. It means the whole earth. Cf. Ank. 9; H. Oxy. 121; and A. 7-9. This is probably not merely Hellenistic universalism. The ancient concept was even more bombastic, that the Egyptian king was the successor to the Creator, and so in his origin he was close to, if not in reality, the prototype of all kings. He was, in imagery, the champion of all cosmic order. See Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 148-9.

ἐξεσάνθη: for ἐκφαίνει referring to human birth, see II XIX 104: σήμερον ἄνδρα φέωσαι Ἑλληνικό ἐκφαίνει. In the passive it also means to shine forth, as in
Il. XIX 17, and may (perhaps by borrowing the metaphor of the sun) refer to a sudden appearance, an epiphany. In Egyptian thinking the sun is the prototype of the Pharaoh. See φέγγος, 13, below.

9. ἐκεῖθεν: cf. 61 6; 111 4, 27. As in 111 6, wealth and moral goodness are concomitants: goodness brings wealth. The king is expected to be in tune, as it were, with the divine, and the mediator between his people and the gods. He will himself be blessed, and able to bless his people with material rewards.
           ἰσάμενος πάσης τε μεγαλορ: he is the strongest of all the kings in the world. For this use of the dative see Kühner-Gerth, Grammatik, 2(1), 433 ff. Translate: of omnipotent power.

10. κλέος καὶ αρετὴ ... ιουνάων: cf. Od. VIII 74: κλέος οἰρανῶν ... ἱερείᾳ With ιουνάων: action, power, etc. compare III 28 above. αρετὴ usually, of a human, ranges from general moral excellence to a specific virtue. But the arete of a god is equivalent to divina via; it is discussed above, 111 27. Isidorus uses the word in its fullest sense here for the King is both man and god.

The metre is faulty. Of κλέος the second syllable is scanned as short in spite of the two consonants following. Also καὶ here long, would be shortened by a better poet.

In lines 11-14 the King is Lord of all the elements, earth, water, air, and fire. The Egyptian King is said in inscriptions to have had much the same vast elemental power as is described here. He is, for instance, often equated to the Nile as Bringer of Fertility and Riches. For references from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see D. Müller, Isisretdologien, p. 62, n. 10. Annually on Thoth 1, the beginning of the Egyptian New Year, the king repeated Horus' victory over Seth, that is, the Nile's annual conquest of the western desert's drought and winds. See OGIS 90.23-7 (the Rosetta Decree).

13. νομις ἰδέων: see 110.

φέγγος: the Egyptian king is Horus, the sun-god. The same god both makes the physical sun shine and sits on the throne of Egypt. The verb θέω is used for the rising of the sun and the appearance of the Pharaoh at his accession, at festivals, and on his throne. See Frankfort, Kingship, p. 57.

14. διαπρεπέως: conspicuously, visibly, so as to be easily seen. It refers to the King's power over the physical sun and is theological. Its prominence in the line shows it is significant: the King being the True Sun (Re etc.) controls Helios who is the True Sun's visible image. See Frankfort, Kingship, p. 57; διαπρεπέως implies that ἡλίος can be seen: the True Sun cannot.

15. ἐκλέω: cf. 135; 111 32; 111 19, above. C. B. Welles suggests that the king appears to have been a kind of Orpheus. The anecdote begun in line 15 runs through to 20.

16. ἐπανέτελε ... ἡ: an awkward periphrasis for ἐπανέτελε. Line 16 appears to repeat 15 (see 17 and note below). The lines could be an instance of the so-called Oriental Parallelismus Membrorum. See Müller, Isisretdologien, p. 74 (re M. 55).
ἐπίκοιον: contrast ὑπόκοιος, II; ἐπίκοιος, possibly more literal than ὑπόκοιος; may mean listening, giving ear to.

17. ἐπετεῖα ἐκλαυε... αἰων.: repeats 15 and τάδ᾿... πάντα ἐπίκοιον. 16. Similar repetition occurs in lines 2 and 7. Cf. III 14-15.

18. τῶν ἱερῶν: may be ‘of the temples.’ But οἱ ἱεροὶ may also mean the initiated, the members of a religious colony. See IG V 1.1390. 1.

γράμμα ἀναλέξαμενοι: see Call. Epigr. 25: τὸ περὶ ψυχῆς γράμμα ἀναλεξάμενος. Isidorus’ expression closely resembles it. See too ibid., 23.4. Apparently Isidorus cannot read hieroglyphs. Welles suggests that τῶν ἱερῶν γράμμα ἀναλεξάμενοι may be a periphrasis metri gratia for such a phrase as ἱερογραμματείας.

This is evidence for holy scripture in hieroglyphs. A magical papyrus from Leyden mentions a holy scripture by ‘birds’ (ὄρνισθολόδαι). See P. Mag. Leid. W 2.37, 4-22.

19. ἐπιστεύεται: supply εἶναι. It stands for ἐπιστεύειν. Cf. the periphrasis ἐπιστεύεται... ἦν 16. Periphrases such as this are a Koine characteristic. See Appendix.

κορώνησι: for reference to what appears to be the same crow see Aelian, NA VI 7, quoted by Vogliano, P. R., p. 47. For stories of other miraculous birds in Egypt see D. S. I 87.8; XVII 49.5. See also the summary of 7-36 above.

20. ἐπιστεύοις: ἐπιστεύοις is a diminutive of ἐπιστεύειν. There is a jingle here with ἐπιστεύεται in 16, and ἐπιστεύεται in 19.

φάντασμα: φάντασμα means word, (oral) report. Cf. πέμψαν μου τὴν φάντασμα in P. Oxy. 2149.17 (second/third centuries A.D.). Wilhelm conjectured φάντασμα and Harder πάλιν. The photograph, however, shows very clearly φάντασμα.

Line 20 appears to be the immediate result of 19, and, in fact, almost an instance of Parallelismus Membrorum. Cf. 16 and note. Probably the King instructed the bird and it flew off with his message in a letter to deliver it to the one addressed. Aelian’s story of Mares’ crow expands the same tale. See 19, above. It was his swiftest messenger, for as soon as it heard his instructions it knew exactly where to fly.

21. The line scans as an hexameter only if ἄμφενος is taken as a dactyl. 21 and 22-24 are to be taken together, for lines 22-24 repeat 21 in a slightly different fashion (again Parallelismus Membrorum). 15-16 and 19-20 are other instances of the same. Cf. I 3, 6.

22. θεός μεγάλον: this is the language of Egyptian temple inscriptions. Cf. SEG VIII 536-7. The various forms of Sebek’s name are often found with μεγάς etc. See Σουχού, 23 below.

ἀναντου: ‘ever-flowing’ (Hes. Op. 595); or ‘everlasting’ (Simon. 4.9, Pi. O. 14. 12). The meaning is equivalent to ἀκαθάν. The XIIth Dynasty hieroglyphic inscription to Skh and Rnnt refers to their gift of eternity to the king. See Vogliano, S. R., pp. 17 ff.

23. Σουχού: cf. III 30 and note, also Σουχού, 15 and note. Σουχού

παγκράτωρ: first known use of παγκράτωρ. It is next found in Susa in the first century A.D. See SEG VII 134. Possibly its use here is an attempt to translate an Egyptian title of Shk into Greek. Cf. Isermuthis as παροκάτευρα I 2, and Hermes (Thoth?) in Crete as παροκάτευρα, Kaelbel, *Euphr.* 865.

μεγάλου κτλ.: an attempt, no doubt, to reproduce the language of temple inscriptions. Cf. θεός μεγάλου 22. The piling up of repetitions of μέγας and synonyms was intended to convey great holiness; it replaces more specific epithets (δεινός in 22, παγκράτωρ in 23). The doubling of μέγας is particularly common in Egypt. See e.g. SEG VIII 498: Σαοριτήν τών τε μεγάλων μεγάλως. Perhaps μεγάλου μεγάλον τε μεγάτον is intended really as a strengthened superlative form, like Trismegistos, but Vogliano considers the first century B.C. to be too early for such an interpretation (P. R., pp. 47-48). Merkelbach, “Note Critiche e Filologiche, Osservazioni Critico-Testuali Agli Inni Isiaci di Isidoro,” *La Parse* del Passato 103, pp. 252, 298-9, suggests plausibly that Isidorus wrote: παγκράτωρ μεγάλου μεγάλον τε μεγάτον. Cf. App., *Met.* XI 30: Deus deum magnum potior et potentior summus et maximorum regnator Osiris. He thinks the stone mason erred because he knew μέγας μεγάς as used in Egypt. See, e.g., OGIS 176.4; 178.3; 90.19; μέγας, etc., is very common in papyri. For instance, Isis is μεγαλά μέγιστο θέω in P. Strassb. 81.14 (second century B.C.), and Horus is μεγαλάψικε παί (Stob. I 41. 44. 973, and 981) and μεγαλάΘεός (ibid., 974).

24. ἀνάε ἐφάνη: cf. κύριος ἐξεφάνη, line 8. Obviously the language is formulaic.

25. μεριπότωρ: cf. ll. XI 224. This is the lineage on the mother’s side.

Σωίς ὁ μεριστής: μεριστής is perhaps a Greek translation of an Egyptian title of Ammon. Cf. Poll. 4. 176; P. Mag. Lekl. 14.42 and Vett. Val. 62. 4 (where μεριστής χρόνων Σωίς means Lord of the Horoscope). Or μεριστής may refer to a primeval divider of heaven and earth. Various Egyptian gods are said to have ‘separated earth from heaven’ at the time of Creation, e.g. Schu, Wepwawet, Osiris-Ptah-Sekaris, and Haroeris-Sch. For Wepwawet see ll. 9, note. The Greek word δαιμών = god in later times was etymologically derived from δαιμόν = μεριστής.

26. Ἀμών κτλ.: Herodotus equates Zeus of Greece to Ammon/Amon of Thebes (II 33, 42); Pindar calls Ammon ‘The Libyan Zeus’ (P. 4.16).

27. τῶς: the divine founder of the temple. See 7 ff.

27-28. δια... ἐπετείρα κτλ.: ἐπετείρα, ἐπιω, κτλ. are formulae for ‘earth-bound’ or ‘earthly’ creatures. Cf. ll. XVII 447; Alcm. 60.3; Cleanthes 1 5. See too Horace, *Satires* I 3. ἐπετείρα is, in fact, contrasted with περεταί by Herodotus (I 140).

28. ποτασία: ποτασία is a frequent Koine adjective, equivalent to τίς. See 2 above and note.
τις τῶν ἔθεμε: cf. the language of Ἱ: τις τῶν ἔθεμε. The answer here, however, is different: Sesōsis (31). But just as in lines 1-2, 7 ff., the questions of 29-30 are at once answered by the poet himself. The information shows a noticeable variation from the extant hieroglyphic inscriptions of the inner temple where Amenemhet IV, the successor, not the predecessor, of Amenemhet III is mentioned. See Voglano, S. R., pp. 17 ff.

τίθημι with ὁλοκαίναρ is a well known idiom. It appears to mean compose, determine, institute, think of first. That is, the expression keeps some of the dignity of its early use in, for example, Od. VIII 465. It even implies artistic achievement as in the English ‘compose,’ ‘execute,’ or ‘create.’ Cf. ὁλοκαίναρ 116, and note. The god in question (Sesōsis of line 31), being the earthly father of Porramantes (34) gave his son a divine title, thus making him heir to the throne. For the bestowing of a crown prince’s (that is, a Pharaoh’s) early titles, see Frankfurt, Kingship, pp. 46-7. Frankfurt lists them in order as (1) the title ‘Horus;’ (2) the ‘Nebry’ title (from the tutelary goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt); (3) ‘Horus of Gold,’ a name symbolizing either the imperishable brightness of the sun or Horus’ victory over Seth; (4) ‘King of Upper and Lower Egypt;’ (5) ‘Son of Re;’ (6) the nomen which the king had received at birth, and which seems closely combined with 5. Isidorus appears in 32 to mention 3, 5 and 6. The translation of ἡλιος ἐνεψυγενις as ‘Son of the Golden Sun’ is a compromise; the expression may refer to ‘Horus as Victor over Seth,’ as well as meaning ‘Son of Re.’

The style of this Hymn is quite unlike Hymns I-III. The questions of 1-2 are answered in 7-20. Thereafter lines 21-26 interrupt the narrative with a laudatory refrain. Lines 27-28 resume narration, and two new questions are asked in 29-30. These are immediately answered in 31-32, and the lines that follow them revert to the story of the divine founder of the temple, Porramantes, whose name, after some suspense, is finally given at line 34. The last two adjectives of this line may be unimportant, and merely serve to extend the king’s titles throughout the line. In narrating the story in this prolix fashion Isidorus could be following some elaborate priestly account. He says as much in 18-19 and 37-39. Incidentally, his mention of the temple, line 1, merely serves to introduce his story of its founder.

31. Σεσοίσις: for the story of the same king (called Σεσοίσις), see Hdt. II 102, 104, 110; and D. S. 155. For Σεσοίσις see Plu. de Is. 24; Tac. Ann. II 60; Strabo, 769; Josephus, contra Apionem, I 98. 102 (quoting Manetho’s story of ‘Sethosis’ = Ramses); Eusebius in Dindorf, Georgius Syncellus, Corp. Script. Hist. Byz. Par. vii, 111-112. For the history of Sesostis/Sen-Usert I, II, III, see H. Kees, Ancient Egypt, and J. A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt. The dynastic name is variously transliterated: Sesoois, Sesostrias, Sesostis, Sethosis, Sen-Usert, Senusert, etc. In lists of Thirteenth Dynasty kings, given by R. Lepsius, Uber die Zwölften Königsdynastie, Berlin, 1851, and W. Helek, Untersuchungen zu Manetho und den Ag. Königlisten, 1956, pp. 60 ff. Sesostris III, Amenemhet III, and Amenemhet IV, appear in this order at the end of the dynasty. Isidorus
agrees with Lepsius’ list when he says ‘Amenemhet’ (Porrannares) follows Sesostris (Sesoisis), and the temple hieroglyphic inscriptions also agree in that Amenemhet IV follows Amenemhet III. Both they and Isidorus know that Egyptian kingship was an institution involving two generations. However, to Hellenistic Greeks and later sources, the hero ‘Sesoisis’ was obviously one ancient, legendary figure whose deeds in fact included those of the three historical kings of that name.

It is not surprising that the Sen-Userts had become legendary in the Fayum; the first two historical kings of that name had been buried close to the newly developed Fayum province. Amenemhet III was associated even more closely with its history (see Porrannares, 34 below). In the third century B.C. Ptolemy II, by developing the area and repeating the work of his Xith Dynasty benefactor-kings, may have obliquely associated himself with them by encouraging the cult of Porrannares. The present Hymn does not honour Philadelphus.

‘Éσερα: for ἑσερά (neuter plural), cf. e.g. Od. XVII 191: πολι ἑσερά; and Ap. 5. 304: ἐς’ ἑσερά. Cf. 5 Ἡλιας . . . ἑσερα κύκλων δανίων (Nech. ap. Vett. Val. 154.29) where the meanings ‘evening’ and ‘western’ naturally blend, as they do with us. When a Pharaoh died he was said to ‘soar to heaven’ (that is, escape, to the western heaven) in the form of a hawk, and so to return to his father, the god Re. The Egyptians always thought of the realm of the dead as situated in the west. Cf. Vogliano, P. R., p. 49.

ἀφτίνα: for ἀφτίνα. For long ιωτα written as ι, see Mayser, Grammatik, 2(1), pp. 87 ff. Cf. εἰκαλατος and γείων, I 36. Forms of this verb are often placed last in a Greek hexameter line. Cf. h. Orph. LVII 7, and XXXVIII 11, 12. The obvious meaning here is, has gone to, i.e., is now in, the western heaven.

32. οἰὼν έθνος: see 29 above. This is another instance of Isidorus’ repetitious style. Cf. 11.15 and 27.8.

33. ἑρμηνευομενον κτλ.: ‘when they say his name in the Egyptian language, when the Egyptians name him.’ For a discussion of the voice of this verb, see Appendix.

34. Πορρανάρενον: for the various spellings of the name, see 7-36, summary. Cf. Vogliano, P. R., p. 50; and P. Mich. Zen. 84.19. Lepsius (Über die Zwölfe Ag. Königsdynastie, Berlin, 1851) states that Ἅμ(μμε)ενεμ in Manetho’s list is ‘Amenemhe,’ and that (in Africanus) the same king is Amemenes, Amereis (and Laminar or Lambare). Herodotus knows him as Μοῖρος (II 13, 101) and Diodorus as Μοῖρος (I 51.5). Cf. Strabo 811.21

21. For the historical king see RARG, p. 756; Erman, Die Religionen der Aegypter, 1934, pp. 394 ff.; Grandet, Terres Cuites, No. 45, 1927; ibid., Doutes et Statues portaits d’Egypte romaine, p. 132, No. 68; Weber, Die aegyptisch-gräzischen Tonskulpturen, Koelnig. Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, 1914, Plate 1, 142, No. 214, Plates 23 and 143. For the same king as Amenemhet III, see W. Schmidt, de græko-aegyptischen Tons-Koarten, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen, 1911, p. 74,
For Poromamines/Amenemhet III's regulation of Nile flood waters in the Lake Moiris region, see D. S. I 51.5-7. He also built a famous Labyrinth at the entrance to the Fayum that was probably the prototype of all later labyrinths (see RE, s.v. Labyrinthus; H. Kees, Ancient Egypt, p. 224). The historical XIIth Dynasty Amenemhet III's figure was engraved on the wall of the inner shrine of the Medinet Madi temple; and as Poromamines his statue also undoubtedly stood in the temple beside Hermouthis, Sokonopia, etc. Isidorus knows something of the history of the XIIth Dynasty kings; but one would imagine he would know more of the large scale attempts of Ptolemy II Philadelphus to regulate Fayum water and settle the reclaimed land. See Ἀρωπειτίς III 30, and note on 31 above. The irrigated soil was rich and produced horticultural abundance (see Strabo XVII 80.9; cf. Hdt. II 129). Its luxuriant olive-groves were planted by Greeks under the early Ptolemies. However, what are really Ptolemy II's achievements in the area Isidorus confuses with, or passes off as, those of the XIIth Dynasty Pharaoh. Cf. Summary, 7-36, above. Poromamines' cult we know was definitely encouraged at least in the late second century B.C. under Ptolemy X Alexander I. A Synod of the same god ('Pramarres') at this time permitted Greeks to become priests for life: ἦ περὶ βασιλείας Κλέαρας καὶ βασίλειας Πτολεμαίων τοῦ ἐπικαλομένου Ἀλεξάνδρου ὁ(τι) φιλομητόρων οἱ ἐκ τῆς μεγάλης σιωπῆς πρωμαρχεῖσις θεοῦ μεγαλοῦ. Ὡν ἂνευς διὰ βοῶν Εὐριπίδος Ἐθνος ὁ συγγενεῖς ἐπικαλομένος (Φιλωνικοῦ τοῦ Φιλωνίου Λ. γ. καὶ τὴ Ἐπεδίκη). See also Brady, Reception, p. 35, notes 18, 37. At Dimai (= Soknopaios Nesos) a temple was dedicated to the four gods, Isis, (Σωφοῦτα), Harpocrates and 'Pramarres' (OGIS 175). An altar (?) of Προμαρχης stood at ‘Apolloonia’ (P. Petr. II 43 b.66).

The metre of 34 is incorrect. Cf. 32.

35. θάρσελα δὲ καὶ παράδοξον: a miracle of the god-King. The phrase is probably a cliché. Cf. Pl. Men. 593; R. 473 a.

36. ἐπειδὴ ἐν ὅραι ὅροι is the 'desert,' P. Teb. 383.61.

35-36. The explanation of this strange couplet seems somewhat as follows. First, the Egyptian word for mountain, hill, and desert is the same (since the hills were not inundated by the Nile but remained barren, or desert). Secondly, there are many pictures in temple reliefs of processions with the carrus navalis, which sometimes went from the villages up to the hills (and cemeteries), or to other distant sites. Thirdly, ancient Egyptian priests guides probably invented stories to astound the traveller. (Cf. the remarks of Spiegelberg, Die Glaubwürdigkeit von Herodots bericht über Agypten, 1925, reprinted in W. Marg, Herodot., Wege der Forschung, Darmstadt, 1966.) The present verse might be explained by combining the above facts. Possibly Isidorus' priestly informants who had but little knowledge of hieroglyphs had tried to decipher an inscription accompanying the relief of a Carrus Navalis procession (which would state it went by river to the

hills or desert). Therein they fancied they saw a paradox or ‘miracle.’ And so they said that the King travelled by wheels and sail over the desert (or hills). Again, they may have invented the whole thing without the aid of a relief or inscription. Isidorus merely repeats what they told him, realizing he does not understand it.

37-41. Summary. Isidorus concludes Hymn IV with the explicit statement that he has composed in Greek the story of Porramanes, basing it on what he had heard from priests ‘scholars’ (18:20). He has then set it up in a public inscription to expound to the Greeks the divine nature of Egypt’s Kings. This is really an aretology not of the goddess of Hymns I-III but of the god-King Porramanes. In a way it is an exposition of the cult. The Hymn in other words is a kind of ‘evangel to the Greeks.’ Doubtless, the Greeks wondered who he had been.

37. ἄτοτοστον: ἄτοστος means enquire into, enquire about, examine, study and report (orally or in writing), come to know. Cf. Hdt. II 113: ἐγέγον δὲ μοι οἱ ἱερεῖς ἄτοστοι. The present context states somewhat the same, although not Isidorus but the priests are said to ‘enquire’ or ‘examine.’ Isidorus himself (cf. 38, ἅντος ἔγω) has carefully listened to the account given him by Egyptian scholars of the Sacred Writings (18). He does not claim to be an historian or scholar. Cf. Isidoros ὁ γιλιττος (Appendix, note 36).

38. ἄπαγαγαμενος: place on record; set up publicly (a pillar with an inscription on it).

39. ἀρμήνευσι for ἀρμήνευσα cf. 33, above. The active voice means interpret, say in Greek (i.e. for Greeks); the middle apparently means say in one’s own language (see 33, above).

δίων: cf. 9, above. Δίων (of gods) is much like ἅρτης, meaning both divine power, and its manifestation in miracles (but δίων is the more common term).

ἀνάκτος: cf. 7, above.

40. βρο[το]τόσ: an obvious instance of dit tropathy. On βροτός see 21, above.

The line sounds like a concluding refrain. Cf. 21.
CHAPTER THREE

THE SPREAD OF THE CULT OF ISIS UNDER THE EARLY PTOLEMYES

If the so-called Hellenistic Isis had a Hellenistic beginning, our knowledge of it is tenuous. Changes in the goddess’ cult and character probably were gradual, and not entirely a matter of deliberation or decree. Herodotus, after consulting the priests of Memphis, Heliopolis, and Thebes, had interpreted Isis and Osiris as Greek Demeter and Dionysus. It would appear, therefore, that Isis was already the Egyptian equivalent of a Greek Karpophoros for the karpas association is the best attested and continuously the most distinctive feature of Demeter’s cult. If this is true of Isis, she must have usurped the rôle of the Egyptian goddess of cereal grain before the fifth century B.C., for dependable sources affirm that Isis had not always been a vegetation goddess. Her syncretism with Renenutet may actually have happened in very ancient times well before the fifth century.

Isis (Isis-Renenutet) appears early in the Ptolemaic period as the goddess of cereal grain, referred to in the manner we know for Demeter. From the Memphis Serapeum, in the so-called Dream of Nectanebo, she is described as ἐνεργείεια καρπῶν ἐνεργεία ... Ἰσίς. This is the first instance of an address to her as the Karpophoros goddess. Possibly it is the first time she is so called in Greek. Henceforward, she was common to both Egyptian and Greek cults; in Greek and Egyptian inscriptions Demeter and Isis are each known as the Theosphoros and Karpophoros goddess. For instance, at Philae, Isis is καρποθόκος; at Edfu, in hieroglyphs she speaks to Ptolemy IV offering him agricultural bounty; at Philae

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1. Hdt. II 2, 3, 42-48, 59, 123, 142-6, 156. For Demeter Theosopora, II 171, and VI 91, 134.
2. The earliest references are: H. Gen. 4, 332, 349, 469.
3. A. D. Nock, Karpokrates, p. 224, n. 2 (quoting A. H. Gardiner); also Müller, Isis und Osiris (p. 31), quoting Clénet, Beutilique Pop. 1, 25 (Gardiner), and Nock (op. cit.). The early Egyptian goddess of cereal grain and the cereal harvest was Rnnt, in English Renenut or Renenutet. The Greeks called her (H)ermouthis, Thernouthis, or Terenouthis.
4. U. E. 81, Sommum Nectanebhi, II, 9-10. See also Breddy, Reception, pp. 1-86. Wissak thought the papyrus early Ptolemaic. See note 8 below. Nectanebo, last of the Pharaohs, was associated at least by the second half of the third century B.C., with Alexander the Great in the account of Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. I. For the dating, see C. B. Welles, “The Discovery of Sarapis and the Foundations of Alexandria.” Historia 11, 1962, pp. 271-298. He considers Ps. Call. to be at least as early as the second half of the third century B.C.
5. A. D. Nock, Karpokrates, pp. 221-8, refers to the Sommum Nectanebhi as ‘a good illustration of the Hellenistic hymn-pattern.’ See Chapter IV.
and Denderah, she appears in hieroglyphs similarly characterized, in the Hymns of Isidorus and in the long hymn, P. Oxy. 1380, she is entitled θεομομήριος. Meanwhile Isis and Demeter each continued to retain their separate characteristics in the two respective cultures. Their common cult was a new and special thing, and may have been encouraged by Eleusis.  

The new city of Alexandria was an important cult-site of Hellenistic Isis. Tacitus tells us that Isis had been worshiped there with Serapis in an ancient temple on the hill of Rhamnus before Alexander built his Serapeum. By Serapis Tacitus must mean Osiris-Hapi, or the bull-god Apis, whom Herodotus had already associated with both Isis and Osiris. The Memphite god Apis was later named Osorapis by the Greeks. Clearly, Greeks celebrated the cult of Isis and Osiris, or Isis and Osorapis, both in Alexandria and Memphis.

By the third century B.C., Osiris and Osorapis/Osorapis were probably indistinguishable. Indeed, in 255 Apollonius, the finance minister, asked for wood for the ‘Isis festival’ in Alexandria; it seems to have been the same as the Osiris-Isis festival held in Egypt for centuries. Although archaeologists have not been able to identify any temple of Isis in the Serapeum area at Alexandria, all agree that she was worshiped there, and probably in her own temple, at least from the early years of the Serapeum. Her Greek cult was probably the same as that of Memphis.

There are good reasons for the spread of Isis-worship among Greeks in Egypt in the early Ptolemaic period. Arsinoe II and Philadelphus themselves are closely associated with propaganda for the royal cult of Isis. Arsinoë adopted the title ‘Isis Arsinoë Philadelphus,’ and it may well have been she who encouraged the

7. Dend. II, 17a; and Philae 599 (Photo 159). For the latter, cf. Müller, Isisarztlogien, p. 96. See also OGIS I, 107 (from Paphlagonia beyond Pisa). And RE XII 2098 (Roeder). Cf. Brady, Reception, p. 28 and note 50-51. Brady states that the worship of Isis, which had been prominent in Upper Egypt since the XXXIVth Dynasty at Philae, had spread ahead of it to the rest of Greece.

8. Quandt, Orphic XXIX 14. For the marriage of Isis, see Herder, Kompokrate, p. 46, n. 2, and Müller, op. cit., pp. 34 ff. Cf. Quandt, Orphic XL (to Eusebian Decree). This is the same goddess as Isidorus’ Isis Hermouthis.

9. IV 84: Fuerat ilia sacellum Serapidi atque Isidæi nostri atque sacratam. See also Arrian, Am. III 1,5, and 20.36.

10. Hdt. II 153. P. Jouquet, “La Politique Intérieure du Premier Ptolémée,” Bull. Inst. Fr. Arch. Or. 30 p. 353, discusses the question. Cf. Brady, Reception, p. 10, n. 15: “It is tempting to assume, as Jouquet has remarked, that during most of the reign of Ptolemy I, the worship of Osorapis was confined to the temple at Memphis and that the early expansion of the cult during this period came from Memphis.”

11. P. Cairo Z. 59154, 59191, and P. Hrb. 27,55-62; for the Osiris-Isis festival, Hethyr 17-20, UDH 80.15; 94.17; 96.2. Cf. Brady, Reception, p. 13, and notes 10, 11.


13. OGIS 31; PSI 539.3 (for Arsinoe’s title as Isis); C. C. Edgar, Bull. Soc. Alex. 19, p. 115 (for the adoption of the cult of Isis and Sarapis by Greeks, Macedonians etc. by the end of the third century B.C.). Cf. Brady, Reception, p. 13, n. 13.
spread of the cult in the Fayum temples of Philadelphus' new towns. The cult of Isis shares almost all Fayum temples of later times, although Isis herself was not always as prominent as other local deities. At court, however, Isis was paramount. Philadelphus regarded her priests as the official priesthood, and the king's ministers propagated her cult among the Greeks in Egypt. The admiral Callicrates built a temple to Isis and Anubis. Apollonius, mentioned above, built one to Serapis and Isis in Philadelphia. It is noted above that the latter considered Isis' festivals as the major festivities in Alexandria.

Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221) continued to promote the cults of Isis and Serapis. He built the Serapeum proper at Alexandria. He designated only the names of Isis and Serapis to stand with those of the deified rulers in the royal oath. His successor, Ptolemy IV, built the small temple to Harpocrates, the infant son of Isis, in the Alexandrian Serapeum area, where it still identifiable by it foundation plaques.

From the end of the third century B.C. (the period to which belongs the older Ptolemaic temple within the Medinet Madi temenos), Serapis and Isis appear to have become accepted and ranked even with the Olympian gods by Greeks throughout Egypt. Serapis himself seems to have been almost entirely Greek. The Egyptians knew little or nothing of a god by that name, and Serapis was apparently still unknown to the Egyptian priesthood at the end of the third century B.C. Egyptians continued to venerate Memphite Osiris-Hapi as god of the underworld. Only Isis and her family were shared by both peoples.

Isis had reached lands beyond Egypt's borders well before Hellenistic times. Greeks had frequented her temple at Naucratis in the fifth century B.C., and her cult had come to the Petraeae before the last quarter of the fourth century. At Rhodes, a statue dedicated by a Carian in Demotic to 'Osiris-Hapi' and Isis may also be pre-Hellenistic. Later, the royal cults spread with the expansion of the activities of the early Ptolemies in the Aegean. The cult of Serapis was probably

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16. P. Cornwell 1. See also references in note 15.
21. See Nilsson, GGR 2.2, p. 120, note 1, for a bibliography of the spread of Egyptian cults. For their arrival in Athens, see IG XI 1306.129 (Isis); XI (2) 1282 (Ammon). See also S. Dow, "The Egyptian cults in Athens," HTR 30, 1937, pp. 183 ff.
22. P. Jougnet, Rev. Edge 2, p. 422. Brady, Reception, p. 9, note 8, states: "This statue may have been a cult object similar to that found at Cyme." He cites Salz, BCH 51, pp. 384-387 (and for similar objects at Delos and Pompeii: Roussel, CR p. 65; and Max-Keßler, Pompeii, Its Life and Art, 2nd ed., p. 175, respectively). Nilsson, GGR 2.2, p. 124 and note 5, cites W. Spiegelberg ("Die denotische Inschrift auf der Statue von Rhodos," ZAS 50, 1912, pp. 24 ff) and says the latter dates the statue 169/64 (see D. S. XXXI 15a).
established at Delos under the reign of Ptolemy I or Ptolemy II, and an inscription from Miletus attests that city’s early interest in Egyptian gods. The text, a dedication ‘to Agathe Tyche and Osiris,’ belongs to a period near the last years of Soter’s reign. From Halicarnassus come two early texts, one, of 270 B.C., commemorating Ptolemy I and another, also of the third century dedicated to τῷ πρὸς τὸν . . . Τιχνὴ Ἀγαθὴν. A third text, from Halicarnassus or its immediate vicinity, as yet unpublished, commemorates a civic honour to a Ptolemy. Since it is third century B.C., before 257 B.C., the Ptolemy in question is undoubtedly Philadelphus. After its early start, the cult of Isis thrived at Halicarnassus. In the first century B.C. the city had a priest of Isis and the goddess appeared on their coinage.

But Ptolemaic conquests were not the only reason for the spread beyond Egypt of the royal cult of Isis and her family. While Zealos, Apollonius, and others in the royal service were encouraging the worship of Serapis and Isis within Egypt, other officials, usually Greek, still in the service or retired, were carrying (or had already carried) the cult into cities and islands of the Aegean. For instance, toward the middle of the third century, the Sarapiastai, a cult society of Serapis, were already installed in the small town of Iulus on the island of Cius, and are known to have passed a decree in honour of one Epameinon for services he had rendered them. The society honoured him publicly with a crown at the Isicia or festival of Isis. It is unknown when the cult of Isis had been introduced into little Cius, but the father of Epameinon was, or had been, in the service of Philadelphus. A Myndian’s dedication on Thera shows the same activity of royal officials. And a man who had served as an elephant-hunter under Philadelphus retired later to Thera, and there spent his time and money building shrines and setting up dedications to the Isis-family, and including the deified rulers in dedications: “In behalf of King Ptolemy and the gods Soter and Philadelpoi, to Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis.” Although this may have been a private cult, it is probable that before the end of the third century B.C. there was a public cult of Serapis on Thera. And in an illustration from Cnidus, a Greek returning from

22. See below, note 29.
25. The text was discussed in a paper by Mr. F. J. Frost, at the meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in 1966.
27. The evidence for the various places: Iulus
Egypt brings to that island the cult of Serapis and Isis. 28

As time passed, Serapis’ importance waned in the Aegean islands. The
development of the cult of the Egyptian gods can best be witnessed on Delos. As
at other sites, the cult of Serapis had possibly been established there in the time
of Ptolemy I or II. 29 Well before 220, a second Serapeum was founded there by
another Apollonius. 30 Archaeological evidence shows there were, in all, three
Serapea on Delos. 31 It is not certain that Isis accompanied Serapis when his cult
first came. The cult had remained private, and therefore small, throughout the
third century B.C. The second, also presumably private, cult was founded before
the end of the third century. It probably came from Alexandria and is known to
have had an isleum.

The cult of the Egyptian gods grew somewhat more slowly on Delos after it
was lost to Egypt. In about 180 the combined cult of Isis and Serapis became
semi-public under administrators called ἰεροποιοι, but, at all times, it appears to
have had at least one professional Egyptian priest in attendance. From 180-137 it
remained semi-public. By this time it was in fact under Roman surveillance, for,
about 164 when Athens was considering abolition of the cult, Rome forbade the
action. In 137, at Rome’s command, an Athenian was established as priest of
Serapis. 32

on Coose: IG XII 5(1) 606; Thess: IG XII 3 1368;
1389; Caldas: SB 2217; 2215; Thess: BCH 31, p.
220; Thrac: Jahrb., 23, p. 193, no. 152; Amphip:
BCH 18, p. 417, no. 7; Pausan: Jahrb., 23, p.
156, no. 93: RSC 23, pp. 86-89 (Tod). For
Anaphos, Cos, Antipatros, Samos, Teos, Aege,
Lesbos and Minoa, see Brady, Reception, p. 31,
note 69.
28. GCR 5528; see Brady, Reception, p. 23,
note 83.
29. Delos was lost to Egypt in 246 B.C. See
Roussel, CE, pp. 71-75. Tarn (Hellenistic Civiliza-
tion, 2nd ed., p. 321) dates the introduction of the
cult about 300. Roussel (Rev. hist. et litt. Rel. 7, p.
33) thinks it at least as early as 266. See IG XII 7
5065; XI 4 1299. But Nilsson dates Sarapion A to
220 B.C. (GCR 2 2.122). See also Brady, Recep-
tion, pp. 10, note 14, 18, note 42.
30. Of this confusing situation Brady says
(Reception, p. 21): “In almost all instances, the
further extension of the worship of Sarapis after
the reign of Euergetes I came by way of the older
foundations in the Greek world and not from
Egypt. Delos had been lost to Egypt at the battle
of Actium, and it remained in the hands of the
Macedonian kings until Philip’s defeat by Rome.
During this period, although contacts with Egypt
may have been derived from the first one, but it is
more likely to have been a separate foundation
from Alexandria. The cult planted there by Apollon-
ious was the early ‘reformed’ worship and may
have been looked upon by the followers of the
Alexandrian worship in somewhat the same way
the Christians of Rome regarded Irish Christianity.
It seems clear from the history of the cult at Delos
that Isis was more prominent in the Alexandrian
cult than she was in that of Memphis. In time, of
course, the religious literature projected Isis back
and gave her an important place in the early
history of the cult. In a few years, the second cult
at Delos completely overshadowed that of Apollo-
nius and about 180 was made a public cult by the
Delian state (IG XI 1033).” For the epigraphical
references, see Nilsson, GCR 2.2, p. 121, notes
11-12.
31. Nilsson, GCR 2.2, p. 122. The date of the
first: Sarapion may precede the first establishment
on the island of the Great Mother of the gods, or
Cybele, who, after her establishment in Thrace in
mid-third century B.C., had perhaps come thence
to Delos. See W. Otto and H. Bengtson, Ge-
schichte, p. 72. She was formally established in
Rome in 204.
32. Cf. Brady, Reception, pp. 42 ff.: “Shortly
after the Athenian occupation of Delos, perhaps
about 164, the Roman Senate sent to Athens a
decree in which it forbade the Athenian state to
Few details are known about Delian cult-life. From 220 onward, in the time of the second and third Serapeum, there were cult associations carried on by **θεραπευταί**. After 167 B.C., Isis was given the title **Σωτείρα**, which may be related to the same title adopted in Egypt by Cleopatra II. Toward the end of the second century B.C., there was a **κλειδώρος** in the Delian cult, an annually appointed **καρνηφόρος** ("from a good family"), a **θάυμος** and an **αινειροκρίτης**. By 156/5, while some of the more private features seem still to have been retained, the Egyptian foundation was more flourishing than before. Further buildings were being erected: near the third Serapeum and the Iseum, a temple to Anubis with a Ptolephorion was built, as were a stoa, an exedra, and a dromos, all dated to 156/5 B.C.

By the end of the second century B.C., cult societies of the Egyptian gods on Delos as in Egypt and elsewhere had become popular and affluent. Three societies appear on Delos: **κοινῷ τῶν θεραπευτῶν**, **κοινῷ τῶν μελανθήρων**, and **θάυμῳ τῶν Σαραπιστῶν**. By the mid-second century, in fact, growth of all the cults on

dissuasih the cult of Sarapis in Delos (BGU 37, pp. 310 ff.; Roussel, CE 92, 93). The Athenian generals transmitted the **sensus communis** to the Athenian superintendent in Delos. The document states that, upon request of Demetrius Rheneus, a decree had been passed forbidding the Delians, that is, the Athenian cleruchs, and the government of Athens, to hinder Demetrius in the exercise of his priestly duties. This Demetrius is probably a descendant, perhaps a great-grandson, of Apollonius who founded the first cult of Sarapis in Delos. Some time in the early second century, the family had acquired citizenship in Delos and, like other Delians, Demetrius would have been subject to exile by the Athenian government when the Athenian colony was planted there shortly after 167/6. (Cf. Nilsson, GGR 2, p. 121.) No other explanation seems possible than that the Athenian state intended to abolish this cult of Sarapis in Delos. Roman intervention in the interest of Demetrius frustrated her plans and, thirty years later, in 137, she reestablished the old Delian public cult and appointed a state priest (Athenian) to administer its affairs. Between 166 and 137, the cult probably had had a semi-public character like the cult of Bendis in the Pentheges. In that event, Athenians could worship the god and engage in the festivals and processions without becoming members of the private societies which were pledged to the worship of the god. But, before 137, the state took no part in the worship and did not, in all probability, authorize any dedications to the Egyptian gods on its own behalf. The popularity of the cult in Delos convinced the Athenians that it would bring even more profit to the state if given a priest and state recognition. So, in 137, the state established an Athenian as priest of Sarapis. Between 166 and 149/8 the cult of Sarapis had been made public in Athens, and this fact, no doubt, made the final step at Delos easier. The private associations continued to exist, but ceased to have any meaning for Athenians since all citizens became **ipsos facto** members of the body of worshippers.

33. SIG III 1129, Delos 1131, Cleopatra II, self-styled "Isis-Soteira," was married to Ptolemy VI in 176, and later to his brother Ptolemy VIII. The title, Soteira, is first attested in 131 B.C.

34. Delos, 2165, 2196, 2120. See Nilsson, GGR, 2, p. 122, note 2. For a more thorough treatment of the societies, official, etc., of the Egyptian cult at Pompeii, see Tran Tam Thinh, Le Culte d’Isis à Pompéi, pp. 89 ff.


36. Nilsson, GGR 2, p. 122. In Euboea, where the oldest cult establishment of Isis was founded in the first half of Philadelphus’ reign, Euboea had a **κοινῷ τῶν μελανθήρων καὶ κοινῷ τῶν θάυματων** in the second/third centuries B.C., celebrated the festival called **θλιβοκερία**. See IG XII, Supp. 571. Chalcis in the second century B.C. offered an initiation into the rites of Sarapis, Isis, Anubis, and Apis. IG XII Supp. 9, 923, 926, 928, 929. See Nilsson, GGR 2, p. 128. At Smyrna **αἰώνιον εὔπορον** are known. See P. Foucart, Des Associations religieuses chez les Grecs, 1873, pp. 234 ff., no. 58. See also Nilsson, GGR 2, p. 127, and note 7. At Kos **Ωσιουρατών** are known. See J. and L. Robert, "Inscriptions de Lydie," Hellenistica 6, 1948, p. 9. They are Hellenistic. See Nilsson,
Delos showed such syncretism that it is difficult for us to see how they (and their priests) preserved any individuality. To choose one well-known example concerning Isis, in 130/129 a Sidonian set up an inscription to: Τις η Μυστήρι θεών 'Ανιάτης. However, some serious feeling and deliberation lies behind all such equations, it seems, for at least in the case of Isis, there is a good deal of consistency in the equations. She is repeatedly syncretized with Aphrodite, Astarte, Cybele (Mother of the gods), and Tyche Agathe (or Tyche). She is also Isis Euploia, Isis Pharia, and Isis Pelagia, that is, the specific goddess of navigation, and seems to have come from Alexandria. As she has succeeded more ancient Greek deities such as Aeuxcolthea (Ino), the sea-goddess mentioned in the Odyssey and an Orphic hymn. Although the first reference to Isis Euploia is as late as 106/5 B.C. on Delos, she is spoken of frequently as goddess of the sea and navigation in the Greek hymns. No doubt she was known by such titles all

GGR 2.2, p. 127, note 8. At Rhodes a cult association twice appears called "Thea subsid." See W. Spiegelberg, "Die dionysische Inschrift auf der Statue von Rhodes," ZAS 50, 1912, pp. 22 ff.; Appian, Mithr. 27; Lindos II, 102.7 ff., 195; IG XII 1796.12; Lindos II, 1257; 195 (82 B.C.); 673, 674; La Hire 126.10. Again, see W. Spiegelberg, "Die dionysische Inschrift auf der Statue von Rhodes," ZAS 50, 1912, pp. 22 ff.; Appian, Mithr. 27; Lindos II, 102.7 ff., 195; IG XII 1796.12; Lindos II, 1257; 195 (82 B.C.); 673, 674; 195 (82 B.C.).


38. SIG 7646. Isis Pelagia and Isis Pharia often appear on Alexandrian coins. See J. Vogt, Die alexandrinischen Monnep, 1924; W. Wittmann, "Das Bildnis des Apollon," Forschungen zur Kirchen und Geistesgeschichte, 12, 1938, p. 93; Nilsson, GGR 2.2, p. 628, note 4; and especially Tran Tam Tinh, Le Culte d'Isis a Pongoi, pp. 95 ff.; It seems that it is in the late period that Isis finally assumes power (over the sea) when she is assimilated to other divinities. Indeed, from the time of the founding of Alexandria and of its syncretistic religion, Isis played a new role, viz. as patron-goddess of that port-city; here she became Protector of Navigation." Tran Tam Tinh outlines the possible reasons for Egyptian Isis' association with the sea, and gives the best evidence for Hellenistic Isis as a goddess of navigation. On Delos especially, Isis is Pelagia, Euploia, and Pharia. He relates the festival of the Flachophoria or Nauplion Isidis to three titles of the great goddess.


40. (Isis Pelagia), Nilsson, GGR 2.2, pp. 338, 626, note 4; (Pharia) ibid., p. 628; note 4. Cf. note 77 above. It could be a time of lively cult activity in the West; for example, the Serapeum at Puteoli is supposed to have been founded in 105 B.C. See note 34.
over the Aegean area as soon as her Alexandrian cult migrated north. The festival of the Ptolephonia or Navigium Isidis is part of her characterization from Alexandria.

Cults on Delos flourished until 88 B.C. when the forces of Mithridates, no Isis-worshiper, advanced past Rhodes and into the Aegean. Archaeological evidence shows that his forces almost entirely destroyed the Delian cult sites. Only slight activity is attested thereafter at the Serapeum.

In summary, the royal cult of Isis and her consort, usually called Serapis in the Greek world, appears originally to have been carried abroad by the Ptolemies and their officers or representatives. Independent action of Greeks who had gone to seek their fortunes in Egypt, and later returned home leisurely to enjoy their gains, accomplished much the same. Once established, the cults flourished vigorously in many places.

Finally, it is interesting to trace the growth of the cults in the West. Although they spread through the older eastern centres where they became established, the first Ptolemy’s influence could have been felt directly through his step-daughter’s marriage to Agathocles of Carana. And some of the influence may have gone the other way. Delian Isis may have got a cult title from Italy. She is called Isis-Tyche-Protegenia on Delos in 115/4 B.C. This Greek title is the translation of Latin Fortuna Primigenia which is attested at Praeneste from the mid-third century B.C. Fortuna Primigenia also had a temple in Rome by 194 B.C. Πρωτόγενεια, as found in the cult title on Delos, is a late Greek word occurring only twice, once with Physis in an Orphic hymn (X 5), and once in the aforementioned Delian inscription of 115/4 B.C. It seems most reasonable to

42. M. Verr. II 65.160. See Brady, Reception, p. 45, for the carrying of the Egyptian cult (of Sarapis) from older centres to their neighbours in Asia Minor and the Aegean Islands; to Cyprus, Magnesia on the Maeander, and Priene; (from Rhodes) to Lindos and Kameiros, Syracs, Chalkis and Rhodian Perusa; and to Pompeii, Paestum, and probably the principal cities of South Italy and finally (first century B.C.) to Rome, Ambracia, Dionysopolis (in the Black Sea). For Magnesia on the Maeander see I. Mag., no. 99; for Priene, Becher, Priene, nos 193, 195; for Ambracia, CIG II 1806; for Dionysopolis, Syll. 762; for Lindos, IG XII 1 788, 813; Syll. 765; for Kameiros, IG XII 1 704; for Syracs, IG XII 3 (1) 4; for Chalkis, IG XII 1 957; for Pompeii, Niessa, Pompeiizchen Studien, p. 174 (the earliest temple at Pompeii, second century B.C.); for Paestum, CIL X 1781.5 (105 B.C.); for Rome, App. Met. XI 30, Cic. ad Att. II 17.2, and for a temple to Sarapis in Syracuse, Cic.

43. For Isis-Tyche-Protegenia on Delos 115/4, see SIG 113 = Delos 2072. For Fortuna Primigenia, see Val. Max. I 3.2. And for the most recent discussion of the cult and temple of the goddess at Praeneste, see F. Pasolo, Il Santuario della Fortuna Primigenia a Palestrina, Rome, 1953; and E. Jacopi, Il Santuario della Fortuna Primigenia e il Museo archeologico praenestino, Rome 1959. These references have been recently sent to me by Professor George Duckworth, under whose able guidance I visited the Praeneste temple with the American Academy in Rome Summer School in 1955.

44. Liv. XXXIV 53.5.
45. At Halicarnassus, Agatha Tyche, probably equated to Isis, had been called Πρωτόγενη in SIG 1044, which may be third century, but is undated. The Latin title appears to be earlier.
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take this example of cult spread as from West to East, as least insofar as actual nomenclature is concerned.

In Italy, the earliest evidence for the cult of Isis herself is found, however, not at Praeneste, but at Rome, Herculaneum and Pompeii, where it arrived in the late second and early first centuries B.C. Since a considerable number of Roman and Italian names are found in the Delian inscriptions, it may be that Italian adherents of the Egyptian cults fled from the onslaught of Mithridates in 88 to their respective cities in Italy, bringing with them their new cult. Furthermore, Roman residents of Delos may have played a part in introducing Egyptian gods into Italy before 88 B.C., since the cult of Isis probably reached Rome during the late second century. Again, the cults of Isis and Serapis may have come directly to Italy from Alexandria. A college of Pastophori was already established in Rome by the time of Sulla.49

So the cults of Isis and her associated Egyptian deities spread through the Greek world as Ptolemaic activity brought inhabitants of the Aegean and the West into closer contact with the newly Hellenized religion. The availability of Greeks who knew the cult and of cult texts in the language of the Mediterranean made the propagation more facile. Some of the transmission may have been direct from Egypt to the West, but, undoubtedly, most of the progress of the new cults was made in stages, moving first into areas in which were the greatest activities of Ptolemies and Greeks from Egypt. Thence it moved into the further reaches of the Hellenic and Latin world.

46. Tran Tam Tinh, Le Culte d’Isis à Pompéi, pp. 9 ff.
47. Ibid., pp. 19 ff.
48. There are some cult characteristics which suggest the direct connection. The seeking and finding of the body of Osiris seems not to have been celebrated in Greece but only in Egypt and Italy. It is presumed that this festival, or Mystery, came to Italy from the Greco-Egyptian cult-life of Egypt. Part of it, the cry ὑπέρτα τοῦ ὀσερίουσαν and the cult-term ἐφερεῖν, apply to the sacred pageant. Nilsson suggests also that the ceremony of the mosaic of stones, as reported by Firmicus Maternus, is really the fitting together of the skeleton of Osiris. See Firm. Mat., de err. prof. rel. 22.2., also Nilsson, CGR 2.3, p. 639 and notes 3-4, and V. Tran Tam Tinh, Le Culte d’Isis à Pompéi, pp. 100 ff. Of course, certain Greek societies, like the Melanophroi of Delos, may have celebrated the same rites.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE EARLIEST ARETALOGIES, OR GREEK HYMNS, TO ISIS

The Tradition of the Texts

After the Hymns of Isidorus, the next Isiac aretalogies come from the Greek world outside Egypt and date also to the first century B.C.: the hymn from Cyme in the Aeolid, the nine-line hymn reported by Diodorus Siculus, and the hymn found on the island of Andros. A later hymn from Ios, dated to the second/third centuries, and a few fragmentary lines from a Saloniki hymn, also supposed to date to the second/third centuries of our era, are, as far as their lines survive, identical to the Cyme hymn. These, apart from the Hymns of Isidorus, are the earliest and most important Isiac aretalogies.

Isidorus’ Fayum Hymns are in hexameters and elegiacs. The Andros hymn is also hexameter, but the other two hymns of the first century B.C. are in prose. Harder believed that the prose aretalogies were translations. They and the Andros hymn are in what has been called the I-style where the goddess herself in the first person tells of her divine power and miracles.

Because of the almost exact similarity of the prose aretalogies, Richard Harder, in 1944, collated the texts of the hymns of Cyme (K.), Ios (J.), Saloniki (S.) and Diodorus (D.), into one Greek text which he called M., assuming that there had been an original, Egyptian text set up on a stele at Memphis early in the Ptolemaic era. He thought D. had come somewhat indirectly from the same prototype. Harder does not analyse the Andros hymn (A.) but Werner Peck in 1931 demonstrated that it too was derived from the same source as K. Harder’s hypothesis is that between M. and the extant Greek prose aretalogies, a Greek translation had been made, adding the introduction still preserved in K. (and A.). The translations of which several copies were made naturally had been in prose. He imagines A. descended from M. through an earlier hexameter version, A^P.

Isidorus’ three Hymns to Isis are not derived from M., although parts seem to be influenced by it or a similar hymn. They are of the same century as A., D., and K.; all other extant Greek hymns to Isis are later.

1. Harder, Karpokrates, pp. 21-22.
2. Festugière, Aretalogies, discussing Harder.
The language of the early aretalogies to Isis reveals that their texts, generally, belong to a transitional period. The Fayum Hymns use what could be called an Hellenistic epic-poetic dialect with mostly epic-poetic traits and relatively few influences from the Koine. Further, amid their numerous epic-poetic expressions they also show certain tendencies of Hellenistic prose composition. The M. text (i.e. K., J., S., and D.) is simple Hellenistic prose with few epic-poetic idioms. What in it appears to be poetic, or cult-language, is, in fact, not influenced by Greek poetical formulae. For instance, phrases like "I am the One who rises in the Star of the Dog," "I separated earth from heaven," "I taught the paths of the stars," "I established the course of the sun and moon," "I made justice strong," and "I am in the rays of the sun," clearly show Egyptian influence. Indeed the phrase ἔρως ἄλτος, found twelve times in M., is probably an Egyptian temple-formula. One can single out M.'s few purely Greek or Greco-Egyptian phrases: "I am the tyrant of all the land/earth," "I discovered . . . ," and "the discoverer of edible vegetation (karpoi).

4. For Hellenistic linguistic style I have generally relied on Kühner-Gerth, Grammatik 2.2; Mayer, Grammatik, 2.3; and Moulton and Howard, Grammar. C. H. Welles, RC, Introduction, has some very pertinent references to late Greek linguistic style.

5. For a summary of his study of the Greek and Egyptian influence in M., see Müller, Historiologia, especially the summary, p. 91. ἔρως ἄλτος occurs: 3a, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 41, 42, 44, 49, 52. See W. Manson, ἔρως ἄλτος, JThS 48, 1947, pp. 137-145.
The vocabulary and expression of the metrical Fayum Hymns, largely epic-poetic as the line-by-line commentary shows, is limited generally to frequent repetitions of common verbs, adjectives, and nouns. Indeed, what seems at times to be a remarkable attention to mood, tense, etc. may in reality be a close dependence on borrowed hexameter formulae. For instance, refinements like the two optatives and two subjunctives correctly used (in four purpose clauses) within ten lines of Hymn I are rare in late Hellenistic Greek. And there are other, less distinctive, borrowed features in the language. The imperatives of the Fayum Hymns, for instance, greatly resemble in vocabulary, grammatical form, and hexameter localization, the imperatives of Orphic hymns. This resemblance to Orphic hymns, of course, extends far beyond the imperative.

The Fayum hymnologist could not find all the expressions he needed in what he knew of epic and poetic sources. Probably because of this, he adopts certain colloquial idioms. Participles, for instance, are noticeably common in his Hymns and help him to lengthen his sentences. This is a characteristic of the Koine. To this idiom belong also his periphrastic expressions (using participles with forms of εἰμί (expressed or understood)). He also uses the participle with the definite article to form the equivalent of relative clauses, another common feature of Hellenistic Greek.

The more closely one examines the four Fayum Hymns, the more one becomes aware of their individual style. Hymn I shows the most complex Greek expressions and, at the same time, most dependence on epic-poetic formulae. Hymn IV, least like Hymn I, retains many epic forms of words but also shows what seems to be an independent, if naive, use of tense and coordinates. And it has several precise uses of the middle voice which are neither epic nor poetic. At least twice in IV there is a strong hint of prose composition. In fact, simple prose composition, juxtaposed to an epic line, twice produces a sharp stylistic contrast (IV 17-20, followed by 21 ff. and 37-9 followed by 40). The other Hymns, II and III, also show distinct Hellenistic tendencies. III is distinguished for its very numerous participles which almost all occur in one particularly rambling.

7. See the line-by-line commentary for the scattered references. For the Orphic hymns, see G. Quandt, Orphic Hymns, Berlin, 1962.
8. Welles, RC, xlvii ff. Had Ixionus not used participles, we must conclude he would have fallen into the same confusion as it sometimes evident in Hellenistic correspondence. Other types of subordination are less easy to master. It seems clear that, when he wishes to speak for himself directly to the reader, he can write like a good secretarial scribe, e.g. IV 27-9.
10. Mayser, Grammatik 2.2, pp. 54 ff.
seventeen-line sentence.  

M., however, shows no remarkable variation in verb form or use throughout its 57 verses. Its participles are not overly frequent, numbering only 10. Of these, none is in a periphrastic construction, and all except the last (verse 57) are used with the article to replace relative clauses. There is much repetition; ἔγω ἐλπίζω appears 12 times, and the first person singular aorist (usually active and with ἔγω) occurs often. Obviously the author of M. believed in forceful, monotonous, didactic repetition.

The Fayum Hymns are not so much repetitious as naively limited in language. There is a conscious attempt to employ artistic expression; many of the linguistic features are repeated often enough to show they are deliberate. For instance, the uses of the definite article are not unlike those of the Homeric and Orphic hymns; at the same time, they are usages of the article that scribes of the Hellenistic era followed in their correspondence. Isidorus uses the article well, particularly with participles to form the equivalent of relative clauses. He uses it with adverbs and a prepositional phrase, with titles and certain epic-poetic nouns. The first two of these are particularly Hellenistic. He generally omits the article with possessive pronouns and general nouns, and, again, his omissions are very like those of epic and Orphic hymns. Significantly, his usage of the definite article is in marked contrast to the practice of certain other hymnologists of the same century. In the Andros Hymn, for instance, the article is almost entirely lacking.

M. also uses the definite article well, in particular with nine of its ten participles, showing a close resemblance to good Hellenistic practice. In M. the article also occurs twice before a prepositional phrase; and it is used consistently with adjectives to form singular neuter nouns. Just as in the Fayum Hymns, it is consistently omitted with general nouns. With titles and names of countries and nationalities M.’s use is sporadic.

11. The style in these lines appears not to involve parallel structure, that is, it is freer than in other verses of the hymns (IV 17-20; II 21-26). Its sentences neither coincide with the length of the line nor the couplet. They and III 24-33, as well as IV 37-39, appear to be a venture in more prosaic composition. There is noticeably almost no epic or epic-poetic language in the lines. Instead, as in III 20-33, many of the tricks of rhetoric occur: some parallel clauses, groups of three, anaphoras, the contrast of a very short clause (28) with what precedes and follows, rhyming words, rhyme at the ends of lines, chiasmus, and even three participles two of which rhyme, a prolonged periphrasis 20-27, and a rise and gradual fall 31-33. For Hellenistic prose that shows exactly the same tendencies, see Welles, RC, pp. xlvii ff. and Numbers 14, 44. For confusion resulting from the lack of participles and an unsuccessful use of other types of subordination, see RC 66.22. Phrases like τὸν ἀγόρασμα are very common from the third century B.C. on. It would seem that Isidorus’ skill in this particular construction hints at a knowledge of formulae which were common among governmental scribes and which we know from papyri an inscriptions.

12. See Mayers, Grammatik, 2.2, pp. 54 ff. for this common Hellenistic use. It was particularly common from the third century B.C. on. Cf. Welles, RC, p. lix.


15. It is interesting that 13. four times uses the article when it is omitted in corresponding verses of M.: i 27.3.4.8,9; and he shows an article and participle where K. has pantactic with αἰτί (cf. M. 3b). See Hadler, Karpenteia, pp. 20-21.
Finally Isidorus' frequent use of the particle ἔρε must be noted. It occurs commonly in Hymns I, II, and III. M. uses ἔρε but once, near the beginning (3c) in the well-known correlative formula ἔρε... καὶ ἔρε. This absence of ἔρε, when compared with Isidorus' lavish use, indicates that the simple rhetoric of M. is not influenced by epic-poetic language, that, in fact, some effort has been made to avoid such expressions. It may well mean that M. in its origin is a scribal composition, a translation from another language. This would tend to substantiate Harder's theory that the prototype was an Egyptian text.

*The Hellenistic Hymn-Style as it appears in early Arethalogies to Isis*

Greek Hellenistic hymns show, generally, four divisions of their content. The Invocation gives the names of the deity, his/her nature, cult-sites, genealogy, and relationships to other gods. The second section tells of the universal omnipotence of the deity, that is, his/her dynamis, arête, and kleros. The third section deals with specific works, miracles, and discoveries (erga, aretes, and heuræmata). These entitle the god to be called universal Lord, Discoverer, Saviour, etc. By contrast with the Homeric hymns, the Hellenistic god's acts for men are not attached to one particular cult-site where miracles may have occurred. The hymns end with a personal request of the poet who speaks of himself as a suppliant. He considers his whole hymn to be a prayer. The Homeric hymns differ from the Hellenistic hymns in that between the opening invocation and concluding prayer they relate a legend illustrating the deity's power and gifts to men, and they frequently refer to some particular cult-site. Thus the main section of the Hellenistic hymn is a departure from the older form of the genre.

There are many examples of the Hellenistic hymn. The most outstanding is

16. See Appendix for details. For the use of ἔρε see especially: Kühner-Gerth, *Grammatik 2.2*, pp. 235, sec. 236.2; 243, sec. 518.2 and sec. 520.4; and 241, sec. 519.1; Mayer, *Grammatik 2.3*, pp. 164, 155, 157; Moulton and Howard, *Grammar*, pp. 420 ff. ἔρε occurs for instance mostly in the Septuagint (and in Malachi, 104), but only three times in the Psalms. It declines sharply in the New Testament, appearing with any frequency only in Acts and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

17. ἔρε is avoided in early Hellenistic prose. See Moulton and Howard, *Grammar*, pp. 420 ff. It occurs for instance mostly in the Pentateuch of the Septuagint (and in Malachi, 104), but only three times in the Psalms. It declines sharply in the New Testament, appearing with any frequency only in Acts and the Epistle to the Hebrews.


19. See especially *H. Hom. II* (the *Hymn to Demeter*).
Cleanthes’ well known Hymn to Zeus; the Orphic hymns also illustrate the pattern. A. D. Nock classifies the Somnium Nectanebei and the Greek aretalogies to Isis\textsuperscript{29} in the genre, and, although he was discussing only the aretalogies that comprise the M. text, we can add all the early Isiac aretalogies, the Andros Hymn, the prose Arealogy of Diodorus, and those of Isidorus of the Fayum to his classification.\textsuperscript{21} In fact, Isidorus’ Hymns I, II and III divide easily into the four sections of the Hellenistic hymn.

Although Isidorus’ Hymns have their own individual characteristics, each shows in its main divisions the typical Hellenistic hymn style. Hymn I has three almost equal sections, after a sonorous three-line introduction. Though most of the main body of the Hymn is concerned with the goddess’ general dynamis, it includes within that section an eleven-line polyonymos or myrionymos passage not found elsewhere in contemporary Greek hymns. Finally, the section of seven lines, preceding the concluding prayer, with specific references to human calamities within which Isis can help, is to be taken as a typical Hellenistic reference to the works of the deity.

Hymn II follows a similar pattern, opening invocation, two long sections, and concluding prayer, but it has a novelty, a postscript which appears to be the poet’s own testimony to the efficacy of the goddess. Hymn III too follows this pattern: a long section following the invocation expresses a eulogy of the goddess’ dynamis arete and her particular relation to the Egyptian Pharaoh, followed by the usual passage dealing with the deity’s works, in this case Isis’ gifts to the people of the Fayum.

Even Hymn IV, though not addressed to the goddess but to the god-king Porraramares, who founded her temple in the X1th Dynasty, still follows the pattern we call typically Hellenistic. There are the same references to dynamis, arete, and erga; even heurisko occurs with the Hellenistic meaning of devise, invent, found. The whole of IV magnifies Porraramares as I, II, and III did Isis, and it ends, like II, with a sentence which is obviously personal testimony.

The Memphis text, or M., also shows the customary sections of the Hellenistic hymn. Harder himself analysed the hymn style of his composite text: an introductory inscription, an invocation telling Isis’ genealogy, titles, relationship to other gods, etc., a dynamis section stating her power over nature, etc., and her specific achievements, or erga and heuromata. Particularly stressed is her creative activity as it effects the achievements and discoveries of civilization. M. concludes with the goddess’ farewell to Egypt.\textsuperscript{22} It will be recognized at once that Harder’s divisions perfectly reflect the sections of the Hellenistic hymn, with the exception of the final prayer, necessarily omitted in M. since the goddess herself is speaking.

\textsuperscript{20} A. D. Nock, Gesammelte Aufsätze, 21, 1949, pp. 221-8. Nock refers to the style found in the Karpokrates hymn as suggestive of various ways of expressing the Orphic hymns, the Andros hymn, and the Somnium Nectanebei.

\textsuperscript{21} All belong to the genre; see Festugière, Arétologies, pp. 21-34, note 25, 30.

\textsuperscript{22} Harder, Karpokrates, pp. 39 ff.
D. Müller, in his analysis of $M$, found that some 19 (or 22) of the 56 verses show concepts that could reasonably be said to come from Egyptian inscriptions extant in the Hellenistic era. The rest of the verses he thought probably of Greek origin. Müller made no reference to hymn style or the arrangement of $M$, but Festugière, commenting on $M$ as an example of Hellenistic hymn style, analysed $M$'s form in essentially the same way as Harder, assigning specific lines to the sections:

A (3-11): the goddess' nature, cult sites, etc.
B¹ (12-14) and B² (39-56): the goddess' omnipotence, i.e. dynamis.
C (15-38): the goddess' discoveries, i.e. heurêmata (or erga).

To explain his two divisions of B, the dynamis section, Festugière claims that an indefinite number of additions to $K$ and $J$ must have been made over a period of time and consequently the order has become distorted. According to him, verses 15-38 should follow, not precede, B² (39-56).

The sections of $M$ and of Isidorus' Hymns concerning the goddess as a Discoverer and Universal Deity are, as said above, specifically Hellenistic. That she acts alone and is almost monotheistic is another Hellenistic trend. Although the feminine title 'Heuretría' is first used in the Fayum Hymns of the early first century B.C., Festugière would date the prototype $M$, and its characteristics generally, much earlier than all the extant aretalogies.

Finally, no analysis of the aretalogies would be complete without the observation that the content of Fayum Hymns I, II, and III, and $M$ seems all to have been rather artificially forced by the hymnologists into the Hellenistic hymn-mould. This is shown especially in the dynamis and erga sections, where the deity's dynamis really cannot be separated from her erga. When such a divinity, omnipotent but warmly personal, as in Isidorus' Hymns, is praised, it would seem to be impossible to divide her specific acts from her universal divine virtue. The conviction that this ever-active Creator's power presides over all life and nature (zoe and karpós/phýsis) so permeates the Fayum Hymns that her dynamis, arete, and erga, can in no way be confined to certain lines. Verbs pour out the message, showing her as a restless, beneficent, intelligent force, giving of her own life-force to men, and forever instructing, discovering-creating, and saving them. The goddess loves mankind. Surely what we find in these hymns is the emergence of the strong new Hellenistic deity which, like new wine, bursts through the form of the Hellenistic hymn. The Fayum Hymns are evidence that the prose aretalogies to Isis also could have been exalted vehicles of genuine feeling if they had been produced by a Psalmist or more sensitive aretalogos.

Certain new developments are shown in the Isiae Hellenistic hymns. While obscure or absent in $M$, they can easily be traced in Isidorus' Fayum Hymns. His first Hymn includes a new ten-line polyonymus or myrronymus (many-name)

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23. Müller, *Isorhthologien*, p. 93: verses 3a, 5,
6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 56, 23, 24, 31, 32, 44, 45, 55, 4,
40, 3c, (11?) (46-47?).
section in which he equates his goddess to all great goddesses and claims all are merely forms of her whom he calls "the One." Harder refers to this section as traditionally Egyptian, and van Groningen gives several close parallels from Egyptian hymns of praise. We can conclude that Isidorus' polyonym section was influenced directly by Egyptian hymns, possibly temple-hymns. This feature did not reappear in hymns to Isis for some two centuries. Among Greek hymnologists, Isidorus may also be an innovator in the use of the title Heuretria, since his is the first extant use.

There is, finally, the important matter of the goddess' power over death. The M. text makes no mention of death, although it says Isis "conquers himarmenon." These final verses of M. may bear some relation to Isidorus' simple claim that his goddess can save men when death threatens, or as Egyptian inscriptions would put it, she can prolong life. Isidorus says that she can heal the sick and infirm by sharing her "life" with them (II 8). Her vaster power to give a kind of life even after death, that is, her power in the underworld, is not mentioned until Roman times, and then somewhat cryptically by the Oxyrhynchus Hymn and Apuleius. Isidorus' Hymns I and II are the first among Greek or Latin aretalogies to suggest that Isis' power to heal is really divine power over death.

One should also recall that the fourth Fayum Hymn shows at least two lines that are very like a refrain, causing the narrative both to pause midway and to close with a more or less similar, sonorous line. Such a refrain seems never to have occurred again in Isiac hymns.

These are Isidorus' innovations in the Hellenistic hymn; but he had little influence on subsequent hymns, for these features either never reappear, or only reappear much later. From our evidence, the Fayum would seem to have been, especially in the first century B.C., a more or less isolated locale of peculiarly vital religious syncretism. Its theology may come from the great institution of Memphis, but it sought local expression through its own temple hymns, some of them in Greek. Meanwhile, in the outside Greek world, the same goddess' hymns of praise were assuming an assertive new didactic prose form, as if spoken by the goddess-teacher herself to a new, foreign congregation. The I-style prose of the Greek aretalogy to Isis constitutes a peculiar type of Hellenistic hymn for a literate audience outside Egypt, while the Fayum Hymns are of and for the local bi-cultural society.

25. See Harder, Karpokrates, pp. 47 ff. He believes the whole of M. shows the "fine hand" of the Egyptian priesthood. Van Groningen, de P. Oxy., pp. 79 ff., refers in particular to an Egyptian hymn (to Hades) showing this feature. He seems to prove that references to the mighty name of Isis stem from Egyptian sources, and are therefore early. Cf. Festugière, Aretalogies, pp. 269-34, who implies it is a late feature. It seems to be both.


CHAPTER FIVE
ISIS’ CHARACTERIZATION IN THE EARLIEST GREEK ARETALOGIES

From the Egyptian pyramid texts of the Old Kingdom, ancient Isis, perhaps originally a sky-goddess, or the personification of the royal throne (or its cushion), was never a vegetation goddess and was always associated with other gods in a family.¹ She was daughter, sister and wife, and mother, and, in every reference, youthful and active. She was especially concerned with the human soul after death. Her ancient family relationships are still prominent in Hellenistic M., where the names of Osiris and Horus occur, but, for her new Greek congregation, Geb, her father, is now re-named Cronos; Thoth is Hermes, and Nut, her mother, is omitted.² Nor, in fact, does the name of Serapis occur in the aretalogies of the first century B.C. although he is mentioned in the Cyrenaic aretalogy, of the early second century A.D.

In the Fayum aretalogies, which are local hymns to the universal goddess, the goddess’ family is also present. But they bear names appropriate to the cult of local Hermouchist Sokonopis, dweller in the temple with the goddess is her husband; Anchoes, the visible sun and a sky-god, is her son but of lesser power and scope than his omnipotent mother. There is no mention of Hermouchis, Sokonopis or Anchoes in M., nor would one expect it.

The early aretalogies emphasize Isis’ power, omnipotent and creative. The goddess shows good will towards men in her erga, which are not separated from her dynamis, as might have been possible in praise of a purely Greek divinity. The goddess has given men justice and laws, she is a strong defender of all human civilization, and she presides over its progressive steps. She has become, in fact, a Greek discoverer and teacher for men, like Prometheus, Demeter, Themis, and Hestia. She “finds” and “teaches” technai: agriculture, writing, sea-faring; she has become the sea-goddess and a punisher of tyrants; she can conquer fate. She is Greek Demeter who discovered vegetation, and the eastern creator who first established the cosmos and made man. Her chief care is for men. The Fayum

1. Pha., de It., 21; R/NG p. 329, and illustration 84. Cf. v. Groninger, De P. Oxy., pp. 131-4. It is interesting to see how the Fayum, Greco-Egyptian Isis-and-child representation appears as the Madonna-and-child, or Maria Galaktophorou or Maria Lactans, in Christian art. Cf. K. Wessel, Coptic Art, plates 5 and 6. For further representations of Isis, cf. G. Vandenbeek, De interpretatio Graeca van de Istituzioni, 1946; F. Grandi, Torre (Castel, No. 27; Nilsson, GGR 2, 2, taff. 7, 8, 9, 11.2, and 11.3. Cf. Pater XIX-XIV.

2. In M. 5 (= K 5, f. 4) she is said to be daughter of Cronos. In D. 3 she is daughter of youngest Cronos. In A. 15 she is the elder daughter of Cronos and granddaughter of Ouranos (A. 18).
psalmist, in true Egyptian fashion, thinks of her as the cause of the Nile’s annual flood.

Much of this is Eleusinian, or similar to Eleusinian theology, and may have come to Egypt from the Greek world through the Greek immigrants. But there is a strong non-Greek side to the goddess as well. She has been made to usurp the powers of all the great gods of Egypt. Not only has she entered the pantheon of the stars but of the sun and moon as well; she is the primeval god who separated heaven from earth. She is, in fact, a new synthesis of all important Egyptian deities.

As this is the Isis of the early aretalogies, so it is the specific goddess of Isidorus’ Hymns. Strikingly, she assumes the characteristics of Renenet, a goddess attested at least in the XIIth Dynasty; her worship had been carried on at the very temple-site of Isidorus’ Hymns. In a temple text Renenet speaks: “I give all life eternally. I give all felicity eternally. I give all eternity eternally. I give all success (or health) eternally.” This ancient Renenet (even to the I-style of her address) reappears as a component of the universal Hellenistic and Greco-Roman Isis.

Unification of different strains under the characterization of Hellenistic Isis is extensive. For instance, Greek Agathe Tyche seems to be a large component. Tyche Agathe, sometimes Tyche alone, frequently occurs equated to Isis in Aegean inscriptions of early Prolemaic times. Isis is also Tyche Agathe in the great Oxyrhynchus Hymn of the first/second centuries A.D., that is, the title continued to cling to her in Egypt. The name Tyche (Agathe) followed Isis not only into the Greek world, but to Italy.

Since the Old Kingdom in Egypt, the control of a man’s length of days had been the prerogative of Egyptian major gods. By decreeing the life span of a man, and the quality of his individual portion of life, Egyptian gods had been said to decree or control a man’s fate. They could also extend an individual’s life span when much of his life force was spent. Two Forces or Powers are thought eventually to have come to symbolize the individual life span and the quality of life given within it: Shai, Psoi, or Shoy, from the Egyptian verb sho, meaning to decree; and Renenet, a Power and goddess, meaning specifically Riches, and Good Fortune, or the quality of life within the life span. These two, Shay and Renenet, usually paired, were, according to inscriptions, always under the control of some major god, who might be Amun, Ptah, Khnum, or Aton in the theology of Amarna. Particularly in the later period, the royal goddess Isis, and the members of her family, Osiris and Horus, were also said to control Shay and Renenet.  


island (pravēn). See also Alfeldi, *Isidori*, p. 27, fig. 330: Isis-Tyche Panthena, first century B.C.
6. Osiris (Demeter 4971): “Shay and Renenet are under his command.” Isis (Brit. Mus. 70, Cat.
Many scholars have stressed the importance of Shay and Renenet in Egyptian theology. Müller states that they are shown to have become more important and more nearly defined in the Amarna period.2 Shay remained a power, unpersonified, but Renenet was a goddess more or less personified as she had been from the Old Kingdom. Shay may be very like Homer's μοίρα δευτ.3 But the Greek moira theon, when concerned with the end of a man's life, may even in Homer be μοίρα θανάτου;4 and, in fact, Hellenistic grave inscriptions show μοίρα alone to mean death without any hint of personification. But Shay and Renenet seem never to have been associated with death by the Egyptians.

It is significant that a bilingual text translates Shay as Greek Tyche.5 It must be Tyche Agathe, the good power who is the implied opponent of death. οὐδεὶς δαμανός is another possible interpretation of Shay, that is, τιχείς ἀγαθή alone and with δαμανός δαμανός in the Greco-Egyptian world, may be Egyptian Shay. Renenart-Hermouthis who gives men luck and riches presides with Shay over the individual life. The individual is constantly protected during his life span by these two divine agents. This theology has essentially nothing to do with his after life.

Isidorus in the Fayum Hymns invokes Iasis as Hermouthis, that is, Renenart, and as Agathe Tyche, that is, presumably, Shay. There is a loose equivalent here to the Egyptian title, “Lord of Shay and Renenet.” In other words, Iasis still controls human life and fate in the Hellenistic Greek world as she did in Egyptian temple-lore. Surely this is why the M. text speaks cryptically of her as controlling Heimarmenon. The concluding verses, “I conquer Himarmenon” (sic), and “Heimarmenon obeys me,” are precisely this, cast in first the Greek and then the Egyptian idiom.6 Hellenistic Heimarmenon is fate, both good and bad. That is, it would seem to be a rough equivalent of both Renenet and Shay (or life), and not, perhaps, their counterpart or moira (death). Iasis, herself, can ward off death by prolonging life.

434: 1162 instability, Cat. 472): “Mistress of Life, Lady of Fate and Increase”; Hermes (W. Spiegelberg, “Horus als Aret.” ZAS 57, 1922, pp. 70 ff): “The words of Hermes save every man whose fate stands (just) behind him.” And for Iasis as able to increase a man's life span, see Philae, Pylon 76, 46. Cf. Müller, Isisartenlogien, p. 85, note 3.

7. Müller, Isisartenlogien, pp. 81 ff. Cf. Roeder, Der Religion des Alten Ägypten, p. 182. They are spoken of in that era either together or separately and confused, for each might represent the other (or it would seem so). Usually Renenart is feminine and Shay masculine although this is not always so. Shay seems not to have been strongly personified, symbolizing chiefly the life span of a man from birth to death.


9. Od. II 190, III 236, VI 197; II. VI 488.


11. Müller, Isisartenlogien, p. 85, note 5. Later, moreover, Apuleius (Met. 6) can say: “Vives autem beatus, vives in sua tutela gloriosus; et cum spatium masculum tui permansus ad inferos ducaris, ibi quoque in ipso subterraneo semirotundo me, quam vides Acherontis tenebris interlocutorem stygique penetralibus reguari.” And ibid.: “Scies ulterius statuta fato tuo spatio vitam quoque tibi protrahere milii tantum licere.”
The authors of the *M.* text have carefully expunged the names of all other goddesses, obviously seeking to hide Isis’ syncretistic nature in *M*’s implied monotheism. The Fayum Hymns, on the other hand, claim in Hymn 1 to be monotheistic, but literally glory in their goddess’ syncretism. After invoking her as Egyptian Isis-Hermouthis and Greek Agathe-Tyche-Deo, Isidorus tells us the specific names of ten other great deities to whom he equates her: Syrian Astarte, Syrian Artemis, Syrian Nanaia, Lycian Leto, the Thracian Mother of the gods, and the Greek goddesses Hera, Aphrodite, Hestia, Rhea, and Demeter. Those Isidorus names are all old, important, Near East and Greek deities. Egyptian Thioiis, The One, comes dramatically at the end; all the others are one in her.

Isidorus’ unique, divine mother is undoubtedly an early product of centuries of Greco-Egyptian syncretism in Lower Egypt. The poet is a man of some culture, living amid humbler Fayum farmers, in the early first century B.C. His Hymns meld a little Greek physical philosophy, certain Eleusinian cult concepts of a discovering-civilizing divinity, and a Near Eastern creation myth.¹² Almost surely the general concepts that underlie his words must have originated in greater intellects than his, that is, with theologians who antedated him. His is a sophisticated goddess whose character is the result of enlightened speculation, and deliberate theological formulation of a high order.

APPENDIX
THE GRAMMAR, SYNTAX AND VOCABULARY OF ISIDORUS' HYMNS

The following is a brief summary of Isidorus' commoner linguistic features. His language, like his theology, belongs to the Fayum society of his day.

His use of verbs is characteristic of his vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Statistically, he uses, on the average, one verb a line, a fairly high proportion of verbs. There is much repetition of the commonest Greek verbs, and present and aorist tenses by far outnumber other tenses. Often one particular verb form occurs.\(^1\) His commonest moods by far are the indicative and the participle.\(^2\) Other moods do occur, but are, strangely, limited almost to Hymn I, and even there to one passage of nine lines.\(^3\) To a very large extent this concentration of similar forms is true of all his lines. For instance, he uses the imperfect tense only nine times, eight of which uses are in Hymn IV.\(^4\) He uses participles 41 times, and over a third of these are in Hymn III.\(^5\) He uses subjunctives only twice, and, as said above, both times in I. He uses the optative only twice and again only in I. In short, his use of verbs is rather more rigid, and formulaic even, than one would expect from one who spoke Greek (of any type) fluently. His stilted vocabulary is evident in his infinitives. He uses only seven.\(^6\) This lack of fluency is even more obvious in his imperatives, although one might expect little freedom of speech in the concluding prayers of his hymns.\(^7\)

He appears to use participles, however, with some freedom, a feature which obviously gives his syntax limited flexibility. Of his verb forms 28 per cent are participles, largely occurring in groups or clusters. Hymn III has almost twice as many as the other three hymns together. They occur in the main section of his

\(^1\) His verbs are frequently compound: ἐκάω, ἐθύσω, εὐλογεῖ, and ἐνδόγω. The others that are frequently repeated are: ἱσςω, ὀβλῶ (cf. άείωνος), ἐνθίσσω (cf. ἐνθίσσω), ἐκάω, ἐπέκαω, ἔκαω, ἐκάω, ἐκάω, εὐθύς ἐκάω (cf. ἐκάω), and ἐπέκαω. The present tense occurs in all 70 times in I (20 times), II (17), III (23), IV (10). The aorist in all appears 43 times: in I (5 times), II (14), III (5), IV (19). Forms such as the following appear more than once: παρεῦθεν (I 54, II 5), ἀνατέλειον (II 53, III 19), ἀνεῖλε (I 6, 14), ἐκάω (I 7, II 21) and ἐκάω (III 4).

\(^2\) He uses the indicative 86 times, the participle 41: I (indicative 19 times, participle 8); II (indicative 22, participle 9); III (indicative 17, participle 14); IV (indicative 28, participle 10).

\(^3\) Substantives I 6, 13, optative I 47. These are the only uses in the four Hymns.

\(^4\) They are all of the three verbs: ἐλπίζω (I 11, 16, 21 twice, 29), ἱσςω (15, 17) ἐπέκαω (36). The other use is III 23.

\(^5\) Nine uses are concentrated in lines 25-34.

\(^6\) In 144 lines his only infinitives are: παρεῦθεν (twice), ἐκάω (twice), κατάσκευα (twice), and γαῖα.

\(^7\) His only imperatives are: ἱσςω (twice), ἐκάω, ἐκάω, ἐκάω, ἐκάω, κατάσκευα, ἐκάω, κατάσκευα, ἐκάω.
composition, after the formulaic invocation and before the concluding formulaic prayer. In III he uses participles to compose with evident dexterity (or manoeuvering) one very long and complicated sentence. His uses of the participle are those generally recognized in Greek syntax. The conditional or temporal participle occurs 14 times, the causal and attributive each nine times, the circumstantial and supplementary each three. But his most distinguishing use of the participle is with forms of εὑρίσκω (understood) in a periphrastic construction. The construction does not occur in Hymn II, but I shows one periphrastic use, III has three, and IV two. Those of IV are especially remarkable (IV 16): ἐπιτεθαλῶν ἦν the equivalent of ἐπιτεθαλῆς, and (19) ἐπιτεθαλῶν ἦν the equivalent of ἐπιτεθαλῆς.

Apart from two purpose conjunctions ὅπως and ὅφει, Isidorus writes only simple subordinating conjunctions: ἐπιστεύει / ἐπιστεύει (once), ὅτε (meaning “that, because,” twice), and ὡς (three times, all in IV). His use of the relative pronoun is more noteworthy because he repeats it frequently. Clearly it is a means of description for him. The correlatives ὥσπερ and ὥσπερ καί occur only in III; but are used rhetorically to begin a group of six consecutive lines. The frequent use of καί and τε are discussed below.

But the feature of his composition that shows most precision, and even refinement, is his use of the aorist and perfect tenses. The perfect occurs once in each hymn, and is well used. In I 9 the perfect αἰσχρὰ, is intransitive, meaning “has come into existence, and therefore exists”; “has become compact or congealed, and therefore is solid.” It is used precisely to express divine creation of the cosmos just as Plato had used it in the Timaeus (32b). The same verb in the perfect tense but in the active voice predicates is as cosmic Creator in H. Oxy. 183. If we can judge from Ovid’s use of Latin consistere in a generally parallel passage (equivalent to Greek συνιστάμαι?), the compound form of ἴστημι, by the first century B.C. had become formulaic to describe the act of creating the physical cosmos. The perfect tense used as here is particularly apt but may also have been formulaic. (The Oxyrhynchus Hymn also shows this apt use of the perfect.) In Hymn II 2, the perfect tense in γέγονε is the epic-poetic use of the perfect and so merely part of Isidorus’ epic-poetic vocabulary; ἀγαθαίκα (III 20) is also epic-poetic. But the fourth perfect tense ἀπείκονισε (IV 31) is of interest.

9. See Goodwin, Greek Grammar, 1557 ff. for the three recognized uses: attributive, supplementary, circumstantial (including the genitive absolute, participles showing conditional, temporal, or causal, force, and participles in a periphrasis with forms of εὑρίσκω). For Isidorus’ attributive use see I 24, 27, 35; II 14; III 1, 30; IV 187, 31, 37 (second); supplementary use, I 25; IV 14, 197; and circumstantial use: genitive absolute I 33 twice; II 25; conditional or temporal: I 34; II 8, 16, 27 twice; III 14, 26 twice, 27, 28, 29, 32; IV 207, 337, 387; causal: II 17, 21, 24, 32; III 9, 34; IV 337, 37 first, 387: the periphrastic construction with εὑρίσκω. I 31; III 147, 151, 25, IV 16, 197.
10. Purpose in I 6, 7, 13, and 4.
11. The epic-poetic relative pronoun ἦν occurs five times in I, four in II, three in III, but once only in IV; ὅτε occurs four times in II, once in III, and five times in IV.
13. See Ovid, Metamorphoses I 54.
Its meaning is entirely appropriate to express the blessed state of the Egyptian god-king's spirit that has reached and now dwells in the afterlife of the western heaven. It is, of course, a Koiné form of the verb, where εἰ has replaced επ᾿.

Isidorus' use of the aorist is also precise. It occurs frequently, especially in Hymns II and IV.\(^\text{15}\) It shows two distinct uses, a simple past act which is the simple aorist, and an habitual or general act, the gnomic aorist, to be translated by the English present.\(^\text{16}\) All the instances of the simple aorist occur in I and IV in narration. The uses of the simple aorist in I are, with one exception, to express the seemingly instantaneous past acts of the Creator: ἡμέρης, ἀναφορὰς (4), κατέθεσεν (6), ἔδωκεν (7), ἐφάρμοζο (8), γενέσθαι (36). These uses reveal Isidorus' basic concept of his goddess as a one-time creator and continuing power in men's lives. The real gnomic aorists are easily detected. For instance, II 14: ἕξεν ἐδίδαξεν τὸ φῶς expresses a daily occurrence and ἀναφέρεται (II 21) is annual. In short, Isidorus' uses of the aorist are those of classical Greek.

He uses the present tense either as the historical present or the present general.\(^\text{17}\) The simple use of the present to express one act in present time, of course, does not normally occur in hymns although ἐστὶν (IV 17) is an instance of it.

His participles are all the present or aorist tense. In these he distinguishes tense as carefully as he does in the indicative. All his aorist participles show acts that could properly precede the main verb or the next participle.\(^\text{18}\) This is particularly noticeable in μάταις (III 25) which is followed by six present participles. Each expresses an act that is continuous throughout each day: διέλευσε, κατατείχοντα, καταλύων, ἐφάραμεν, νεκρωπότα, ἔκδοσις is a one-time act each twenty-four hours. Possibly ἀγὼν(τε) (32), though not really continuous, is present because it expresses the continuous stream of Fayum farmers bearing their produce offerings, as they might appear in a painted or sculptured temple relief.

Isidorus' use of voice is particularly careful, and provides evidence that the refinements we have noted above may well be intentional. The active and middle voices remain distinct in all his verbs; his use of the passive is infrequent but exact.\(^\text{20}\) Middle and passive deponent verbs are used somewhat freely in I and II and are always correct. The active voice largely predominates, as is to be
The greatest variety of voice is in I and IV; the least in III. I also shows the greatest variety in mood.

Some of Isidorus’ remarkably precise uses of voice deserve attention. For instance, ἀναλέγειν (IV 18) is properly middle, meaning “read.” Callimachus has an expression that is very similar (Ἑρμ. 25). Isidorus’ voices, in fact, may betray his formal training. The middle voice in ἐρμηπευόμεθα (IV 33) almost certainly is to be translated “express, put into words, articulate in familiar speech.” This is a classical use of the middle and is carefully distinguished from the active in ἰημηπην (39): “translate into a foreign language, interpret for foreigners.” The latter is both classical and Koine. Another apparently precise use of voice occurs in ἠδρο (18) where the middle voice predicates the ἐθνης goddess. In IV 6 the same verb occurs in the active of the god-king, meaning “found, establish (the temple).” Therefore it would seem that Isidorus has deliberately chosen the epic-poetic middle voice to describe the major acts of his primeval creator. With this is to be compared the epic use of the verb (cf. Od. XIX 403, where it means “find, conceive and bestow”).

Thus it seems obvious that Isidorus has a restricted but usually correct knowledge of epic-poetic and classical Greek. It indicates that he has had at least some formal schooling. Certain passages of poetry he may know by heart, passages such as have been found in Hellenistic school textbooks. Students were apparently required to memorize and study intensively selected poetic excerpts. But Isidorus’ vocabulary is not entirely epic-poetic. For instance, his idiomatic ἀναγραφάμεθα (IV 38), ἱστοροῖς (37), and ἐπιμελεῖον (33, 39) are found in what appears to be freer sentence structure, in fact almost prose structure. Hymn IV, lines 37-39 show an especially distinct style. III 26-33 may be similar.

And so, while many of his words, phrases, and sometimes whole lines can easily be identified as epic or epic-poetic, his language is, in fact, a patchwork of borrowed, well worn poetic phrases, a few commonplaces that may be original (see λαμπρόν καὶ λυπαρόν III 10), and some very good ‘prose’ sentences. All are combined somewhat naively and with the awkwardness that could characterize an intelligent man who had learned, but did not easily speak, Greek. Sometimes he seems to write merely nouns and adjectives joined by very unclear connectives.

Cf. III 5-6:

καὶ ἔκοψεν γυλωριῃ τε ἐχεῖν καὶ τέρψιν ἄριστον
ἀδεξός εὐθυχία καὶ συμφρονεῖν τε ἄλπην.

Since Isidorus belongs to the late second and early first centuries B.C., his Greek should bear evidence of the Koine. And there is such evidence. Participles are abnormally frequent in III; he uses fairly often the periphrastic construction cited above; his imperatives are probably the commonest forms of the commonest

21. The active voice occurs: I (22 times), II (38), III (32), IV (50).
22. See, for instance, O. Guérard et P. Jouguet, Un livre d’écolier du IIIe siècle ayant J.-C., Le Caire, imprimerie de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1938
verbs known to Greek. His frequent and repetitious relative clauses are probably also influenced by the Koine; in fact his use of simple relative clauses for present general conditional-relative clauses is possibly Koine. At the same time, recognizable Koine forms occur: ἀφεὶς (IV 31) ἔμεινε (I 36), and ἀντιστιχὸς (II 33). Yet his pervasive dependence on epic-poetic formulae makes his language seem more epic-poetic than Koine. Purely epic expressions occur, like ἐγένετο and ἤρε (IV 21), and ὕκερος (III 23). His uses of tense and voice are consistently classical.

The definite article appears to be somewhat sporadic at first sight. But it is noticeably well used with participles in Hymns I and IV. Here it produces the equivalent of relative clauses. This is a classical use, but it remained common in Hellenistic times. Isidorus also employs the definite article with adverbs and prepositional phrases, a classical use that continued in later Greek. Elsewhere he uses the article chiefly in titles and sometimes with possessive pronouns or their equivalent, for example ἐν τῷ σόμων (II 13), and τῷ σοῦ σόμων (III 17) (and perhaps τῷ σῷσαλς σοῦ III 17). He also uses the definite article with the nouns πόλος, ἐδήμη, and χρόνος which is probably a formulaic use. Otherwise he omits the article, notably with general nouns (cf. I 5 ff.).

In short, his uses of the article are seen to be both epic-poetic and Hellenistic according to the best tradition. They also coincide with the use of the article in more formal prose, such as is found in Hellenistic letters. This good use of the article by Isidorus is to be contrasted with, for instance, its omission in the Andros hymn of the first century B.C. where it is almost entirely lacking.

Isidorus' uses could, perhaps, further indicate his formal training as a scribe.

His uses of τοί are most difficult to tabulate. Generally this particle is probably epic-poetic. At first sight he appears to use it with the utmost freedom. It occurs most frequently in III and least in I and IV. Often it is merely the equivalent of καί (and δέ). Here his use resembles somewhat that of τοί in the Homeric, and certainly the Orphic, hymns. Twice the correlatives τοί ... τοί occur, in what are demonstrably epic lines (I 27, III 16). And other correlative uses are clear: τοί καί (I 5, II 11, III 8, 27) and τοί ἤτοι (III 29). In all instances, of course, his use of τοί may be metri gratia, especially when it appears in the fifth foot (as it does some 11 times). Sometimes Isidorus appears ingeniously to use it in the fifth foot both metri gratia and as a correlative.

There are, however, less clear uses of τοί in the Hymns. Some of these may be an epic adverbial use somewhat like an emphatic enclitic, which had survived in classical Greek in two, sometimes indistinguishable, forms: (a) as a suffix on...
conjunctions and (b) in relative clauses. These uses are known to epic and classical Greek, but fall into disuse in the Koine except for the occasional retention with participles and infinitives. Isidorus may know the epic and classical enclitic use of τε in relative clauses, but one must admit that in each of his uses in relative clauses, τε also appears in the fifth foot of his hexameter line. But it also occurs with participles some three times where it is not in the fifth foot. His four uses of τε with infinitives, however, are in the fifth foot half the time.

It could be that the τε, which often appears unnecessary and awkward, may be intended simply as an enclitic, i.e. emphatic, appendage. This would explain intelligibly Isidorus’ use of the particle in II 12: καί ... καί ... τε; III 5: καί ... τε ... καί ... καί ... τε; III 13: καί ... τε καί ... τε ...; III 6, 35: καί ... τε.

The particle τε is of epic origin, and significantly, several of Isidorus’ uses of it occur in epic quotations (I 27, III 11, 16 and probably II 12). In later Greek it is rare, prosaic, variable, and usually difficult to define. Isidorus’ frequent use of τε surprises anyone who expects him to employ the Koine. But understandably it is a great convenience in writing the long Greek hexameter line, especially when a word of one short syllable may be placed almost anywhere.

Isidorus’ linguistic and poetic limitations are easily recognized. His Hymns are important chiefly as documents of social history. As literary efforts they are pedestrian, but careful and intelligible especially in their employment of mood and voice, and the definite article. Generally, his language is formulaic and repetitious, but at the same time his sentiment is unusually clear. His expression is, moreover, simple, never pompous or superficial. His Greek will serve, he believes, to communicate his message to Greeks. He may, in fact, have been able to write creditable Greek prose; and, further, Isidorus, the devout author of the Hymns, may have been Isidorus γαλαγητης. In Hymn IV he states he is writing an exposition for Greeks to be set up publicly. Obviously he seeks to merit the goddess’ favour by his compositions. They are a conscious exercise of his command of the Greek language en ‘γαλαγητης. As an aretopoletist at the temple, he is a professional hymn-writer. His Greek hymns obviously enjoyed the respect of the local Greek congregation of Isis-worshippers. Otherwise they would not have appeared prominently at the temple’s main gate.


34. IV 37-9.

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Lysimachus 78
Mares (see Porramanres)
Mares (see Porramanres)

Mithridatos 14, 82, 83
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Permarres (see Porramanres)
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Philip of Macedon 79
Philometor, Ptolemy VI 80
Philopator, Ptolemy IV 40, 75, 77
Plate I. Aerial photograph of the excavations at Medinet Madi, 1935-36.

Plate II. The temple forecourt and termination of the Processional Way at the South Portal.
Plate III. The same as Plate II, right.
Plate Va. The dedication inscribed at the top of the left pillar.
Plate Vb. The dedication inscribed at the top of the right pillar.
Plate VI. Isidorus' Hymn I.
Plate VII. Isidorus' Hymn II.
Plate VIII. Isidorus’ Hymn III.
Plate IX. Isidorus' Hymn IV.
Plate X. The left pillar and its inscriptions.
Plate XI. Reimanet-Hermouthis on a dedicatory stele found at Medinet Madi during the 1956 excavation.
Plate XIV. Isernethis, Anchoes (?), Sokonopis; a fresco found in situ in an alcove of the Second Court, 1936.
Δημήτριος ἀρταμιδώρου ὁ καὶ θρασίας Ἡλίας ἅγιος ἀπὸ Μαίανδρον ἔσωθε εὐχάριστον ἔλθεν. 

Τάδε ἐγράφατ' ἐκ τῆς οἰκοτηκῆς τῆς Ἡλίας Ἱεράς ἐστιν πρὸς τῷ Ἡρακλείῳ.

Εἰς ένα τούτων τόσας ἡμέρας καὶ ἐπανεύθυνε ὑπὸ Ἐρμοῦ καὶ Ἡλίας. 

Εὐχάριστον ἔγραψαν τόσον καὶ θαυματουργὸν ἐνδοιαστήσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἡρακλείῳ γράφοντο σταύρῳ ἐν τῷ τοῖς αὐτοῖς πάντα γράφονται.

Ἐγὼ νόμος ἀνθρώπων ἡθικῶν καὶ ἱστομοθέτησα οὐδεὶς δύναται μετασχηματίζει.

Κρόνου θυγάτηρ πρεσβυτάτη. Ἐγὼ εἶμι γυνὴ

Καὶ δόλῳ Ἀσαρίδος βασιλέως. 

Ἐγὼ εἶμι καὶ καρπὸν ἀνθρώπων καὶ δόλῳ Ἀσαρίδος βασιλέως.

Δυρώσα. Ἐγὼ εἶμι μήτηρ Ὀρφεί βασιλέως.

Ἐγὼ εἶμι καὶ ἐν τῷ τοῦ Κυνὸς εὑρεθήκα τῷ ἄστρῳ ἐπίθελλοσ.

Ἐγὼ εἶμι καὶ παρὰ γυναῖκες θεῶς καλοῦμεν. εἰμὶ καὶ ἐν θυσία.

Βουβαστίςς πολλἀς φιλοκαρδίας. 

Ἐγὼ ἔχομαι γῆν ἀπὸ ὦρανοῦ. 

Ἐγὼ θυσίας καὶ τῆς φιλοκαρδίας.

Ἄστρων ὀδοὺς ἴδῃς, Ἐγὼ ἄνευ καὶ σελήνης πορείαν συνετάχθην.

Plate XV. The M, or Memphis, text of Harder
15 ἐγὼ θαλάσσια ἤργα εὗρον. 16 ἐγὼ τὸ δίκαιον ἰαχυρῶν ἐποίησα. 17 ἐγὼ γυναῖκα καὶ ἄνδρα συνήγαγον. 18 ἐγὼ γυναῖκι δεκαμηνιαίοις βρέθος εἰς φῶς ἔξωγεν καὶ ἡτα. 19 ἐγὼ ὑπὸ τέκνων γονής φιλοσοφίας ἐνομοθετήσα, 20 ἐγὼ τοῖς ἀστόργοις γονέων διακειμένοις, ταῖς ἐπεδήλωσε. 21 ἐγὼ μετὰ τοῦ ἀδελφῶν ὑπενδόθης τῷ ἀγάματι ἡπάσα. 22 ἐγὼ μνήμες ἀνθρώπων ἐπεδίδωσα. 23 ἐγὼ ἀγάματα θεῶν τειμῶν ἐδίδωσα. 24 ἐγὼ τῇ κυρίῳ κείμεθα. 25 ἐγὼ τυράννοις ἀνήγαγε κατάλυσα. 26 ἐγὼ βέβαιος ἐποίησα. 27 ἐγὼ ἀνήγαγε κατασκεύασα ἀνδρῶν ἡνάγαγα. 28 ἐγὼ τῇ δίκαιον ἰαχυρότερον κρατῆσαι καὶ ἀργυρῷ ἐποίησα. 29 ἐγὼ τῇ ἀλήθεια καλός ἐνομοθετήσα νομοθετήσα. 30 ἐγὼ συγγράφας γαμικάς εὗρον. 31 ἐγὼ διαλέκτος Ἐλληνικός καὶ ἱστορέω. 32 ἐγὼ τῇ κυρίῳ καὶ ἀληθῶς διαγενέσασθαι ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως ἐποίησα. 33 ἐγὼ τοὺς δοκεῖ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ἐποίησα. 34 ἐγὼ τῷ θεῷ ἐπιβουλώσαντα (ἀλόγος) ἀναλαμβάνων τῷ ἐπιβουλωμένῳ παρέθυκα, ἐγὼ τοῖς ἀλόγοις παρέσυροσεν τειμορίαν ἐπιτίθημι. 35 ἐγὼ λεγόμενος Θεός ἐνομοθετήσα. 36 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις διμαντήσασθαι τειμών. 37 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 38 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 39 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 40 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 41 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 42 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 43 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 44 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 45 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 46 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 47 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 48 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 49 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 50 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 51 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 52 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 53 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 54 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 55 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 56 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών. 57 ἐγὼ τοῖς δικαίοις τειμώνοις τειμών.