

**THOTH, THE HERMES OF
EGYPT: A STUDY OF SOME
ASPECTS OF THEOLOGICAL
THOUGHT IN ANCIENT EGYPT**

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Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt: A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt
by Patrick Boylan

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PATRICK BOYLAN

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A STUDY OF SOME ASPECTS
OF THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN ANCIENT EGYPT

BY

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in financial matters. This section also highlights the need for regular audits and reviews to ensure that all data is up-to-date and correct.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of internal controls and risk management strategies. It outlines various measures that can be taken to prevent fraud, mismanagement, and other potential risks. These include establishing clear policies and procedures, separating duties, and conducting regular risk assessments. The document also discusses the importance of training employees on these controls and ensuring that they are fully understood and followed.

3. The third part of the document addresses the role of technology in modern business operations. It explores how digital tools and software can streamline processes, improve efficiency, and reduce the risk of human error. Examples of such technologies include cloud computing, data analytics, and automation. The document also discusses the importance of data security and privacy, as well as the need for regular software updates and security patches.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of communication and collaboration within an organization. It emphasizes that effective communication is key to achieving organizational goals and resolving conflicts. This section also highlights the need for regular meetings and reports to keep everyone informed and aligned. Additionally, it discusses the importance of fostering a culture of transparency and open communication, where employees feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns.

5. The fifth and final part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed and offers some concluding thoughts. It reiterates the importance of maintaining accurate records, implementing strong internal controls, leveraging technology, and fostering effective communication. The document concludes by stating that these practices are essential for the long-term success and sustainability of any organization.

PREFACE.

The purpose of this essay is to indicate the chief tendencies of ancient Egyptian speculation in regard to the god Thoth. Taking as the basis of his work a fairly complete examination of the chief references to the god in Egyptian literature and ritual, the author has tried to distinguish the more important phases of Thoth's character as they were conceived by the Egyptians, and to show how these aspects, or phases, of his being help to explain the various activities which are assigned to him in the Egyptian legends of the gods, and in the ritual of tombs and temples. An attempt has been made, in many instances, to discover the simple concrete meaning which often underlies characteristic epithets of the god, and the need of seeking groupings among epithets which can in any way be associated with well-defined activities or aspects of the god has been emphasised. The author has not aimed at anything like a full analysis of the individuality of the god. That would have demanded a much closer and more detailed study of Egyptian religious literature, and a more extensive recording of results, than Egyptological scholarship has hitherto attempted in regard to any problem of ancient Egyptian religion.

It will be noticed that texts derived from the Egyptian literature of the Graeco-Roman period have been freely used throughout this essay. Every student of Ptolemaic texts becomes rapidly convinced that those texts contain a considerable amount of theology, which, though it cannot, perhaps,

be always paralleled from the older texts, seems to be fully in line with genuine Egyptian thought of the early — sometimes of the very early — period. Hence, whenever the Ptolemaic texts seemed to promise any assistance in explaining aspects of Thoth, they have been used as authentic documents of Egyptian speculation and belief.

For the theological thought of the early period, the Pyramid texts have, of course, been minutely examined. Considerations of space and expense have excluded the printing of quotations from the Pyramid texts, but frequent references to the numbered *Sprüche* of Sethe's *Pyramidentexte* will enable the reader to follow and control the writer's use of the Pyramid literature. Passages from the Book of the Dead, in like fashion, have been, for the most part, referred to, rather than quoted. The references are generally to Naville's *Totenbuch* (in the text of which, however, certain slight emendations based on *Wörterbuch* material, have sometimes been incorporated).

The theme of this essay was suggested to the writer some time before the outbreak of the Great War by Professor Erman. The subject had already been treated by the Russian scholar Turayeff in his *Божь Тотъ* which was published in 1898. Though that study was the outcome of painstaking work on the part of the distinguished Russian Egyptologist, it was, on the one hand, inaccessible to most students of Egyptology and Comparative Religion, and, on the other, it needed to be largely supplemented and modified in view of the great advance in Egyptological research since 1898. Most of the results of that advance were stored up in the material which had been gradually accumulated for the Berlin *Wörterbuch*, and Professor Erman made the composition of this essay possible by procuring permission for the writer to make free use of that material. The writer's gratitude is due to Professor Erman not only for procuring that permission, but also, and still more, for the unfailing generosity with which he

put at the writer's disposal his great store of knowledge and his keen critical ability whenever he was consulted on any question arising out of textual or other difficulties connected with the study of the character and worship of Thoth. To Professor H. Schäfer, and to the other officials of the Egyptian Museum at Berlin, and to many of the young scholars who were engaged on work connected with the *Wörterbuch*, the author is greatly indebted for much courtesy and kindness.

The thanks of the writer are due in a very special way to Professor Hermann Junker of Vienna. To him he owes his initiation into the Egyptian script and literature of the Ptolemaic period, and to Dr. Junker's published work on the religion of the Ptolemaic period many points in the present essay are due, directly or indirectly. During the passage of this essay through the press, Dr. Junker has found time, in the midst of his academical duties in Vienna, to read the proofs, and to make many useful suggestions. For all his kindly help the writer is deeply grateful. To Dr. W. Till of Vienna who helped to prepare the MS for the printer, and assisted constantly in the proof-reading, much thanks is also due.

The title of the essay has been chosen partly to suggest from the beginning an important and intelligible aspect of Thoth to the general reader, and partly to remind the student that a god who, at first sight, might seem to be a divinity of purely Egyptian importance, was, nevertheless, associated with such a widely flowing current of ancient thought as the speculation of the Hermetic writings.

St. Patrick's College,
Maynooth,
January 1922.

P. B.

CORRIGENDA.

Page 3, note 1, read Nav. 94.

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|---|-----|---|----|---|--|
| " | 4, | " | 1, | " | <i>Rylands.</i> |
| " | 16, | " | 3, | " | <i>Mystères ég.</i> |
| " | 64, | " | 5, | " | makes. |
| " | 84, | " | " | " | commands the <i>šhi</i> [instead <i>hšb</i>]. |
| " | 85, | " | 6, | " | <i>Šhi</i> [twice]. |