

**Panthea, Initiations and Festivals of the Goddess**  
**by Olivia Robertson**

**9. Festival of Opet**  
**23rd July to the 3rd August**

**Oracle of the Goddess Muth**

**Priestess:** Divine Muth, Mother of all beings, come to our hearts! Inspire us with wisdom and compassion, so that at the last we may dwell in Thy everlasting habitations overshadowed by thy Wings.

**Oracle:** In verity the two lands of earth and after-life are One. They are only separated by the blindness of the ignorant. Day and Night are One. Sun and Moon are One, Man and Woman are One. The inner sun which shineth within the depths of the earth is One with the Sun in Heaven. Every heart is united with all hearts through the spheres with the warmth of Love. Yet every being and atom calleth to the others through unique quality that is its essence.

But discord destroys peace and joy through this very Love, when it becomes distorted into obsessive passion. It strikes through narrow devotion to family and nation, but it is at its most evil when it consumes the soul with religious fanaticism. Devotees so deluded will torture and kill those who will not accept the object of their worship.

My children of ancient Egypt saw Deity in the Many. They recognised innate divinity in cats and dogs and hippopotami, through beetles and crocodiles and rivers. As the intellect brought separation of man and nature, men found the Path of the One Light: they acknowledged the Many as emanating from the One. This satisfied mind and heart. Both ways of approaching reality have brought many to everlasting joy. Yet both have caused great evil, through abuse by overemphasis. Those who worshipped the Many in a mindless way degenerated. They became dissipated and lost strength of directed mind and purpose. After them came the followers of the One, whether the One God or Mind: these through unbalanced ideals killed millions of their fellows in the name of love and justice.

The Deities always provide an antidote to poison. And the antidote to obsessive devotion, whether to a person or to a country, to a religion or to an ideal, is to face the truth. This is not easy. If facts contradict long-held feelings and opinions, a man would rather die than accept them. Such people regard Truth as ugly and shun it. They are terrified of the unknown. For them the Goddess is shrouded in black night. Yet if they had the courage to unveil Her, they would see the beautiful countenance of Truth. Instead they pursue Love, thrusting aside all that stands in their way. Inevitably they are consumed by violence and insanity. Love must be approached with humility.

Let Love and Truth be brought into that Sacred Marriage which bringeth forth harmony.

*At the gates. Pharaoh wears Amon crown with 2 plumes of Truth and Justice. He carries burning incense. High Priest in gold headdress holds staff. He and men celebrants are in white and gold.*

**High Priest:** We are assembled to celebrate the Mystical Marriage of the Sun God Ra and the Sky Goddess Muth. Sirius, Star of Isis, has its heliacal rising at the Egyptian New Year. The birth of their Son, the Moon God Khonsu, is invoked.

**Pharaoh:** This incense embodies the life-giving warmth of Ra. To begin the Opet Festival, the statue of Amon Ra was carried from his Temple of Opet-Esut in Karnak down the Avenue of Rams, into the Boat of Ra on the Nile. The Pharaoh, His son, with the High Priest of Amon and other dignitaries came with the statue. The boat was rowed Southwards for the Holy Mile to the Temple of Luxor. Nobles and people accompanied the procession by the river bank, playing musical instruments and singing and dancing.

**H. Pr:** The God was travelling to Luxor for his yearly stay with his Queen, the Goddess Muth, in Her Temple of Opet-Resyt. Within, standing by the statue of Muth, stood the great Queen of Egypt, daughter of Muth, awaiting the Pharaoh, her husband.

**Pha:** For eleven days the Mystical Union of God and Goddess was celebrated in the Holy of Holies. On the eleventh day before expectant crowds assembled in the Outer Court, the Queen appeared followed by the Pharaoh. She would walk in procession down the Avenue of Sphinxes to the bank of the Nile. There she would raise her arms and call down the power of the Sky Goddess, and bless the river. So was a successful inundation ensured, bringing a good harvest to feed the people. To end the festival the statue of Amon Ra would be carried by boat to his own Temple in Karnak. Let us make procession to the altar of Muth!

*Music. Procession to altar which is draped in green and gold, on it are 9 lighted candles. Before it is a large silver vessel of water. By it is a table with feast, a cup of water and bread in a cloth. The Queen stands by it wearing the Muth headdress of stylised bird with long feathered wings. High Prs. and Women Celebrants in white and silver.*

*High Priest knocks twice on ground with staff.*

**High Priestess:** Who seeks admittance to the Holy of Holies of the Goddess Muth?

**H. Pr:** Her Husband, the God Amon Ra, Who would celebrate with Her the Festival of Opet.

**Queen:** He is welcome!

**Pha:** I offer this incense, in which is ensouled the God-like fire of Amon Ra that bringeth life. Homage to Thee, O Amon Ra, Who resteth upon Maat and Who passeth over the Heavens. Every face seeketh Thee! Thou doth wax great as Thy majesty doth advance, and Thy Rays are upon all faces. Thou hearest with Thine ears and Thou seest with Thine Eyes.

**H. Pr:** Millions of years have gone over the world: I cannot tell the number of those through which Thou hast passed. Thy heart hath decreed a Day of happiness, in Thy name of Traveller. Thou doth travel through untold spaces through millions of years. Thou passeth through them in peace. Thou steerest thy Way across the Watery Abyss to the Place which Thou lovest. Thou art in the heart of Thy Queen, the Goddess Muth.

**Queen:** I accept this incense in the name of Muth! (*She circles incense left to right 3 times in air. She sprinkles drops of water from finger tips onto incense.*) I present this water of the Goddess who poureth Her rains upon the fruitful earth, replenishing hidden springs that are the source of the Nile. Homage to Thee, Thou mistress of The Gods, Thou Bearer of Wings. Thou art the Mighty One of enchantments in the Boat of Millions of Years, Who art Mother in the horizon of Heaven. Praise be to Thee, O Lady of Heaven. Words of adoration rise to Thee from the eight Gods.

**H. Prs:** Living souls risen from the coffins of death praise Thy Mystery. Thou art Mother of departed souls, Thou Source from Whom all spring. Thou makest for souls a place of repose in the Underworld of Amenti, and makest them strong in the abode of eternity. In the Name of Muth, Who maketh souls strong and Who maketh sound bodies, let us be blessed. Amon Ra reposes His fiery beams within thy

widespread wings. So is our thirst quenched and our fields are made to bear rich crops!

**Pha:** At this time of Opet it was the custom to perform a Divine Drama. Let the Mystery of the Sandal of Rhodope be enacted!

### **Mystery of the Sandal of Rhodope**

*Actors: Modern traveller. Arab Guide. Greek Chorus. Rhodope in white and wears gilt sandals. Pr. of Helios. Helios in gold wearing gold rayed crown. Old Woman in black. Egyptian Soldiers. Pharaoh Amasis in Amon crown. Egyptian dancers.*

*Traveller meets Guide.*

**Guide:** Never have I seen such an exhausted traveller! Our country has three famous pyramids! Why then do you make a circuit of this third one which is smaller than the others and even neglected? I have seen you wandering by it day and night for weeks, hardly stopping to eat or rest!

**Traveller:** I have forgotten my home and my studies. I am a lost soul obsessed by a phantom. At the time of the golden moon of August, as it rose at sunset, I saw gliding by this very pyramid a naked woman most divinely beautiful. She saw me and she blushed a rosy red and gave me the smile of an angel! She beckoned to me and I drew near - but then she evaporated like a mirage and seemed to enter the very stones. Since then I have longed for her as a starving man longs for bread and the thirsty, for water. My soul is consumed with fire. I cannot leave this place.

**Guide:** Many men have seen this phantom at midday or at sunset, and through the centuries there are those who perished in their search for her. Some have worshipped her as Hathor of the stars of Taurus, Goddess of Love. Others believe she is the Spirit of the Great Sphinx. But most adore her as Queen Nitocris, who finished this pyramid of Mykerinos, causing it to be encased in red Syenite granite, which has magical properties.

**Trav:** I am in despair. You are a Guide. Can you help me?

**Guide:** I help those who ask for it. Indeed some call me Hermes, and others, Anubis. You have a choice between two ways. You can blot this vision from your mind, return to your own land, and immerse yourself in your studies. Or you may continue your search for love, and I will help you. But this way is dangerous, and has many pitfalls.

**Trav:** I choose the Way of the Heart, even if it means madness or death.

**Guide:** So be it. Behold with your inner vision! (*makes the sign of the Ankh in the air and draws traveller to one side*) The ancient past unfolds itself. Watch what befalls in the Temple of the Sun God Helios in the Island of Rhodes.

*Music.*

**Chorus:** Alas for Rhodope! Alas for ourselves. In headlong disobedience she denies the teachings of our Priests, and obstinately turns from their doctrine, preferring her own fantasies!

*Enter Pr. from one side, Rhodope from the other.*

**Pr:** From my own goodwill for you, Rhodope, my brightest pupil. Will you not bend your will to our learning? This is a Temple of the Light of Reason and Philosophy. Why do you persist in believing your

wild imagination?

**Rhodope:** Helios has appeared to me in a vision and spoken to me. He declares you draw the people away from faith in the Deities, and so bring spiritual death to this island.

**Pr:** So, you persist in spreading delusions to your companions! Hear the Judgment of the Hierarchy. You are excommunicated, and so are banished from this Temple. Because you are a Vestal, no man may lay hand upon you under pain of death! But no one may give you shelter or food or drink.

**Chorus:** Rhodope, repent! Obey and be silent. If you leave us we shall lose our new-found ecstasy. And you will surely perish.

**Rho:** Never! I accept my doom.

*Pr. and Chorus leave. Music. Helios appears. Rhodope sinks on one knee.*

**Helios:** Rhodope, My daughter, be of good heart. For long you have bravely trodden the path of truth. Now you need to find the way of Love. For this you need to discover my Sister, Queen of Night.

**Rhodope:** So be it. Where shall I find her?

**Hel:** Thou shalt find to the left of the House of Hades, a Well-Spring. And by the side thereof grows a white cypress. To this Well-Spring approach not near. But thou shalt find another by the Lake of Memory, cold water flowing forth, and there shall be a Guardian before it. Say "I am a child of Earth and of Starry Heaven: but my Race is of Heaven alone. And lo!, I am parched with thirst and I perish. Give me quickly the cold water flowing from the Lake of Memory." And the Guardian will give thee to drink from the Well-Spring. And behold, thou shalt receive the armour of Hermes! And thou shalt be emboldened to make Thy Profession of Faith with words inspired by Mnemosyne, Muse of Remembrance.

**Guide:** And Rhodope journeyed far and long and no one would give her shelter or food or drink. And though she sought far and wide, she found no well, nor cypress nor lake of memory. And she was cold and hungry and thirsty when she reached a small grove of cypress trees by a stream.

*Enter Rhodope holding bread in cloth.*

**Rho:** My feet are bleeding and aching! I shall bathe them in this stream.

*She takes off her sandals and as she has one foot in stream, Old Woman comes upon her.*

**Old Woman:** Fair Maiden, give me to eat, for I starve! Soldiers slaughtered all my family, even the children. They burnt our home. Yet still I would live, that I may offer gifts to the Goddess Persephone on behalf of their souls.

**Rho:** I see that others suffer more than I do. I weep with you. Take this bread, good Mother. It is all I have.

*Rhodope gives bread from bundle. Old Woman throws off her cloak and reveals herself as the Goddess Muth. Rho. goes on one knee.*

**Muth:** Rhodope my daughter, you have reached the stream from the Lake of Memory! You have successfully passed through the ordeal ordained by the Blessed Gods. You speak the Truth. What is your Profession of Faith?

**Guide:** And Rhodope brought to mind the words given to her by Helios, and spoke them to the Goddess.

**Rho:** Inspire me, O Mnemosyne! Out of the Pure I come, Pure Queen of them below, for I avow that I am of Your Blessed Race. And I have paid the penalty for deeds unrighteous, whether it be that Fate laid me low or the Gods immortal. I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel. I have passed with eager feet to the circle desired. I have entered beneath the lap of the Queen Below, Despoina of the Underworld: and now I come a suppliant to Thee, Holy Persephone, Divine Muth, that of Thy Grace Thou shalt receive me to the seats of the Hallowed.

**Muth:** Holy and Blessed One, thou shalt be Goddess instead of mortal! (*gives Rho. water from cup*) Receive this water from the Lake of Memory, that thou mayest acknowledge thy True Self. (*Rho. drinks*) But there is a further trial for thee to endure! Flee, Rhodope, for soldiers come upon thee! (*Rho. puts on right sandal*) Delay not one second but fly for thy life!

*Muth wraps cloak about her and leaves and Rho. flees leaving left sandal. Enter Egyptian soldiers headed by Captain.*

**Captain:** (*picks up sandal*) This is strange indeed! A woman of unsurpassed beauty flees across the desert, her hair flying like the night, leaving behind this tiny gold sandal! Surely this is an omen as the Festival of Opet approaches. I shall bring it to the Pharaoh, who is no mean magician!

**Guide:** And the Captain was as good as his word. He brought the sandal to the Pharaoh Amasis, who had left his capital in Memphis for Thebes in the South, to celebrate Opet.

*Enter Amasis and Captain.*

**Cap:** Your Majesty, I found this sandal by a stream where a maiden of divine loveliness was washing her feet in a stream. When she saw us in the distance, she fled, leaving behind her sandal.

*He presents sandal, ribbons tied.*

**Amasis:** This sandal forms a Golden Ankh! I have seen it in a vision, held in the hand of a smiling Goddess, hair loosened and falling about her like a cloak. She filled my heart with flame. I am determined that at any cost I must find this maiden. I shall make her my Queen. Let the owner of this sandal be searched for and brought before me! I offer a rich reward.

**Guide:** And the owner of the sandal was sought for all over the land of Egypt, but no woman's foot filled it exactly. And seekers, eager for the rich reward, travelled further and finally they found Rhodope searching for berries to eat, by the Ionian sea, and she, too weak to protest, was brought by ship and land to Thebes. There she was brought before the Pharaoh.

**Rho:** What would the Pharaoh have of me?

**Amasis:** I know thee, Bearer of the Ankh! I would learn the Mystery of the Wells of Persephone.

**Rho:** If the Goddess wills it, so be it.

**Am:** What may I offer you in return?

**Rho:** Thou hast come to me as Helios. I would learn the secret name of Ra.

**Am:** If the God wills it, so shall it be. Rhodope, you have my love. Will you be my Queen?

**Rho:** You are in my heart, Amasis. I shall be your wife.

*Music. Muth appears.*

**Muth:** This Sacred marriage has been ordained by Amon Ra and myself, The Goddess Muth. Know that thou, Rhodope, are in verity the Princess Nitocris, sister of the Pharaoh Metesouphis. After his assassination, thou wert conveyed as a baby to the Temple of Helios in the island of Rhodes, birthplace of your Ionian mother. Thou, Amasis, hath restored Truth and Justice to Egypt and so shall be blessed with offspring through this union. Together you shall celebrate Opet with your marriage! In recompense for your abandoning your Vestal Vows, Nitocris, thou shalt finish the building of the Temple of Mykerinos in My honour. Thy Spirit shall bless all those who in Truth seek for Eternal Love.

*Amasis and Rhodope hold hands palm to palm, then turn to bless Omnes. Egyptian music and dance.*

**Guide:** Return, O Traveller, in time to your present existence! Leave this pyramid having obtained its good, and journey to your own country and resume your studies. From now on, in every woman, whether ugly or beautiful, old or young, wise or foolish, you shall see the Goddess! And so in you they shall recognise the God.

**Traveller:** I give you thanks. My mind and heart are One. I know myself. I am Ra the Traveller, and the Day of Happiness has come! I rest in the Heart of Muth.

*Gong is struck once. End of Mystery.*

**Queen:** *(anoints each brow saying)* True Vision is within your brow.

**Pharaoh:** *(offers incense to each saying)* In your heart is the hidden sun.

**Prs. H:** Fellow Celebrants, let us contemplate the Mystery of Rhodope's Sandal.

*Contemplation. Rays of harmony are sent forth. Reports.*

*H. Pr. and H. Prs. give thanks to Muth and Amon Ra. Feast is enjoyed.*

**End of Rite.**

**SOURCES:** "The Dawn of Civilization, Egypt & Chaldea," Professor Maspero, S.P.C.K., London, 1884. "The Book of the Dead," Wallis Budge, Kegan Paul, 1923. "The Gods of the Egyptians," Budge, Dover. "The Goddesses of Chaldea, Syria & Egypt," Durdin-Robertson, Cesara.

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