#### Hymn to the Aton

This week's lecture is on the Egyptian New Kingdom. During that time, Egypt experimented with monotheism. The individual who did this was Akhenaten. He and his wife Nefertiti wrote the following hymn:  
  
AKENATEN'S THE HYMN TO THE SUN (Aton)  
When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,   
[1st comparison, verse 20]  
The earth is in darkness like the dead.   
They sleep in their chambers   
Their heads are wrapped up.   
Their nostrils are stopped   
And none see the other.   
While all their things are stolen   
Which are under their heads   
And they know it not   
Every Lion cometh forth from his den   
[2nd comparison, verse 21]  
All Serpents they sting   
Darkness The world is in silence.   
He that made them resteth in his horizon.   
[22. The Sun riseth, they get them away,   
and lay them down in their dens. 23. Man   
goeth forth unto his work And to his labor until   
the evening.]   
Bright is the earth when thou riseth in the horizon.   
[3rd , 22]  
When thou shinest as Aten by day   
Thou drivest away the darkness.   
When thou sendest forth thy rays   
The two lands (Egypt) are in daily festivity.   
Awake and standing upon their feet   
When thou has raised them up.   
Their limbs bathed they take their clothing   
Their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning   
Then in all the world they do their work.. [4th, 23]   
All cattle rest upon their pasturage  
The trees and the plants flourish   
[12. By them the birds of the heavens have their   
habitation. They sing among the branches.]   
The birds flutter in their marshes, [5th, 12]  
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.   
All sheep dance on their feet.   
All winged things fly,   
They live when thou hast shone upon them.   
[25. Yonder is the sea great and wide. Wherein   
are things creeping innumerable. Both small and   
great beasts. 26. There go the ships.]   
The barges sail upstream and downstream alike.   
[6th, 26]  
Every highway is open because thou dawnest.   
The fish in the river leap before thee.   
Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.   
Creator of the germ in woman  
Maker of the seed in man   
Giving life to the son in the body of his mother  
Soothing him that he may not weep.   
Nurse (even) in the womb.   
[29. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled.   
Thou takest away their breath and they die.   
And return to their dust.]   
Giver of breath to animals, every one that he maketh   
When he cometh forth from the womb [7th, 29]  
On the day of their birth   
Thou openest his mouth in speech   
[27. These wait all for thee. That thou may give them   
food in due season.]   
Thou suppliest his necessities.[8th, 27]   
When the fledgling in the egg chirps in the shell   
Thou givest him breath there-in to preserve him alive.   
When thou hast brought him together   
to (the point of) bursting it in the egg   
To chirp with all his might,   
He goeth about on his two feet   
When he hath come forth therefrom.   
How manifold are thy works,   
They are hidden from before (us)   
O Sole God, whose powers no other possesseth.   
Thou didst create the earth according to thy heart   
While thou wast alone   
Man, all cattle, large and small   
All that are upon the earth   
That go about on their feet   
(All) That are on high   
That fly with their wings   
The foreign countries, Syria and Kush,   
The land of Egypt  
Thou settest every man into his place   
Thou suppliest their necessities   
Everyone has his possessions   
And his days are reckoned  
The tongues are divers in speech   
Their forms likewise and their skins are distinguished   
(For) thou makest different the strangers.   
  
It has long been recognized that there are similarities with Psalm 104 in the Old Testament.