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# The Golden Bough

## The Third Edition

VOLUME 5: ADONIS ATTIS OSIRIS:  
STUDIES IN THE HISTORY  
OF ORIENTAL RELIGION 1

J.G. FRAZER



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# ADONIS ATTIS OSIRIS

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF  
ORIENTAL RELIGION

BY

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THESE studies are an expansion of the corresponding sections in my book *The Golden Bough*, and they will form part of the third edition of that work, on the preparation of which I have been engaged for some time. By far the greater portion of them is new, and they make by themselves a fairly complete and, I hope, intelligible whole. I shall be glad if criticisms passed on the essays in their present shape should enable me to correct and improve them when I come to incorporate them in my larger work.

In studying afresh these three Oriental worships, akin to each other in character, I have paid more attention than formerly to the natural features of the countries in which they arose, because I am more than ever persuaded that religion, like all other institutions, has been profoundly influenced by physical environment, and cannot be understood without some appreciation of those aspects of external nature which stamp themselves indelibly on the thoughts, the habits, the whole life of a people. It is a matter of great regret to me that I have never visited the East, and so cannot describe from personal knowledge the native lands of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. But I have sought to remedy the defect by comparing the descriptions of eye-witnesses, and painting from them what may be called composite pictures of some of the scenes on which I have been led to touch in the course of this

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volume. I shall not have wholly failed if I have caught from my authorities and conveyed to my readers some notion, however dim, of the scenery, the atmosphere, the gorgeous colouring of the East.

J. G. FRAZER.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN this second edition some minor corrections have been made and some fresh matter added. Where my views appear to have been misunderstood, I have endeavoured to state them more clearly ; where they have been disputed, I have carefully reconsidered the evidence and given my reasons for adhering to my former opinions. Most of the additions thus made to the volume are comprised in a new chapter (" Sacred Men and Women "), a new section (" Influence of Mother-kin on Religion "), and three new appendices (" Moloch the King," " The Widowed Flamen," and " Some Customs of the Pelew Islanders "). Among the friends and correspondents who have kindly helped me with information and criticisms of various sorts I wish to thank particularly Mr. W. Crooke, Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie, Mr. G. F. Hill of the British Museum, the Reverend J. Roscoe of the Church Missionary Society, and Mr. W. Wyse. Above all I owe much to my teacher the Reverend Professor R. H. Kennett, who, besides initiating me into the charms of the Hebrew language and giving me a clearer insight into the course of Hebrew history, has contributed several valuable suggestions to the book and enhanced the kindness by reading and criticizing some of the proofs.

J. G. FRAZER.

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

IN revising the book for this third edition I have made use of several important works which have appeared since the last edition was published. Among these I would name particularly the learned treatises of Count Baudissin on Adonis, of Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge on Osiris, and of my colleague Professor J. Garstang on the civilization of the Hittites, that still mysterious people, who begin to loom a little more distinctly from the mists of the past. Following the example of Dr. Wallis Budge, I have indicated certain analogies which may be traced between the worship of Osiris and the worship of the dead, especially of dead kings, among the modern tribes of Africa. The conclusion to which these analogies appear to point is that under the mythical pall of the glorified Osiris, the god who died and rose again from the dead, there once lay the body of a dead man. Whether that was so or not, I will not venture to say. The longer I occupy myself with questions of ancient mythology the more diffident I become of success in dealing with them, and I am apt to think that we who spend our years in searching for solutions of these insoluble problems are like Sisyphus perpetually rolling his stone up hill only to see it revolve again into the valley, or like the daughters of Danaus doomed for ever to pour water into broken jars that can hold no water. If we are taxed with wasting life in seeking to know what can never be known, and what, if it could be discovered, would not be worth knowing, what

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can we plead in our defence? I fear, very little. Such pursuits can hardly be defended on the ground of pure reason. We can only say that something, we know not what, drives us to attack the great enemy Ignorance wherever we see him, and that if we fail, as we probably shall, in our attack on his entrenchments, it may be useless but it is not inglorious to fall in leading a Forlorn Hope.

J. G. FRAZER.

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