

## A late Edfu Theory on the Nature of the God

**T**HE 'Building Text' of the great enclosure of the Ptolemaic Temple at Edfu (1) tells us of the history of building and functions of this wall. It also reveals traditions which were connected with this structural part of the temple. It has been noticed that in addition to these accounts there is included a record that describes the characteristics of the chief god who dwelt in the temple — Horus the Behdetite (2). This text is without any doubt a writing of a late date and most probably written by the Edfu priests themselves. It does not disclose a new tradition ultimately attached to the Edfu god or a tradition of a remote date hitherto unknown. This text is an amalgam of trends of thought borrowed elsewhere, combined and applied to the Edfu god. Nevertheless, it furnishes us with an interesting set of ideas that enable us to trace the way of approach to the religious feelings of those times, in particular, to the problem of how the Egyptians of Ptolemaic times looked upon the god whom they adored in their temple. This record reads:

(16,2) *Long live Horus-Rē<sup>(a)</sup> who brightly illumines the Two Lands (b) the light of the Radiant One (c), the Two Mistresses, the Horizon god who begat (d) the Eldest Ones (e), who founded (16,3) the Two Lands (f), Horus of Horus gods, Khopri (g) who created existent beings (h), the King of Upper and Lower Egypt. Ptah-Tanen (i), Father of the Eldest Ones, is his true name (j).*

*Rē<sup>(k)</sup>-Horus has appeared (16,4) upon the Throne of the Eldest Ones (k) (as) the beneficent heir (l) in Khāw-nefer (m). With him (n) is the command (o) which the Father gave to him: to (p) create men, to give birth to the gods, to create all that should exist (16,5) as the creation of his thought (q).*

*When the lotus bud grew verdant (r) from the lotus (nhb) (s) even the seed of the Nun, to raise everything (t) (16,6) from the egg (bnnt) (u)*

(1) E. VI. 5,5-18,15

(2) E. VI. 16, 2-9.

the Vulture-goddess and the Frog-goddess (v) surrounded it (w) to exercise the protection [of Horus (x)] the child of Tanen.

When the šṭṭt-egg (y) was created they opened (16,7) its interior (z) within the lotus and Rēc as stripling was between the Two Ladies. His embodiment is Khopri, even Ptah (aa) who was first to cause (16,8) his creation to be (bb). The slumber shall pass away when (cc) the light (dd) came forth therefrom in the form of the radiant stripling who dried (ee) everything in its surroundings (ff) by his two flaming eyes from the Island of the Two Flames (gg).

May he give all victory to the King of Upper and Lower Egypt (Heir-of-the-Beneficent-God-and-the-Beneficent-Goddess, Chosen-of-Ptah, Justiciar of-Rēc, Living-Image-of-Amun) given life like Rēc for Eternity.



## NOTES TO THE COMMENTARY

(a) Horus-Rēc, alternatively Rēc-Horus on l. 16, 3; for the equation of the Falcon Horus with Rēc cf. ASAE, 25, p. 191, Junker, *Politische Lehre*, p. 33-44, Kess, *Goetterglaube*, p. 418-430, Blackman, *JEA*, 28, p. 23; what concerns further Edfu references, see in particular the speech of the King to the god in a scene of the « Offering of the Lotus » in E. VII, 162, 12-13: « I came unto thee, O, Behdetite, lord of the two skies, Horus of Horus gods who removed himself afare to the sky. I bring thee the lotus from which thou hast emerged and which came into existence in the High Hill. Thou art Rēc who illumines the Two Lands by his rays, who shines with gold every morning. », and below, p. 67-68.

(b) *šlī psqt*, lit. « who throws light », cf. *Wb.* IV. 327, (12); this description alludes to the appearance of the solar Falcon in the temple by early morning, cf. E. I. 22; E. II. 9, 8-6; 10, 8; 10, 16; 11, 2; 12, 4; 27-29; E. VII. 162, 13 quoted in n. (a); it brings to mind the ideas that lie behind the Edfu set of the « Morning Hymns », cf. E. I. 18 and Blackman-Fairman, *Misc. Greg.*, p. 398-400.

(c) *šsp iḥw*, *šsp* is here a noun, cf. *Wb.* IV. 283; *iḥw*, as a divine name, describes chiefly Rēc, cf. *Wb.* I. 33 (4). The Edfu cosmogonical records tell us of a deity *iḥw* « the Radiant One » who could hardly be identical with Rēc; cf. E. III. 7, 7; 121, 10; 132, 5; 231, 10; VI. 182, 17; 183, 12; 186, 4. He seems to have been believed to be an intangible deity; no description of his physical appearance is given but the *šnn iḥw*, the « Likeness of the Radiant One » is referred to in the texts. This name applies to the Primaeval Protector god who was later equated with Ptah. Allusions are also made to a sacred place *iḥt iḥw*, the « Mound of the Radiant One », cf. E. VI. 11, 5; 183, 12. These texts do not derive from the Heliopolitan tradition; it may, therefore, be surmised that the Edfu tradition alludes to another solar deity and his cultus-place which did not survive in dynastic times but which might have been elsewhere in Lower Egypt than in the Heliopolitan region. For further Edfu references to the « Radiant One » cf. E. I. 19, 21; IV. 140, 14; V. 180, 16; VI. 320, 8; 349, 1. See also E. I. 496, 1 where *iḥw* occurs as the name of a form of the deceased god in which he comes in the morning into the temple to re-

ceive his food — the libations ; *sim.* in E. V. 244, 3 and 250, 2 the « Radiant One » is the deceased god who brought to life the existent beings.


(d)  read *ḥty*, cf. E. IV. 83, 14 ; VI. 153, 8.  is used with the reading

*bḥ*, cf. E. IV, 267, 5.

(e) *wrw*, the 'Eldest Ones' occurs in the Edfu texts as an alternative of *tpyw-r*, the « Ancestor Gods », cf. *CdE*, 75, 54, n. (4) and is common in describing the first generation of the creators, cf. *ZÄS*, 87, p. 42, n. (a).


(f) *grg ḥwi*, the creation of the world is interpreted as the « foundation of Egypt » ; for the same idea cf. E. I. 289, 2 ; IV. 390, 6 ; VII, 79, 3-4.


(g) Khopri is according to this tradition the physical body of the Sun god born in the lotus, cf. I. 16, 7 ; E. III. 106, 12 reveals another belief ; the *August Khopri who came forth from the Nun* is ' the great *sj*-Falcon ' ; he is (cf. 106, 16-17) « the self-engendered one who issued from the Nun, the Unique One, the great *nḥb*-lotus that came into being at the beginning, whose rays cast away the darkness ».

(h)  *wnt* may convey the general meaning « everything », cf. *Wb.* I.


310, (4) ; the sense of *wnt*, cf. *Pyr.* 2057 and *MD.* IV. 15 will be here plausible.


(i) Ptah-Tanen, the thought that Ptah-Tanen was the father of all the divine beings is predominant in the cosmogonical doctrines of Graeco-Roman times, cf. Sethe, *AMUN*, p. 55-60 ; Junker, *Goetterglaube*, p. 75 ; for the Edfu description of the Earth-god see : E. I. 498, 16 ; II. 37, 4-6 ; 37, 9-10 ; III. 8, 6 ; 231, 10-11 ; VI. 31,9 ; 321,16 ; VII. 32, 13-14 ; VIII. 94,3 ; CD. V. 44, 11 and *below* p.69-70.

The god's name is written in this instance with the determinative  ; in E.

VI. 15, 3 and *Urk.* VIII, 138, 2 we find the name determined by the sign .

Two interpretations are possible : a) the name « Ptah » is written without any

determinative and describes the god Ptah and the sign  as an alternative of

 conveys the meaning *Tni* ; the reading of the divine name would conse-

quently be *Pth-Tni*, « Ptah-Tanen » ; b)  may be used only as a determinative

of the divine name. We find in E. VI. 16, 7 that the name of Ptah shows the pictogram of the Sun god as its determinative. We would, therefore, be inclined to admit that the name *Pth* may convey in this instance a more or less general meaning

'the Creator' (cf. *Wb.* I. 565, (10)) whose real nature is found specified by the form and significance of the determinative; the form of the determinative would seem to indicate whether there is a reference to the creator of the earth or whether he represents the solar creator of the world.

(j) *kꜣ mꜣꜣty*, the Egyptian belief was that the name was the chief means to convey the characteristics of a divine being to another, cf. Kees, *Goetterglaube*, p. 171 ff. This belief is, in particular, illustrated by series of episodes in the Edfu cosmogonical records, see our work on the *Mythical Origin of the Temple* (with printer). Here, the Edfu Falcon as a god of solar nature is given the name «Ptah-Tanen» and is consequently regarded as the «Father of the Eldest Ones»; cf. *below*, p. 69-70.

(k) *nst wrw*, the «Throne of the Eldest Ones», as an alternative name of the *st n sp lpy*, the «Seat of the First Occasion» (cf. de Buck, *Oerheuvet*, p. 72) and *st ḡꜣꜣ*, the «Seat of the primaeval time» (cf. Drioton, *ASAE*, 44, p. 112-113) is not rare in the Edfu inscriptions to describe the god's original resting place; see E. VI. 174, 13 referring to the *nst n pꜣꜣwtꜣw*, the «Throne of the Primaeval gods», *id. Urk*, VIII. 31, 5; C. VI. 186, 7-8; CD. II. 177, 7-8; in E. IV. 1, 14 the expression is used as the name of the Edfu Temple; *sim.* in E. IV. 14, 5 the expression *nst Rꜣ ḥꜣꜣ sꜣꜣꜣw nfr pꜣꜣwtꜣ*, the «Throne of Rēꜣ upon the blessed territory of the primaeval age» and in E. VI. 15, 10 *nst n Rꜣꜣ ḥꜣꜣ Ḥꜣꜣ* the «Throne of Rēꜣ and Horus» are also employed as names of the Edfu Temple; in E. I. 498, 16 the *nst n Inb-ḥꜣꜣ*, the «Throne in the White Enclosure» is said to be the place of Ptah-Tanen, «the Father of the gods, the progenitor, the Eldest One who came into existence at the First Occasion, the great god». This belief links with the Edfu tradition deriving from our record; see the reference to Khāꜣw-nefer.

(l) *mnḥ mnḥ*, the reading *mnḥ mnḥ* sounds a little strange; the emendation in *lꜣꜣ mnḥ*, the «beneficent heir» will fit in with the context.

(m) *Ḥꜣꜣw-nfr*, cf. Brugsch, *DG*, 561; Gauthier, *DG*, IV, 168 and Junker, *Onuris-legende*, p. 62; E. I. 298, 16; VII, 21, 10. There is no authority to prove that *Ḥꜣꜣw-nfr* was the name of the original sacred place of Memphis. It is only the Edfu tradition that made of it the home of the primaeval deity, the realm of Tanen in which the Falcon became successor of the Earth-god; cf. the already quoted instance from E. I. 498, 16 and *below*, p. 70-71.

(n) *m-ꜣ*, cf. Junker, *Gramm. Dend. Texte*, p. 148, 195; the clause *rdꜣ n.f ḫꜣꜣ* can here have two grammatical functions either it is the predicate of the sentence in which the expression *wꜣꜣt.f m-ꜣ.f* is the subject or it is an ordinary relative clause qualifying the word *wꜣꜣt*, «command».

(o) *wꜣꜣt*, cf. *Wb.* I 396; this is an Edfu view elaborated according to an ancient belief; the Ka of the primaeval age was believed to issue commands to his successor, with the view to establish the life of sacred places; cf. E. VI. 17, 11; 176, 5 177, 11; 185, 2 and *Myth. Orig.* and our article on the «Children of Tanen» (with printer).

(p) *ḥꜣꜣ sḥꜣꜣꜣ*, here as well as in the two following instances *ḥꜣꜣ ms* and *ḥꜣꜣ kmꜣ* *ḥꜣꜣ* seems to convey the final meaning, cf. Spiegelberg, *DG*, p. 132, i). These three expressions, *sḥꜣꜣꜣ rmt*, *ms ntrw*, *kmꜣ wnnwt nb*, are in the Edfu inscriptions the

usual clichés of the brief accounts of the creation, cf. for instance E. I. 99, 3-4; II. 37, 10; III. 42, 14-15; IV. 140, 5-6; VII. 79, 4.

The traditions that were connected with the origin of the gods of historical times, the *nrtw*-gods, are various; E. IV. 140, 5-6 tells us that the gods came forth from the creator's mouth; we learn from P. dem. Berlin 13606, II, 2 (*sim.* IV, 3) that they were created in the darkness and were born from the creator's tears; the text of the Shabaka Stone, l. 60-61 reveals an entirely different conception of the origin of the gods. It is stated that the creator formed the *dt*, the « physical body » into which the *nrtw*-gods entered.

(q) *m kmꜣt n ib.f*, we are inclined to take *m* as the *m* of equivalence; the Edfu redactor was undoubtedly inspired by the same thought which is reflected in the text of the Shabaka Stone, l. 53-56 that the creation of the world was the result of the god's tongue and heart, cf. Junker, *Goetterlehre*, p. 39-59; Sandman, *Plah*, p. 44-45; P. Berlin 3048, III, 1; *Urk.* VIII. 79, 10-11; E. I. 289, 4-5.

(r) *wbg .....m*, cf. *Wb.* I.296, (16); the preposition *m* indicates the direction « from »; for *wbꜣ*, cf. *Wb.* I. 355, (3).

(s) *nḥb*, for the rôle of the lotus in the creation of the world see *Myth. Orig.* This is the only evidence in which the lotus is described as the *mtwt*, « seed » of the Nun, which, however, can be linked with the trends of thought enshrined in P. Berlin 13606, II, 6; there it is stated that the creator made fertile the water (*mw*) in the great pool from which the lotus emerged to emit the radiance. The majority of the Edfu instances refer only to the emergence of the lotus from the pool of the « Island of the Egg », cf. E. I. 29, 3; II, 232, 8; III. 185, 14; IV. 140, 2; 392, 15-16; V. 84, 14; 85, 2; VI. 247, 11; 338, 13-14; VII. 16217-8. In a good number of the Edfu cosmogonical records the lotus itself is said to be the creator who initiated the existence of the world; E. III. 42, 14-15; V. 51, 1; 74, 12; 84, 12; 221, 1; VII. 162, 7; M. 204, 19; also in CD. II. 177, 7; III. 190, 13; IV. 172, 12. In E. V. 84, 14 only do we read that the lotus issued from the *dt*-embodiment of the primaeval divine beings.

(t) *hr twꜣ nꜣj r-r.w*; *hr* conveys again the final meaning, cf. *above*, p. 64, n. (p); *twꜣ*, *lit.* « to carry », « to lift up », cf. *Wb.* V. 249; the context seems to require a slightly modified meaning such as « to raise », « to bring out as a creation »; the object is not defined and we may hesitate whether *nꜣj* is used with a general meaning or whether it refers to the divine beings whom the lotus was believed to carry out of the primaeval water.

(u) *bnnt*, the embryo of the earth; cf. *Wb.* I. 460, (8) which does not define the meaning of the word; for the significance of the *bnnt*-embryo in the creation see Sethe, *Amun*, p. 118-119 and in particular E. IV. 139, 13 ff.; this text preserves a part of a doctrinal document in which the function of the *bnnt*-embryo was interpreted. This text is studied in detail in our *Myth. Orig.*

(v) The same mythological episode is recorded in E. VI. 339, 1-3; our text, however does refer neither to the *pꜣwtꜣw tꜣꜣw*, the « First Primaeval Ones » who were believed to create the Sun god (cf. E. IV. 140, 13-14; V. 86, 14; VI. 174, 14-15) nor to the *šꜣꜣ*, the « Great Pool » which was regarded as the birth-place of the Sun god, cf. E. III. 185, 14; IV. 392, 16; VI. 247. 111; VII. 162, 8 and the *Myth. Orig.*

(w) *phꜣr ḥꜣ*, cf. *Wb.* I. 545, (12); the description seems to allude to a magical rite performed at birth which is not referred to in the majority of the instances describing

the birth of the Sun god in the lotus except E. VI. 339, 1-2; *-f* must refer to the lotus; *hr* is again used with the final meaning, cf. *above*, p. 64, n. (p).


(y) Rest. [*Hr*]; Horus as the son of Tanen is also mentioned in E. IV. 353, 4; cf. *below*, p. 69.

(x) *pth štyt* is used as the *sdm* A temporal and the expression is to be paralleled with *qr wbg whj* in l. 16, 5; *-štyt*, cf. *Wb.* IV, 55, (5); this is the sole evidence to tell us that the *štyt*-egg was the real birth-place of the Sun god in the lotus; differently E. III. 186, 4 reveals the belief that the Sun god was created within the Nun and carried out in the lotus.



(z) *kfj.sn hnw.s*; the suff. *-sn* must refer to the two goddesses. This tradition is unknown from the other texts describing the birth of the Sun god; *hnw.s*, the suff. *-s* can only refer to the egg.

(aa) *hr*, cf. *Wb.* III. 39, (3). The Edfu redactor parallels again Khopri with Ptah to illustrate the composite nature of the local god, cf. l. 16, 3; the name of Ptah is written with the determinative of the Sun god, cf. *above*, p. 63, n. (i).

(bb) *šyr*, for a closely similar use of the verb *šyr* to convey the sense « to be first to cause to be » cf. E. III. 42, 14.

(cc)  ; the interpretation of this group meets with difficulty;


*nd* may tentatively be taken as the temporal conjunction NTE; its connexion


with the sign , however, remains obscure;  with the reading *pri* is

common in the Edfu graphical system.

(dd) *wnyr*, cf. *Wb.* I. 315, (4).

(ee) *tkj*, *lit.* « to burn ». The belief that the terrestrial world was created by the process of drying up the primaeval waters around the centre of creation is foreign to the Memphite doctrine of creation. None of the cosmogonical narrative deriving from the Hermopolitan tradition does ever allude to this belief.

(ff) *m hšw.f*; the suff. *-f* refers to the lotus;  is used as the determinative

of *šhtj* instead of the common , cf. *Wb.* I. 17.

(gg) For the Island of the Two Flames, cf. Sethe, *Amun*, p. 49-50; it is an alternative name of the Hermopolitan Island of the Egg, cf. E. V. 51, 6; 84, 14; VI. 339, 1; VII. 162, 8; M. 23, 10; 87, 7; *Petosiris*, no. 61, 18; 62, 4; 82, 96; at Edfu this primaeval island is also described as the *st hht*, the « Place of the Flame », cf. E. IV. 140, 3; 392, 16; VI. 247, 11-12; VII. 321, 11 and the *Myth. Orig.*

#### GENERAL COMMENTARY

The general intent of the text studied in this paper is clear: to furnish an evidence that the local chief deity residing in the actual temple

was, indeed, the creator of all animate beings, of all the gods and their ancestors. This tendency is common to all the native temples of Graeco-Roman Egypt (1), each of which claimed for the priority of its god while describing him as the omnipotent creator of the univers. The Edfu record only adds to this general tendency for the ideas that can be deduced from it, can apply almost to any god. That the Edfu redactor of this text took ideas from the two main Egyptian doctrines of creation and combined in a deliberate manner their summarized versions is beyond dispute.

It is known that at Edfu Horus the Behdetite did preserve his original identity of the warrior-god (2). But he is also the son and successor of Osiris. The influence of the Heliopolitan myth and doctrine was strong on the Edfu tradition. We find the Edfu Falcon described in the temple inscriptions as the likeness of Rē in the South (3), then as the Sun god himself. The various forms of the solar Horus the Behdetite are constantly fused or differentiated in accordance with the feelings of the Edfu redactor or to suit the religious situation of the Edfu Temple (4). In addition to the already known forms of Horus the Behdetite we find him here represented as the creator of the world. He is pictured in the first instance as the solar creator. This view can be illustrated by numerous pieces of evidence from the Edfu inscriptions and is, in particular, striking in a set of ritual scenes engraved on the walls of the Pronaos. Of these we recall in the first place a short inscription which can rightly be regarded as the summary of the record here studied; it reads: « *the Great Lotus (nḥb) who was first to cause the earth to be who had existed in the past, the Solely Sole without peer, who was first to cause the earth to be on his (potter's) wheel, who created men, gave birth to the gods, Lord of Univers, ruler of the gods of primaeval age, the First Primaeval One who came into existence before the primaeval ones, Horus the Behdetite, great god, lord of the sky* (5). In closely similar terms he is portrayed in the scenes of the Foundation Ritual represented in the Pronaos: *Horus the Behdetite, great god, lord of the sky, the august being, speedy of birth who came forth from the*

(1) Cf. SETHE, *Amun*, where the inscripational evidence from the Karnak temple is discussed.

(2) Cf. JUNKER, *Onurislegende*, p. 21.

(3) E. VI. 113, 3.

(4) Cf. BLACKMAN-FAIRMAN, *JEA*, 28, 23.

(5) E. III. 42, 14-15.

*Nun who shines from the Naunet, who created substances, who brought into existence living beings, the great god pre-eminent in Nedjem- $\epsilon$ Ankh, the Ancestor who appears with solemnity in Wetjeset-Hor. The King of Upper and Lower Egypt who issued from the Nun, the Radiant god at seeing whom men live, the great god pre-eminent in the Seat-of-R $\acute{e}$ c, the great Sakhem in Egypt, the august idol in Wetjeset-Hor, Horus the Behdetite, great god, lord of the sky (1). Horus the Behdetite, great god, Him-with-dappled-plumage, great of strength who slays his foes, the Sanctified god who came into being at the First Occasion who brought into existence the existence after he came into being, the Solely Sole who created the existent ones, who brought into existence the seeds of the glorious field. The Radiant god has shone with radiance (even) Horus-R $\acute{e}$ c in the capacity of the strong-of-arm, great of reverence while slaying the enemy, killing the foes (and) steaming out the attack of his adversaries. He is the Soul of the East who shines in the East to whom the gods give adoration (2),*

As a solar deity Horus the Behdetite was consequently believed to have come into being in a manner alike that of the Sun god; we are told that he was born in the lotus. Numerous are the instances which we can gather from the Edfu set of the ritual scenes of the « Offering of the lotus ». There Horus the Behdetite is always the « august stripling » — the Sun god. It seems most likely that the same doctrinal scripts were used for writing of both, the text incorporated into the « Building Text » of the Enclosure and the definition of the deity represented in all the scenes of this rite. A couple of quotations will adequately illustrate the identity of the source. In a scene of the « Offering of the Lotus » engraved on the wall of the Pronaos Horus the Behdetite is said to be « *the great god, lord of the sky, the august stripling who rose from the lotus. This august god who came into being in the Great Pool who was led forth from the Nun within the lotus, for whose soul the sky was uplifted so that he may shine therein, the underworld being inaccessible in order to conceal his embodiment* » (3). The same ideas are repeated in the epithets of the Edfu god in the instances of the same rite represented on the walls of the Forecourt; he is « *the august child*

(1) E. III. 110, 1-3; 4-5.

(2) E. III. 123, 12-13; for further closely similar descriptions of the Edfu god cf. E. III, 47, 8-9; 60, 11; 64, 15; 67, 13-16; 106, 12-13; 106, 16-17; 108, 8-9; 110, 1-3; 111, 1-2; 116, 5-6; 113, 3-4; 134, 1-2; IV. 71, 14-16; 140, 5-6; VII. 79, 1-4.

(3) E. III. 186, 3-5.

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who rose from the lotus, the First Primaeval One who came into being before gods, at whose coming forth the darkness was driven away (1).

The Edfu redactor proceeds then to tell us that the Falcon Horus born in the lotus was the son of Tanen (2) and that despite his solar nature his real name was Ptah-Tanen and that from the Earth-god did he acquired the creative power. We may venture to suggest that the Edfu priestly writer was influenced by the general theory of those times and attempted to link the local god with the prevailing trends of thought that the Earth-god exactly was the power that initiated the existence of the world. This belief is found at Edfu abundantly illustrated, in particular, by the epithets of Tanen; of these we draw special attention to a description of Tanen occurring in a text of the original nucleus of the Edfu Temple. Tanen is pictured as the likeness of the 'Ir-t, the «Earth-Maker» in the following terms: «Ptah, Him-on-the-South-of-his-Enclosure, lord of ḥAnkh-tōwī, great god residing in Behdet, the Father who impregnated females, the august god who came into being at the commencement as the Sole One without peer, who created himself, who was fashioned at the beginning there having been no father no mother to form his body, the Solely Sole who created gods, who fashioned females and who created his progeny, who raised [.....] by the creative work of his hands, who founded the Two Lands for his divine Children.

*The Earth-Maker who created the Primaeval Ones, the Father of all the gods, the First of the First Ones who brought into existence existent beings, who fashioned that which is, who created that which exists, who formed those who give the form, who fashioned those who fashion, Tanen, who gave birth to the gods (3).*

Evidence of the ultimate relationship between Tanen and Horus is not lacking at Edfu. Horus is said to be «That One who created everything, the Falcon of Tanen who illumines the darkness, the lord of life in this land (4). Moreover he is «Tanen who created that which exists, Father of the Fathers who created gods and men, the Unique One without peer. The ḥAḥ-sake who created the Primaeval Ones, the sakhem [.....] for whose disk the sky even the hyt-sky was uplifted, who created the earth

(1) E. V. 9-10 and similarly IV. 393, 1; V. 245, 24-25; 342, 9; VI. 248, 2; VII. 79, 2-3; 162, 16; 163, 2; 321, 14.

(2) Cf. above, p. 61, 66, n. (y).

(3) E. II. 37, 4-6; 9-10.

(4) E. V. 9, 3-4.

for him who issued from him, who was first to come into being when there was no existent being, Horus the Behdetite, great god, lord of the sky <sup>(1)</sup>. He is also the « august soul of *Ḳmꜥt.f*, Father of the gods, the god without peer who created sky, earth, water and mountains <sup>(2)</sup>.

We learn from our record that the Edfu Falcon became creator after he ascended to the throne of the primaevial deities; then he was invested with the command to create. Needless to comment upon the very artificial aspect of this view of becoming creator. Nevertheless, we think that it is possible to investigate the source from which might spring this realistic and factual conception of becoming creator of the univers. It brings to mind an ancient tradition which we know only from the Edfu cosmogonical narratives. We are inclined to admit that this mythical episode might well have been the starting point of this properly Edfu theory. We learn from the Edfu creation myth of a mythical place in the island of creation which was sacred to the 'Ir-tj, the 'Earth-Maker'. There stood the 'Mansion of Isden' at which the Falcon arrived. There Tanen, as the protector of that place, offered the Falcon with the sacred emblems of the Earth-god. Through the medium of this episode the Falcon was believed to have been able to succeed the Earth-god in the rulership over the primaevial world. According to the copy of the original version of the myth, however, the Falcon did not become the creator of the world, he was only the god for whom the world was created <sup>(3)</sup>. When we compare the original version of the myth to the properly Edfu theory we find that there are features that are reminiscent and that they may enable us to trace the way of approach to the speculative doctrine of the Edfu priests. It might, perhaps, have been believed that the Falcon acquired not only the power to rule over the world but also he was equated with his ancestor in all his characteristics when he received his sacred emblems. On this belief, probably, was based the speculative theory concerning the « decree-of-creation » of the Earth-god as the vital force operating in the origin of the world.

This theory has no parallel but from the point of view of the Edfu Temple this theory can be explained. The local god was to be introduced as the chief god of the univers. There was, therefore, the need to justify

<sup>(1)</sup> E. V. 157, 3-4.

<sup>(2)</sup> E. V. 201, 17-208, 3.

<sup>(3)</sup> E. VI. 183, 4-10 and *Myth. Orig.*

that Horus the Behdetite was the creator and became it by the command of a divine Ancestor. The Edfu priest had a recourse to an ancient tradition and modified it in a way to project it into the drama of creation.

The purpose of the Edfu writing may appear clear if we give consideration to the context into which this record was incorporated. It was included in the « Building Text » of the Edfu Temple in which there are enshrined summaries of the Edfu creation myth. These summaries have a direct bearing on the history of the Edfu Temple (1). We find there on the one hand a brief account of the history of origin of the first temple of the Falcon (2), on the other hand that of the creation of the first temple of the Sun god (3). We may venture to suggest that the explanation of this highly arbitrary and artificial theory on the nature of the Edfu Falcon Horus may perhaps, be sought from this point of view. As far as we could reconstruct the theory of the Edfu priests concerning the origin of the Edfu Temple, it seems most likely that they were used to regard their temple as the reflexion and projection of these two mythical temples that were believed to be created at the beginning of the world. It does not, therefore, appear unnatural that they too were keen on proving that the god dwelling in the historical temple was the likeness of the deity for whom the first temple was created. This account was, therefore, intended to illustrate their view that the local Edfu god was in his essential nature, the embodiment of divine lords of the two mythical temples of the primaeval age — Rē and the Falcon. This suggestion seems to accord with a statement of the Edfu priest which we read at the end of the first summary of the creation myth: « *Thus the Throne (nst) of Rē and Horus came to be in this place to abide for Eternity* » (4).

E. A. E. REYMOND.

(1) Cf. *Myth. Orig.*

(2) E. VI. 14, 13-15, 10.

(3) E. VI. 17, 17-18, 10.

(4) E. VI. 15, 10.