

## Worship of the Ancestor Gods at Edfu

THIS paper has the limited purpose of discussing some less known aspects of the *worship of the Ancestors in Ancient Egypt*. The Ancestors with whom we are concerned in this paper are neither the royal ancestors nor the forefathers of the ordinary, non-royal Egyptian, but the Ancestors of the Egyptian gods themselves (1).

It is appropriate to mention at the beginning of this study that among the numerous inscriptions engraved on the walls of the Pronaos of the Temple at Edfu, we find a series of ritual scenes bearing on the adoration of deities whom we can scarcely meet in other temples of Pharaonic or Graeco-Roman Egypt (2). These scenes are to be found among the inscriptions decorating the architraves of the hall of the Pronaos. These are placed on the west side of the roof of the Pronaos following a scene of *Presenting Truth to the Masters of Truth* (3), and yet another scene of *Elevating offerings to his Father* (4); they concern: 1) *Adoring the God, four times* (E. III. 296, 11 - 296, 15), a scene which bears on the worship of the *Little Ennead*; 2) a scene without title dealing with the worship of the *Heliopolitan Ennead* (E. III. 298, 16 - 299, 5); 3) *Presenting incense and libations to the Eminent Souls, the Ancestors* (tpyw-c), *the Children of Rēc* (msw Rc), (E. III. 301, 8 - 301, 16); 4) *Adoring the God, four times* a scene which refers to the worship of the *Seven Souls of Rēc* (E. III. 303, 17 - 304, 5). On the east side of the roof of the Pronaos, again after a scene of *Elevating offerings to his Father* (5) in which Horus the Behdetite

(1) The reader will find a comprehensive account of the Egyptian funerary beliefs and customs in H. KES's *Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der alten Aegypter* (Berlin 1956), where further textual and bibliographical references are given; see also S. MORENZ, *Aegyptische Religion*, p. 192.

(2) As far as the late period is concerned, such scenes are not to be found in the Temples at Denderah, Kom Ombos and Philae; from the Temple at Karnak only a limited number of ritual scenes referring to the Hermopolitan Ogdoad can be added to the Edfu set.

(3) E. III. 291, 6-13.

(4) E. III. 293, 17-294, 10.

(5) E. III. 309, 4-13.

was adored, there is to be found : 5) a scene of *Offering the Lotus to the Very Primaeval Ones* in which the Hermopolitan *Ogdoad* are adored (E. III. 312, 2 - 312, 9) ; 6) *Adoring the God, four times* a scene bearing on the worship of the *Seven Sages* (E. III. 314, 13 - 315, 5) ; 7) *Adoring the God, four times*, a scene referring to the worship of the *Seven Builder Gods* (E. III. 317, 9 - 317, 17) ; 8) *Bringing the Falcon of Gold*, a scene in which the *Fourteen Kas* are praised (E. III. 320, 6 - 320, 13) ; 9) *Presenting incense and libations to the Gods of Behdet* a scene which again concerns the worship of the *Children of Rēc* (E. III. 323, 5 - 323, 11).

A study of the inscriptions on the outer wall of the Pronaos permitted us to identify a number of other scenes of adoration. They resemble the set of ritual scenes described, but contain more extended reference to the same deities. These scenes are : 1) *Stretching the cord over the Temple of Horus the Behdetite, great god, lord of the sky* which bears on the worship of the *Seven Builder Gods* (E. IV. 352, 2 - 353, 15) ; 2) *Adoring the God*, a scene referring to the adoration of the Shebtiw<sup>(1)</sup> (E. IV. 357, 15 - 359, 8) ; 3) *Adoring the God*, a scene which bears on the worship of the *Seven Souls of Rēc* (E. IV. 383, 15-385, 4) ; 4) *Presenting the palette and the scribe's outfit*, a scene in which the *Seven Sages* are adored (E. IV. 389, 10-391, 2). Other scenes connected with the same kind of worship are to be found on the outer wall of the Naos, such as 5) *Offering the Lotus*, a scene in which the *Ogdoad* are praised (E. IV. 139, 11 - 141, 11) ; 6) *Adoring the God*, a scene which bears on the worship of the *Fourteen Kas of Rēc* (E. IV. 295, 6 - 297, 6) ; 7) *Tying the crown for the Little Ennead* (E. IV. 265, 9-267, 5) ; 8) *Tying the wsh-ornament*, a scene in which the *Great Ennead* is worshipped (E. IV. 109, 9 - 111, 2).

The first set shows very simple ritual scenes. The texts include only the title of the rite to be performed and mention the officiant who does not bear any specific title ; only a list of names of the deities worshipped accompanies the representations of their images on the wall of the Temple ; very occasionally is there a brief description of the deities adored.

The second set on the outer wall of the Naos, however, presents us with much expanded accounts which not only acquaint us with the worship of the deities represented in the Temple at Edfu, but seem to describe at some length the nature and the activities of these gods.

(1) See our article in ZĀS, 87, 1, p. 41-54, *The Shebtiw in the Temple at Edfu*.

The texts of the scenes give a coherent picture of the various actions of creation which these deities were believed to have completed in the mythical age. It is evident that we have, in both instances, a large set of offering scenes bearing on the worship of various groups of Creator gods.

We will not enter into a detailed discussion of what all these groups of Creators represented in our ritual scenes, had done in the mythical past. The problem is partly outside the scope of this paper, and has already been studied in one of our forthcoming works concerning the Egyptian religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt. Our main interest is to examine the significance of this long series of ritual scenes, and to attempt to explain the part which these Creators, the Forefathers of the Egyptian gods, played in the life of the historical Temple.

It is inherently possible that all the ritual scenes listed above did not serve only to decorate the walls of the Pronaos and the Naos, but that they stand in a close relationship to the tradition connected with the Pronaos, and to all the rites to be performed in that part of the temple. As a whole, this rich repertory of ritual scenes seems to point to an important cult once celebrated at Edfu about which, however, very little is known or has been written. Our view is supported by the textual evidence of other inscriptions engraved on the walls of the Edfu Pronaos. The « Building Text » of the Pronaos, which is to be found on its east side-door (1), in particular, can be taken as an argument in favour of our hypothesis.

A well known feature of the organization of all the late temples of Graeco-Roman Egypt is that each room or hall of the temple, as well as its main architectural parts, was provided with texts of a special nature. These texts are not, in the strict sense, ritual texts or ordinances regulating the temple services, but records which explain a good deal of the history of the temple concerned, its significance and functions (2). The « Building Text » of the Pronaos mentioned above reveals very little of the history of building of this part of the Temple, but describes a large assembly of gods and states : *This greatly blessed door-way that*

(1) E. III. 355, 10-356, 3.

(2) For a preliminary account of the significance of these « Building Texts » see H. W. FAIRMAN, *Worship and festivals in an Egyptian Temple*, *BJRL*, 37, p. 169-173 and our forthcoming work on *the Mythical origin of the Egyptian Temple*, Part I.

leads into the Pronaos, there is none like unto it. The Beetle enters it on the festival day, its two uraei being its protection.

Tanen settled (therein), his company of gods being in his train : Isden together with Seshat the Great, the Sages, these who magnify (swr) his awe, the Builder Gods who fashion upon the (potter's) wheel, the Ogdoad, (even) the Senior Ones (wrw), the progeny of the Lord of Eternity, who arrayed (ḏb) the gods in a blessed operation. (Then) Rêr, his Seven Souls together with his Fourteen Kas, the Ancestor Gods, his Children, (even) these ones, the pre-eminent in Behdet.

The end of this inscription speaks of the *Company of gods* (psḏt) of *Wetjeset* protecting the embodiment (ḏt) of Rêr-Harakhte together with his Ancestor (ḏfn) Tanen.

It will be noticed that this *Company of gods* of *Wetjeset* apparently consisting of two distinct bodies, are, in fact, the same deities to whom the ritual scenes listed above have introduced us. We find mentioned in this « Building Text » three groups of deities associated with Rêr, i.e. his Seven Souls, his Fourteen Kas and his Children. In an equal position with them there is the Ogdoad representing the « Senior Ones » (wrw). The other part of this divine assembly are deities closely associated with Tanen since they are said to be his *Company of gods*. There is no difficulty in recognizing in them the founders and builders of the mythical temples of the primaeval age <sup>(1)</sup>. The second set of scenes gives adequate support to this statement and indicates that this *Company of gods* of *Tanen* was called by an alternative name *msw Tnḏ*, *Children of Tanen* <sup>(2)</sup>. The texts of the scenes listed above reveal also the belief that these *Children of Tanen* assumed the (kingly) office of their father *Tanen* <sup>(3)</sup>, and that while creating the sacred domains and temples in the primaeval age they completed the work of creation of their father *Tanen* <sup>(4)</sup>. It is also stated in one of our documents that they completed the creation, even the work of him who begat them and which he handed over to them because so very excellent were they <sup>(5)</sup>, a fact which in our « Building Text » is found summarised in the ex-

(1) Cf. ZÄS, 87, p. 49-54.

(2) The tradition concerning the *Children of Tanen* is known only from the Edfu texts; cf. ZÄS, 87, p. 45, n. (n) and p. 50.

(3) E. VI. 173, 7.

(4) E. III. 317, 13-14.

(5) E. IV. 353, 3-4.

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(1) E. III. 355, 1

(2) E. III. 199, 1

(3) E. VI. 323, 6

pression *db; ntrw m ir<r>nfr*, who arrayed the gods in a blessed operation (1).

Bearing in mind all these allusions and hints there will be a little doubt that the «Building Text» in part translated above, has the claim that all the deities who were engaged in the creation of the world, the sacred places and their temples, were believed to dwell in the Edfu Pronaos. We do not think that this belief was a purely Edfu tradition. There are reasonable grounds for assuming that this principle of organization of the Edfu Temple derived from, or was made at the dictate of a tradition of much earlier date. An inscription to be found engraved on the «cornice» of the Pronaos explains that this part of the Temple was believed to be, in its abstract significance, equal to a mythical temple of the Sun God which in the tradition as we have it is described as the *Mansion of Ms-nht* (2). Such a temple is not known to us from any archaeological evidence. An account of its origin and history, however, survives in the Edfu texts (3). The records which acquaint us with the belief in the existence of the temple *Mansion of Ms-nht*, are analysed and discussed in detail in our forthcoming work about the *Mythical origin of the Egyptian Temple*.

Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, it is essential to give summarily only some of the thoughts enshrined in the myth about the Temple of the *Mansion of Ms-nht*. It can be deduced from this account that the Egyptians believed that there existed in the mythical age of the gods a temple, in which all the divine beings who were engaged in the creation of the world lived. The records explain that the creators assembled after they completed their creative task, and under the leadership of Tanen, the Ancestor, they entered the mythical temple called the *Mansion of Ms-nht*, and there found their rightful resting places. It appears as though the Egyptians believed that all the creators of the world were housed in the same sacred place, and that while resting in that particular temple they assumed a new function — the protection of the god for whom they created the temple.

There is, certainly, much similarity between the account of the history of the mythical Temple described as the *Mansion of Ms-nht* and the «Building Text» of the Pronaos. It is, therefore, suggested that the

(1) E. III. 355, 12 and ZAS, 87, p. 43, n. (d).

(2) E. III. 199, 10-13 = IV. 169, 13-16.

(3) E. VI. 323, 6 - 325, 5.

history of the mythical temple might have been taken into account to determine one of the essential functions which the Pronaos had in the organization of the actual temple. We incline to the opinion that the tradition and beliefs connected with the Edfu Pronaos may restore the mythological situation which was believed to have existed in the legendary *Mansion of Ms-nḥt*.

We read in the account of the mythical temple that its original inhabitants, the creators of the sacred domains and temples rested in it as the « Ancestors » (*tpw-r*), and that, as such, they formed the « Company of gods » (*psḏt*) of the chief god of this *Mansion of Ms-nḥt* who was the Sun God (1). Therefore, the tradition looked on the *Children of Tanen* as on deities from an earlier vanished world (2). To supplement this view we can refer to the subsidiary name of Tanen who is frequently described in our sources as the *Ancestor* (*ḏfn*) or the *First Ancestor* (3). Not only the Earth-god and his progeny bore this name, but « Ancestors » is the name of other creators, in particular, that of the Hermopolitan Ogdoad (4).

Further hints of the ancestral nature of the creators may be seen in that our documents allude to the funerary services which these creators received in the necropolis. Thus, for instance, the Shebtiw are described as the *Eminent Souls, great of reverence in Neref* (5), whose *funerary images (scḥ) abide in the Mansion of the Ram* (6). Similarly the Temple of Mesen is said to have been furnished with the funerary images (*scḥ*) of the Sages (7). Consequently, there will be little hesitation in defining the symbolical significance of the long set of ritual scenes which we have been describing. The nature of this kind of worship is evident from the characteristics of the deities adored. It was the worship of the *Ancestor gods*, the Ancestors who, in the tradition as it is known from the texts of Graeco-Roman period, were the

(1) E. VI. 325, 3.

(2) E. III. 315, 2, they are described as *tpw-r* and *wrw*.

(3) For the rôle of Tanen, the « Ancestor » of the Temple see our forth-coming work on the *Mythical origin of the Temple*.

(4) E. I. 289, 1 ; 345, 8 ; 355, 13 ; IV. 103, 13 ; 121, 18 ; 140, 2 ; 392, 16 ; V. 85, 3.10 ; VI. 174, 11. 12. 14 ; 183, 3 ; 247, 11 and Sethe, *Amun*, p. 53.

(5) E. IV. 358, 10.

(6) E. IV. 359, 2.

(7) E. IV. 390, 14.

*Ancestors of the First Occasion* (1). It was the worship of the *First Generation* (*ht tpt*) of *Mesenty*, his Children, the Primaeval Ones (2).

The worship of the divine forefathers is known, indeed, but as far as we are aware, this worship was connected with, and was performed in the necropolis. We can refer to the adoration of the Ogdoad in the Necropolis of Djême; a record in the Edfu Temple tells us that after their life span came to an end, their mortuary images were arrayed in the necropolis of Djême, the Underworld of *Km;t.f*; there offerings were presented to them at the beginning of the week, and a further ritual service was performed during the *Feast of the Valley* when their souls alighted upon their mortuary images (3). We know also about the adoration of the Nine gods of Edfu, the *Children of Rêc* already mentioned in the «Building Text» translated above (4), as well as about the funerary services performed in the Necropolis of the Heracleopolitan nome on behalf of the Earth creators (5).

The long list of the Edfu ritual scenes makes it fairly clear that the same Ancestors were also adored within the temple. What was, therefore, the significance of this worship held in the temple which appears to be parallel to the services performed in the necropolis, and what was the part which these Ancestors played in the life of the temple? It will be seen that the name «Ancestors» occurs frequently in the temple inscriptions. We read about the *beneficent Ancestors, the pre-eminent in Wetjeset-Hor* (6), who by their second name are described as the «Company of Wetjeset». We are also told about the *Ancestors of the Temple of Denderah* (7), as well as about the «sayings» of the Ancestors which, apparently, bore on the organization of the temple (8). It has been noticed, too, that the Ancestors said to be the «Company of Wetjeset», are described as the *ddw* of Djeba, and are regarded as

(1) E. VI. 174, 14.

(2) E. VI. 174, 11; 186, 8.

(3) E. I. 289, 6-8; III. 312, 6 refers to their Necropolis in Djême.

(4) E. I. 173, 3-174, 7; 382, 4-15; II. 51, 7-52, 8; III. 323, 4-12; IV. 102, 17-103, 13; 239, 13-241, 14; V. 61, 17-63, 16; 160, 12-162, 6; VII. 118, 4-119, 8; 279, 16-281, 2; for a preliminary account of this ritual service see H. W. FAIRMAN, *BJRL*, 37, p. 200.

(5) Cf. *above*, p. 54.

(6) E. IV. 53, 5-6; III. 345, 8.

(7) DUEMICHEN, *AK*, 115, 26; MD. IV. 10, 4.

(8) E. IV. 14, 1; CD. II, 11, 2; MD. I. 67, 9.

the guardians (*szwtjw*) of the *szj*-alcon in Mesen (1). The name *ḏdw* was also used in describing the Ancestors of the primaeval age (2). There seems to be a parallelism in the use of the names *tpjw-r* and *ḏdw*. This, perhaps, may be a new and starting suggestion in the study of the cult of the Ancestors in the temple.

The name *ḏdw* is found recorded in the Berlin Dictionary with the meaning *lesser deities who were in the train of the chief god in the great temples* (3). This interpretation is accompanied by only a small number of quotations from the texts at Edfu, Denderah and Philae. Somewhat more light can be thrown on the nature of these *ḏdw* from the Edfu evidence; it enables us to reconstruct the picture of the mythical world in which these *ḏdw*, *Ghosts* were believed to dwell. In the study of the Edfu cosmogonical records (4) we came across this divine name on several occasions. The context in which this divine name occurs, however, seems to point to an entirely different significance of this name to that given in the Berlin Dictionary. We found that the name *ḏdw* describes some divine beings who were believed to be present in a primaeval region (5) in which they seem to have been associated with the creators of the Earth, the Shebtjw (6), and yet some other deities described as *hwtjw* (?) (7). In the same myth these *ḏdw*-gods seem to have attended an act of creation of the earth though it is not explicitly stated that they intervened in the process of the creation itself. It is likely that there is an allusion to the images of these *ḏdw*-gods which seem to have been placed on the marginal land of an island of creation; they might, perhaps, have been believed to behold from there the other creators who performed effectively the work of creation (8). The Edfu texts contain also an allusion to a *bw*, *place* of these *ḏdw*-gods; this instance reads: *the Place (bw) of the ḏdw-gods since they were there from the primaeval time* (9). This evidence makes it clear that there was a belief in the existence of a primitive domain in

(1) E. IV. 205, 9-10.

(2) E. V. 85, 9-10; 181, 10.

(3) Wb. V. 627, (13).

(4) Cf. our forthcoming book on the *Mythical origin of the Temple*.

(5) E. VI. 183, 16.

(6) E. VI. 177, 1.

(7) Reading doubtful.

(8) E. VI. 184, 10.

(9) E. VI. 11, 4 = 183, 16.



which these *ḏdw*-gods lived. The suggestion can be supplemented by an allusion to the *wꜣw*, district of the *ḏdw*-gods (1). This district is said to have enshrined the reed, and is described as the *šꜣt tꜣꜣꜣw-ꜣ*, the *Field of the Ancestors* (2).

There will be little doubt that this small number of quotations from the Edfu texts hints at a less known tradition concerning some divine beings who were believed to dwell in a field of reeds in which they had eventually their *bw*-place, and that these deities had some connexion with the creators of the earth. Further study of the Edfu cosmogonical records indicates that the name *ḏdw* applies also to a group of nameless creative powers who are said to have been first to exist in the *primaeval* time, who were the progenitors who created their own embodiment, and who were earlier than the *Primaeval Gods* (*pꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣw*) (3). This appears to be the original nature of the *ḏdw*-gods who in the tradition of a later date were equated with the *Little Ennead*. The name *ḏdw*, as has been said describes also the *Fourteen Kas of Rēꜣ* who are said to be the *ḏdw-gods, the Sanctified Ones who came into being at the First Occasion* and the *Ogdoad* who were believed to be the *ḏdw-gods, the Ancestors whom the Nun fashioned* (4). These quotations provide reasonable grounds for supposing that the name *ḏdw* applies to the creator gods, was of fairly wide significance and use. It looks as though it describes a definite generation of creative powers who originally might have been nameless deities, and with whom other creator gods were equated in the course of time and according to local traditions and beliefs. The text describing the *Little Ennead*, in particular, seems to propound the idea that these *ḏdw*-gods might have been the same divine beings as the *wꜣw*, the *Eldest Ones* among the gods (5). This would imply that the *ḏdw* was only an alternative name for the *Ancestors of the Primaeval Age*.

It is important, therefore, to return once more to the description of the mythical domain in which these *ḏdw*-gods were believed to have lived. This is said to have been a field of reed (6). This field of reed

(1) E. III. 158, 5-6.

(2) E. III. 102, 4-5.

(3) E. IV. 266, 6.

(4) E. V. 85, 10.

(5) E. IV. 266, 1-2; *sim.* IV. 296, 1. 4.

(6) Cf. p. 56.

seems to have the property of giving strength to a presumably defunct deity who is described as the *Tired One*. This definition brings to mind the description of the field of reeds in the island of creation in which these *ḏdw*-gods were in the company of the creators of the earth. The field of reeds is said to have had the power of restoring (*tw*) the Ancestors (*tpyw-c*)<sup>(1)</sup>. Since here again the name *ḏdw* alternates with *tpyw-c*, Ancestors, it is evident that the name *ḏdw* must apply to deities from another, earlier, sacred world which might, eventually, vanish, and that, consequently, these *ḏdw*, represented the Ancestors of the sacred world that was to follow. It is, therefore, tempting to suggest that these *ḏdw*-gods might represent the spiritual form of the gods of the past. They were the always « Abiding Ones », the ghosts of the earlier divine powers who might have been the principal means of the protection of the new-born sacred world. It has been noticed that according to the main Edfu cosmogonical records, it was believed that the images of these *ḏdw*-gods were placed on the marginal land of the island of creation before the period of creation of a new sacred world started<sup>(2)</sup>. It is possible, it may be suggested, that their presence precisely ensured that the new world of gods could be brought into existence, and this new-born sacred world was precisely the first sacred domain of the Falcon, the *Wetjeset-Neter* of which the Temple at Edfu was believed to be the reflection on the earth. As the Ancestor gods were believed to have been immanent in their images at the time when the first step was made to create Falcon's domain, it is evident that the same deities were believed to be present in the temple which was believed to re-enact and to continue the existence of the first abode of the Falcon. The original *Wetjeset* found its revival and renewal in the historical temple of the Falcon Horus<sup>(3)</sup>. As the *Primaeval Ghosts* protected the *Sanctified God* in his mythical abode, they were believed to protect the god who was the likeness of the former, and they again formed his *Company of gods of Wetjeset*<sup>(4)</sup>.

A number of other instances can be cited from the Edfu texts which give convincing evidence that the protection of Horus the Behdetite

(1) E. VI. 183, 3-4.

(2) Cf. p. 56.

(3) Cf. our forthcoming book on the *Mythical origin of the Temple*.

(4) Cf. *above*, the *Company of Wetjeset*, and E. III. 187, 5-6, the *pꜣwtꜣw*, the *Primaeval Ones* are said to Safeguard of Horus the Behdetite.

was ensured by these *ddw*, *Ghosts of the Ancestor Gods*. They are said to be soul-like<sup>(1)</sup>, they are in fact, the *Ghosts of Djeba* who escort the god in the ceremony of the *Entering the Temple*<sup>(2)</sup>. They are god's protection in the temple<sup>(3)</sup>, and their presence within the temple seems to contribute to complete the life of the sacred entity. These thoughts agree with what is known of the mythological situation in the field of reeds as well as in the mythical Temple of the *Mansion of Ms-nht*.

It has been seen that «ancestry» is closely associated with the idea of the «protection» and the «ancestry» seems to be one of the constitutive elements of the life of the sacred domains. In the *primaeval* age of gods an earlier divine generation protected the god and ensured by their presence *in situ* the creation of his domain. The same situation can be found in the texts referring to the historical temple. The Ghosts, the Ancestors, were there the chief guardians of the god. It is true, they differ in their nature from the original Ghosts, they were the creators of the sacred domains and temples. Their principal rôle in the Temple was, however, identical with the function of the former. They protected what was the projection of their own creation. The actual historical temple appears to have taken over in this respect beliefs of some primitive far distant cult-places.

Due reward was paid to the Ancestor Gods for the safeguard of the temple. In our study of the *Shebtw in the Temple at Edfu*<sup>(4)</sup> we suggested that the record and its connected ritual scene seem to illustrate one of the ancestral cults celebrated in the Edfu Temple<sup>(5)</sup>. The Shebtw were believed to have created the first resting place of the Falcon, consequently they were regarded as the ancestral founders of the Temple of the Falcon Horus which was believed to be the direct descendant of the mythical abode created at the beginning of the world. In view of all the facts and allusions which we cited in this paper, there is no doubt that the other divine beings who in the Edfu records are described as the *msw Trî*, *Children of Tanen*, were placed in the same position as the Shebtw. The reason was not only that they

(1) E. VII. 279, 13-14.

(2) E. IV. 205, 9 = VII. 2, 8.

(3) E. V. 321, 13; VI. 12, 7; 240, 1; VII. 15, 2-3; 313, 12.

(4) Cf. p. 50, n. (1).

(5) Cf. ZÄS, 87, p. 53-54.

were believed to be the brethern of the Shebtiw (1), but evidence can be cited that all the *msw Tni, Children of Tanen*, were regarded in the Edfu tradition as the ancestral founders of the Temple of Horus at Edfu.

The text that accompanies the scene of worship of the Builder gods (2), and which is engraved on the outer wall of the Naos, sets out clearly that these Builder Gods were believed to be the mythical constructors of the Temple of Horus, and that the Sages attended them during this action (3). As it is highly probable that the Shebtiw had a cult which was celebrated at the Edfu Temple, it is a logical deduction from the facts that the other divine companies that were associated with them and were also the *msw Tni, Children of Tanen*, had their cultus room within the Temple at Edfu. The cult of all the families of the *Children of Tanen* was, most probably, celebrated in the same room or part of the Edfu Temple. The « Building Text » of the Pronaos translated above, conflated with the ritual scenes engraved on the architraves and outer walls of that part of the Temple provide convincing evidence that the hall of the Pronaos was used for the performance of the cult of these divine beings. Other companies of the creators might have been adored in association with them.

As far as the ritual service of the Primaeval Ancestors at Edfu can be reconstructed, it is certain that this ceremony consisted, in the main, of the episode *dw; ntr, « Adoring the God »*. It will be noticed that only occasionally other ritual episodes occurred which, however, seem to show a close connexion with the activities of the creator gods. Thus we can find that the Builder Gods were adored in connexion with the performance of the episode of *Stretching Cord*, the Sages were presented with the scribe's outfit, finally the Ogdoad were offered the lotus. The evidence is, however, lacking to decide whether these ritual episodes reflected the original rites or whether they were only result of a later tradition.

There is no evidence that these primaeval Ancestors were presented with a meal, or other substantial offerings, or even clothing. The ceremony *dw; ntr, Adoring the God* appears to be definitely the sole and main act in their worship in the late temples. This is, in fact,

(1) Cf. ZĀS, 87, p. 45, n. (n).

(2) E. IV. 353, 3 - 353, 15.

(3) E. IV. 353, 4-9.

logical to expect since we have to deal with deities who were Ancestors. In two instances only we find reference to the ceremony of presenting the *wsh*-collar. This, however, would appear to have derived from another sequence of ideas than those which seem to govern the adoration of the primaeval Ancestors.

It is evident that the rites of the Ancestor cult were performed only by the officiant of the Temple, the King. According to the textual evidence, the King does not seem to have borne special priestly titles in the performance of this cult. This point may be significant. We are inclined to see here a hint of the existence of a very old ritual from the times when the services in the sanctuaries was solely performed by the King. The Edfu organization might preserve the original aspect of the early rites for this special purpose. When we consider the characteristics of the deities adored in this cult it is easy to imagine that the Edfu Temple claimed to preserve or restore the original aspect of the cult service as it was once performed in the primitive enclosures of the prehistoric and archaic periods. There are positive data that the act of *adoration* (*dwj* or *ijw*) was one of the earliest rites that existed in the Egyptian ritual service (1), and that the cult of the Creator or the Creators was one of the ritual services that were constituted in the primitive shrines (2). To support our hypothesis yet another fact should be emphasized. In the set of ritual scenes listed above there is no reference to the lustration. This can be taken as a definite hint that we have here preserved, in part at least, rites which were of an earlier date than the constitution of the Heliopolitan ritual (3). We are therefore, inclined to assume that this kind of ritual service which we have been outlining, is a commemoration of the Creator gods who were remembered as Ancestors of the sacred world of gods and adored as such in the temple. It is probable that this worship of Creators as Ancestors was also celebrated in other late temples. In the Theban Temple the Ogdoad were adored as defunct gods together with the Earth-god *Km3t.f* (4), and also libations and funerary offerings (*sfsf*) were presented to the Ogdoad « at the beginning of the week » in the Temple at Karnak (5); they were definitely therefore worshipped as

(1) E. VI. 182, 5 and our forthcoming book on the *Mythical origin*.

(2) Cf. *ibid*.

(3) Cf. BLACKMAN, *JEA*, V, p. 160.

(4) Cf. SETHE, *Amun*, p. 26, 53-61.

(5) Cf. *Urk.* VIII, p. 75, 13-76, 12; 120, 11.

the Ancestors. Nevertheless, nowhere do we find an extensive evidence as in the Temple at Edfu.

As far as this Temple is concerned it appears that occasionally in connexion with this kind of worship there was re-enacted in the Pronaos of the Edfu Temple the early cultus-place in which such ceremony might once have been performed in the dim past when only the sacred enclosures for the worship of the creative powers existed. This is again suggested by the scene referring to the worship of the Shebtiw (1). The representation on the wall of the temple shows the appearance of the *primaeval Djeba*, the first sacred places the Shebtiw were believed to have created. It may very tentatively be suggested that this mythical place might have been erected within the temple on the day of their adoration. Very similar circumstance seems to be indicated by the scene of worship of the Ogdoad (2). The Ogdoad were seated behind a lotus before which the scene of worship performed by the King, took place.

In the study of these ritual scenes attention should be drawn to the expression *sjr psdt n p;wty tpy* which we find used as a title of the King while offering the *wsh*-collar to the Great Ennead (3). Two interpretations of *psdt n p;wty tpy* are possible: either the *Company of gods of the Early Primaeval Age*, or the *Company of gods of the First Primaeval One*. Of these, the second appears more plausible since in all the occurrences known to us the word *psdt* describes a company of deities who were closely associated with another god who was generally believed to be their *progenitor* (4). It can be assumed with certainty that in this context the word *psdt* does not mean only the *Ennead*, but has a much wider meaning. In the majority of instances it describes a company of eight gods and their progenitor; sometimes, however, it describes two or three groups of divine beings who together formed a *psdt* « company ». It will be noticed that in the instances quoted the word *psdt* applies to the Ennead as well as to the Hermopolitan Ogdoad, the Little Ennead and, finally, also to the Fourteen Kas of Rê, all of whom are described in the Edfu ritual texts as the *psdt, Company of Atum*. In an equal position to them we have in

(1) E. X. pl. 105.

(2) E. X. pl. 85.

(3) E. IV. 109, 14.

(4) E. IV. 109, 10; 140, 2; V. 167, 1; VI. 174, 12.

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our set of ritual scenes the *psdt*, *Company of Tanen*, which was consisted of the Shebtiw, the Sages and the Builder Gods, all of whom bear also the name *msw Tni*, *Children of Tanen*.

If we bear in mind the title of the King, *sjcr psdt n p3wly tpy* and look at this series of ritual scenes we would venture to suggest that in the historical temple the worship of the *Ancestors of the First Occasion* might have been the *sjcr*, *uplifting*, or *elevating* of the assembly of the primaeval deities to their progenitor. What was the function and significance of such a ceremony in the temple, and when was it celebrated?

The set of the ritual scenes engraved on the architraves of the Pronaos starts, on both sides, with a scene of the adoration of Horus the Behdetite. Then follow the scenes referring to the *Company of Tanen* as well as the *Company of Atum*, with whom are associated the Nine Dead Gods of Edfu. All these scenes are represented on the same pattern, and all of them are very simple. In the right-hand corner there is depicted the King standing while praising the deities who are shown seated in all the scenes. As has been said, the ritual text reveals nothing more of the actual performance of the rites (1).

From the manner in which these scenes are represented we are inclined to conjecture that on definite days of the year the statues all these primaeval gods were displayed in the hall of the Pronaos, and that, eventually, the sacred spear was placed in front of the assembly of gods (2). Then the King would seem to have recited the spells of adoration. In support of this theory that the Pronaos of the Edfu Temple was used as a place for the worship of the creative deities who were the *Ancestors*, attention should be drawn to a scene engraved on the inner face of the Enclosure Wall. This scene and its accompanying text undoubtedly have a bearing on the performance of the rites in the Pronaos, and provide an argument of value to support our hypothesis concerning the re-enactment of the early rites in the historical Temple in connexion with the worship of the Creators. There is clear evidence of the worship of the *Sanctified God who came into being at the First Occasion* (3) with whom Horus the Behdetite was equated in the tradition of the Edfu Temple. This god was believed

(1) Cf. *above*, p. 50.

(2) E. X. pl. 105; XIV, pl. 561.

(3) Cf. our book already mentioned and *JEA*, 48, p. 82-4.

to have been adored primarily in the mythical sacred place called Wetjeset-Neter of which the Edfu Temple was regarded as the projection on the earth. The words to be uttered by the sole officiant, the King, read : *I came unto thee, O, my Lord, He-with-dappled-plumage, Horus the Behdetite, great god, lord of the sky. I bring thee the heart placed in its (own) place. I adore the Living One in thy Pronaos. Thou art the sanctified God who came into being at the First Occasion* (1).

The speech of the sole officiant makes it clear that this ritual, when performed at Edfu, was celebrated in the Pronaos. The expression *r-hjt-hr.k*, « in thy Pronaos » can only have referred to the Pronaos of the Temple. This ritual scene would thus provide solid grounds for the deduction that the hall of the Pronaos was used for the worship of the living substitute of the *Sanctified God of the First Occasion*; consequently, it may be expected that the aspect of some early sacred places was re-enacted in the Pronaos at such occasions. The ritual scene on the inner face of the Enclosure Wall can be taken into account as to show of what nature was the sacred place erected in the Pronaos for this purpose. Hence, we conclude that the deities who were believed to create the first sacred place for this god, were also adored at Edfu in the same hall, and in connexion with the same service. Indeed, the ritual scene mentioned shows the images of the *Children of Tanen* seated on the left side of the seat of the god; with them are associated the Ogdoad. It is reasonably certain that the relief depicts the actual performance of the ritual. We are inclined to admit that after the primaeval seat of the Falcon was erected in the hall of the Pronaos, the images of the primaeval deities were brought into the Pronaos and arranged around the seat — the Perch (djeba) — of the Falcon. This idea would accord with what might be deduced from the order of the ritual scenes engraved on the architraves of the Pronaos. This ritual act, i.e. the carrying of the images of the gods into the Pronaos, might, perhaps, have been the act of the *sj'r*, « elevating » of the primaeval deities towards their Creator (2). This having been done, then the real service of « adoring the God » might have taken place.

If this reconstruction be accepted it is evident that the scenes engraved on the architraves of the Pronaos present us with a connected ritual. This circumstance brings us to much closer examination of

(1) E. VI. 181, 9-10.

(2) Cf. *above*, p. 62-63.



the position of the second set of scenes which refer to the same primaeval deities, and which we find engraved on the outer walls of the Pronaos and the Naos. This study shows that on the walls of the Naos, in parallel position, are the ritual scenes of the *Company of Atum*. These are four, and are placed on the walls in the following manner: on the west wall in the IIIrd register the 7th scene refers to the adoration of the Heliopolitan Ennead; in a corresponding position on the east wall there is the adoration of the Little Ennead. On the west wall IVth register, 7th scene, there is the Hermopolitan Ogdoad; in the exactly same position on the east wall there are the Fourteen Kas of Rêr.

Similarly on the outer walls of the Pronaos there are placed the scenes of the adoration of the *Company of Tanen*, the creators of the mythical temples. On the west wall IIIrd register, 3rd scene is the worship of the Builder Gods; in the corresponding position on the east wall the Seven Souls of Rêr. The west wall, IVth register 3rd scene shows the Shebtiw; in the parallel position on the east wall are the Sages. Thus on the outer walls of the Naos and the Pronaos, on both sides, east and west in the IIIrd and IVth register, the central scenes are occupied by the representation of the adoration of the primaeval deities. There are four scenes of adoration of the initiators of the existence of the world, and four scenes of adoration of the creators of sacred domains and temples. This arrangement of scenes is striking, and certainly, does not appear to be meaningless. The scenes placed on the outer wall of the Pronaos in which the *Company of Tanen* was worshipped present definitely a set analogous to that referring to the adoration of the *Progeny of Atum*. That there might have been connexion between these two sets of four scenes, seems to be indicated by the evidence of the series to be found on the architraves of the Pronaos. We may hazard a guess that the manner in which these scenes were engraved on the walls and made into groups of four in both cases might have a direct bearing on the performance of this service. It might, probably, indicate that these four scenes were to be performed together, perhaps on the same day, or in connexion with the same festivity celebrated in the temple. We do not know anything about the dates on which this cult of Ancestors might have been celebrated, the ritual texts of the scenes listed give no explanation. It is also completely unknown whether all these deities were worshipped on the same day or whether each of the main bodies of the creators had

its own day of worship in the temple. The bare text of the ritual scenes listed does not permit us to discern what was the part which this kind of worship might play in the life of the historical temple, and which were its possible connexions with other festivities celebrated in the Temple at Edfu.

We mentioned in the first part of this study <sup>(1)</sup> that there seem to be some points of contact between the worship of the Creators of the Edfu Temple and conditions in a presumably early temple described as being of mythical nature and named the *Temple of Ms-nht*. When we recall the situation in the mythical Temple of *Ms-nht* in which all the creators were believed to rest after they completed their task in the creation of the world, it is clear from the account preserved that they entered the temple after it was consecrated and handed to its legitimate lord <sup>(2)</sup>. This is, perhaps, a new and starting suggestion and we are tempted to speculate on the probable state of facts in the Temple at Edfu, and to attempt to investigate whether, perhaps, we may reasonably expect that the situation was the same there. It is known that in the Pronaos there was performed the main part of the *Consecration Ritual of the Temple* <sup>(3)</sup>. The text of this ritual, as far as it is preserved on the walls of the Temple, contains an allusion to the ceremony of adoring the gods <sup>(4)</sup>. It does not, however, specify who were the gods adored on that day. More important is, however, that both parts of this ritual end in the mention of the ceremony of Handing over the Temple to its Lord: *Ceding the Great Seat by His Majesty to its Lord* <sup>(5)</sup>, and *Ceding the Wetjeset-Hor to its Lord by His Majesty* <sup>(6)</sup>.

In presuming that there might have been a connexion between the adoration of the primaeval deities and the performance of the ceremony of the *Handing over the Temple to its Lord*, we find that on the outer wall of the Pronaos, in the IIrd register, 3rd scene on the west wall, exactly below the scenes of adoration of the *Children of Tanen*, there

(1) Cf. *above*, p. 53-54.

(2) E. VI. 325, 1-4.

(3) E. IV. 330-331; cf. BLACKMAN-FAIRMAN, *The Consecration Ritual of an Egyptian Temple*, JEA, 32, p. 75 ff.

(4) E. IV. 331, 2.

(5) E. IV. 331, 4.

(6) E. IV. 331, 14.

is to be found the scene *Ceding the Great Seat of Rer, lord of the sky. Handing over Wetjeset to the Protector of his Father* (1). From this point of view it is natural that there is a connexion between these two ceremonies, the worship of the Ancestral Deities of the Primaeval Age and the Ceremony of Handing over the Temple to its lord. The setting of the ritual scenes on the west wall of the Pronaos occupying the 3rd place in the IIrd, IIIrd and IVth register, indicates the possibility of a connected set of ritual episodes, and we suspect that it might also specify the order of the proceedings. Another argument to support our hypothesis about the connexion between these two ceremonies derives again from the myth about the *Temple of Ms-nht*. We pointed out above that the belief that all these ancestral deities dwelt in the Pronaos, is based on the situation of the mythical temple. As these deities were believed to enter into the mythical temple after the ceremony of *Handing over the Temple*, it can reasonably be supposed that a similar situation existed at Edfu also. We suspect that following the ceremony of *Handing over the Temple*, there was a procession in which the statues of all the primaeval deities were carried and displayed in the Pronaos. This procession then might have been regarded as the re-enactment of their solemn entry into the mythical temple. Following it, the rite of adoring might have been performed on behalf of these deities.

If this suggestion be accepted, it would mean that all the rites referring to the worship of the primaeval Ancestors were performed on the day on which was celebrated, at Edfu, the *Rite of Consecrating the Temple*. It is known that this ceremony took place in the Night of the New Year (2). Although there is no evidence from the texts cited in this paper, the idea that all the primaeval deities might have been adored in the night of the New Year Festival appears logical because they were the Ancestors, the creators of the first temple-entity, and they were, too, its protectors. The worship of the Ancestors on that day will accord with one of the main ideas and the general significance of this festival. This festival meant the renewal, and the revivification of the temple-entity. This festival, in fact, re-opened the temple to a new life (3). Therefore, it is easy to under-

(1) E. IV. 346, 13-14.

(2) Cf. *JEA*, 32, p. 81, n. (32).

(3) Cf. *JEA*, 32, p. 82, 83, n. (39) and p. 86-90.

stand that among all the ceremonies that constituted the ritual of that festival, one act was devoted to the homage to the gods who were believed to have created the temple, the entity which was about to be opened to a new life. It is known that the *Rite of Consecration of the Temple* employed at Edfu, consisted, in part at least, of the ceremony of the *Opening of the Mouth of the Temple* (1). The characteristics of the ceremony suggest that it was performed not only on behalf of the Temple itself, but also on behalf of all the divine inhabitants. Through the performance of this rite all the statues of gods in the Temple, as well as all the figures on the reliefs became alive. This idea evidently will accord with the belief in the Ancestors and with their worship within the temple. There will be little need to argue for this idea; since the entity they had created was brought to a new life, it is clear that the creators, consequently, became alive by virtue of a ceremony which applied, in particular, to the Ancestors. We venture to suggest that after the preliminary episodes of the Consecration Ritual were over, the images of the Primaeval Ancestors might have been carried through the east side-door of the Pronaos into the hall, and arranged around the seat of the Falcon. Then the ceremony of bringing them to a new life might have been enacted on them. Then came the adoration (*dwj*) imitating thus the rites of the early sacred place which might have been performed by the King. It should be added that the Ritual of the Consecration of the Temple contained also the episode of *Presenting the Truth* (2). This rite is precisely the first episode which starts the set of ritual scenes engraved on the architraves of the Pronaos. We are, therefore, inclined to consider this as a hint of a probable connexion between the ritual scenes engraved on the architraves and the rites that constituted the ceremony of the *Consecration of the Temple*. Consequently, it follows that the night of the New Year Festival, the time of the re-opening of the Temple, was the date of the worship of the Ancestors (3).

There is another fact to mention in support of our interpretation. We know from the history of the *Temple of Ms-nht* that the Creator gods, after they entered the temple, assumed a new function (4); they

(1) Cf. *ibid.*

(2) E. IV. 331, 2.

(3) Another hint of this idea can be seen in Petosiris, inscr. no. 82, l. 96-97, cf. LEFEBVRE, *Le Tombeau de Pétosiris*, p. 63; *sim.* CD. V. 139, 5; MD. IV. 11.

(4) Cf. *above*, p. 53.

became the protectors of the god for whom they created the temple. That the assembly of the primaeval deities was believed therefore Horus the Behdetite, is confirmed by the Building Text of the Pronaos translated in the first part of this study (1). It is logical therefore that the protector gods of the chief god of the Temple were adored and made immanent in their images in the night of the New Year Festival. It is known that the Primaeval Ancestors acted as protectors. Therefore, we suppose that in the actual temple they were regarded as one of the principal means that ensured the life of the temple throughout the whole year.

Further arguments in favour of the views expressed can be seen in the 3rd scene of the IInd register of the east wall of the Pronaos. This scene corresponds in its position on the wall to the episode referring to the *Handing over the Temple to its Lord* already mentioned above. This scene is the episode of *dw; ntr, Adoring the God* (2), which refers to the worship of the Powers (*shmw*) who are in the *Wetjeset*, who are the « company » of gods (*psdt*) who were believed to appear at the voice of the officiant (3). From the position of the scene we conjecture that this episode, too, is to be connected with the set of ritual scenes we have been describing; consequently, this scene might also have been included in the rites performed in the night of the New Year Festival. The deities depicted in the scene are gods of historical times. It is essential, however, that they bear also the name *ddw, Ghosts* (4). We suspect that this might have been the tradition of a later date which equated the gods of historical times with the original *ddw, Ghosts*, since, as a body of deities, they are described as the Senior Ones, the Powers who form the Two Conclaves in Mesen, the *ddw*-Ghosts, the Sanctified Ones, great of awe in the Great Seat, the August Kas who surrounded (with protection) the Two Outpourings who are in the train of *Rēc*, the companions of the Beetle, the crew of the Golden Falcon. From the ritual text to be recited by the officiant it is clear that they were adored as the Protectors of Horus.

This scene asserts our suggestions concerning the part which the Ghosts of the Primaeval deities played in the life of the historical

(1) Cf. *above*, p. 51-52.

(2) E. IV. 378, 2.

(3) E. IV. 378, 9.

(4) E. IV. 379, 14-15.

temple. If we assume that this scene in regard to its position and connection with the episode of *Handing over the Temple*, was included in the ritual of the New Year Festival, it is evident that the Egyptians believed that the protection of the god was in hand of the ancestral deities, and that this protection began in the night of the New Year Festival, and that thereby it was granted throughout the year of the Temple.

We think that we are not wrong to conclude that all the evidence discussed in this paper makes it clear, in part at least, what was the part played by the Primaeval Ancestors in the life of the actual historical temple. The belief in the protecting powers which these Primaeval Ancestors were, was not a belief specific to the late Graeco-Roman times, but, surely, it was a tradition of a remote date.

The Edfu evidence enabled us to trace the way of approach to one of the cult of Ancestor gods which was duly celebrated in the late temples of Graeco-Roman Egypt. This cult was, in essence, the cult of the Creator gods, the *Ghots of the Primaeval Age*.

At Edfu the creators' cult formed an integral part of the organization of the ritual services to be performed in the outer part of the Temple, in the Pronaos. It can rightly be claimed that most probably the rites of this cult were included in the ceremonies of the *Ritual of Consecration of the Temple*, and consequently, were performed in the night of the New Year Festival.

This study has demonstrated that the functions of the historical temple were established under the influence of ancient myths and traditions which go back into the dim past of prehistoric Egypt. The performance of the cult of the Ancestors in the Pronaos at Edfu seems to be one of its chief ritual purposes. It appears that the tradition of the Edfu Temple built in the Pronaos a memorial for the creators of this world, in particular, for the mythical founders of the sacred domains and temples, who in return, guarded the Temple and the god. In the strict sense, the Pronaos was the sanctuary of the divine powers who created the first Temple.

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