

WORSHIP AND FESTIVALS IN AN
EGYPTIAN TEMPLE¹

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MOST of the many temples of Pharaonic Egypt now lie in ruins. Most of them were being built, modified or added to over so many centuries that they preserve little homogeneity and it is difficult for the ordinary visitor to gain any fair idea of their original nature and condition, still less to imagine how they could have been used for worship. The latest temples to be built in Egypt, those of the Ptolemaic Period (and especially the Temples of Edfu and Denderah), differ from those of Pharaonic times by their preservation, and by the nature and extent of the reliefs and inscriptions that cover their walls.

The texts in these late temples include long descriptions of the temple room by room, each room, hall, or part of the building being named and its purpose, decoration and dimensions recorded. Each room and hall usually contains additional texts that repeat its name and give further information concerning its use. Similarly, each door is named and bears texts that state when and for what purpose it was used. Another long series of texts records the festivals celebrated in the temple throughout the year, indicates the date and duration of each, and sometimes outlines the ceremonies performed. An independent series of longer texts describes in greater detail some of the more important festivals.

This rich treasure of inscripational material, illustrated as it often is by well-preserved reliefs, enables us to describe the

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The abbreviations employed in the notes are those normally used in Egyptological publications, with the following additions: *CD* = E. Chassinat, *Le temple de Dendara*, vols. i-v; *E* = E. Chassinat, *Le temple d'Edfou*, vols. i-xiv; *MD* = A. Mariette, *Dendérah*, vols. i-iv.

function of every part of the temple from the smallest chapel to the largest hall, from the gargoyles and water-spouts¹ to the pylons and obelisks. It is possible to reconstruct the furnishing and equipment of certain rooms, to tell when, how and where the offerings were prepared, to indicate the precise doors through which they were introduced into the temple, to trace the order of the ritual and the route of the great processions, and even to know what happened to the offerings after the services and festivals were ended. Moreover, there is evidence that in general the texts are based on sound ancient tradition, that in vocabulary and content they often go back to the early days of Egyptian civilization, and that, if used with due care and discretion, they provide us with a unique and exceedingly rich source-book of Egyptian religious practice.

Among all these Ptolemaic temples, that of Edfu occupies a unique position. It is the only one that was completed; it was built within a comparatively short space of time and therefore appears to us today as a unity; and in the 2,000 years since its completion it has suffered only comparatively slight damage. The main temple is intact, its roof is complete, all its columns are in position, and only the obelisks at the entrance and some small chapels on the roof have disappeared, while the sacred lake, the temple storehouses, abbatoirs, and other buildings of an administrative nature still lie deeply buried under the houses of the modern town to the east of the temple.

The temple of Edfu thus affords us our best opportunity of studying a complete Egyptian temple and the varied religious activities that took place within it day by day throughout the year. In this paper I propose to give a very brief account of daily worship and of some of the great calendar festivals that were celebrated in the temple. My purpose is merely to describe in barest outline religious practice, as recorded in the texts and reliefs of the temple, and lack of space will prevent me from entering into great detail or even attempting proper justification of views that may differ from those of other scholars. For the same reason I have had to abstain from any serious attempt to

¹ C. de Wit, "Les inscriptions des lions-gargouilles du temple d'Edfou", *Chronique d'Egypte*, no. 57 (Janvier 1954), 29-45.

explain the religious and mythological significance of the festivals and the individual ceremonies, for in fact each festival requires a complete book for its proper exposition.

Before, however, we can consider the religious activities in the temple throughout the year, it is essential to give some idea of the building and its history. The Temple of Edfu is dedicated to Horus the Behdetite, a falcon god who is usually represented as a man with the head of a falcon: the temple contained statues of the god in this form, and also in purely bird form. Adjacent to the temple there was also a Temple of the Sacred Falcon, and here there lived and reigned, for a year at a time, a living falcon, whose selection and coronation formed one of the greatest annual festivals (see below pp. 189-92).

There were three main phases in the building of the temple. The original nucleus, itself a complete temple with a hypostyle hall, two other halls, sanctuary and numerous side chapels, was commenced in 237 B.C. and dedicated in 142 B.C. To the south of this was added between 140 and 124 B.C. the Pronaos or Outer Hypostyle. Finally, the foundations of the Forecourt, the stone enclosure wall and the pylons were laid in 116 B.C.; the dedication ceremony was celebrated in 71 B.C., but the decoration of the temple does not appear to have been finally completed, and the great doors of the pylon were not hung, until 57 B.C. The whole temple thus took 180 years to complete.

This great building lay within a vast enclosure surrounded by a massive brick wall, the main entrance being to the south, slightly to the west of the main axis of the temple. The precise extent of this enclosure is unknown, for the existing brick walls are to a great extent modern, and all that part of the enclosure to the east of the temple lies buried under the modern town. The inscriptions tell us, however, that it was in this buried eastern section that were situated the sacred lake, the temple abbattoirs, kitchens, storehouses, and stock-yards for cattle and birds of various kinds. Here also there must presumably have been a sacred grove in which the sacred falcons were reared, in addition to administrative offices, and probably houses for some of the priests. Immediately outside the temenos, west of the main

ance and at right angles to the temple, is the Mammisi, or Birth-Temple, and facing it to the east there must have been the Temple of the Sacred Falcon, of which all traces have now disappeared except for the base of what was apparently an altar or offering table.¹ Finally, some distance to the west or southwest lay what is called the "upper temple" and other edifices of uncertain nature which played an important part in the ceremonies connected with the joint festival of the Sacred Marriage and the Festival of Behdet (see below, pp. 196-200): the position of this upper temple is still unknown.

The temple² is oriented from south to north. Before each wing of the Pylon there were originally two masts and an obelisk which have now disappeared. Over the main door (A) and between the wings of the Pylon was the *Balcony of the Falcon*, reached from the Forecourt (1) by stairs in the eastern wing of the Pylon.

The Forecourt (1) was a vast open court with a colonnade of thirty-two columns to south, east and west, and with two doors in each of its east and west walls. The most important and biggest of these four doors was the south-eastern one (B), and through it Hathor entered the temple on her arrival at Edfu at the beginning of the Festival of the Sacred Marriage after having entered the temple enclosure through a door in the now buried east temenos wall.³ The most frequent names of the Forecourt were *Court of Offering*,⁴ *Court of the Pylon*,⁵ and *Court of Appearance*.⁶ There must presumably have been an altar here, but all traces of this have disappeared. Great burnt offerings were made in this court at the New Year Festival, and probably on certain other occasions, and it is sometimes stated that offerings were made there to Rē⁷ thrice daily; pre-

¹ E. Chassinat, *Le Mammisi d'Edfou*, pp. viii-xiii; revised Pl. I (printed in Fasc. 2, Cairo, 1939); Pl. LVI.

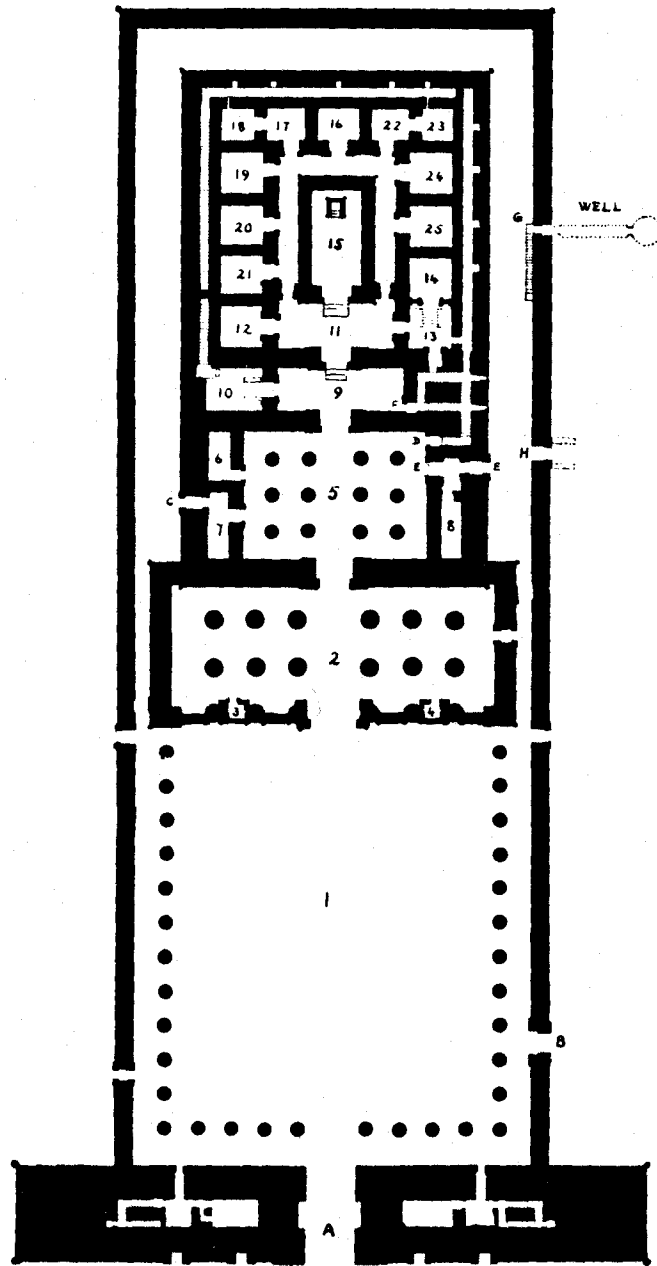
² See the plan in Fig. 1. The Arabic numerals in parentheses after the names of parts of the temple refer to the numbered rooms and halls of the plan; the capital letters refer to the doors.

³ E. vi. 7, 5-8, 1; vii. 18, 10-19, 2. Cf. the texts of welcome on the eastern jambs of this door, E. v. 370, 11-371, 9; 374, 3-14.

⁴ E. i. 554, 1; iii. 355, 7; v. 2, 2; 305, 3; vii. 5, 3; 18, 6-7; 19, 4.

⁵ E. vii. 9, 4.

⁶ E. iii. 355, 6; v. 5, 5.



THE TEMPLE OF EDFU
 (Adapted from Chassinat, *Le temple d'Edfou*, IX, Pl. I)

sumably these offerings were made on special festivals, for the three services of the ordinary daily ritual were celebrated in the Sanctuary.

To the north of the Forecourt lay the Pronaos or Outer Hypostyle (2), the *Fore-Hall* or *Great Court* as it was most usually called. It was both higher and wider than the rest of the temple to the north of it and contained twelve great columns. Its south wall was composed of a screen wall, to about half the height of the hall, with three engaged columns on either side of the entrance, thus, in contrast with the rest of the temple, ensuring that it was reasonably well lighted. There was a service door in the east wall. Two small chapels were built against the south wall: to the west of the main door, the *House of the Morning* (3) for the purification of the King before performing the ritual, and to the east the *House of Books* (4), the temple library, containing a selection of the books required for the services; a lector priest was on duty here throughout the day.

Beyond the Pronaos lies the original nucleus of the temple. First, a hypostyle hall (5) called the *Great Court*,¹ or *Great Pillared Hall*,² or, less frequently, the *Court of Festival*.³ At the north-west corner of this hall was the *Laboratory* (6) in which incense and unguents were prepared, and to the south of it the *Room of the Nile* (7) which had in its west wall an antechamber and door (C) leading to the ambulatory; it was through this door that the libations were introduced daily into the temple. On the east side of the hall was an entrance to the winding stairway (D) leading to the roof, a passage (E) through the east wall by which the daily offerings were introduced, and, south of the passage, the temple *Treasury* (8) in which the more valuable equipment and cultus vessels were kept.

Beyond the Inner Hypostyle lay the *Hall of Offerings*⁴ (9), having to its west the antechamber to the western stairway (10), and to its east the chief entrance to the winding, eastern stairway (F). To the north lay the *Central Hall*⁵ or *Place where the Gods Repose*,⁶ or *Hall of the Ennead*⁷ (11), where the

¹ E. vii. 17, 3.

² E. iv. 6, 4.

³ E. ii. 11, 13.

⁴ E. iv. 6, 3; vii. 16, 5.

⁵ E. iv. 5, 12; vii. 15, 7.

⁶ E. iv. 5, 12; vii. 15, 8.

⁷ E. iv. 13, 13.

able shrines of the co-templar divinities were kept, and to its west the *Chapel of Min*¹ (12). On the east of the Central Hall a door leads to two rooms that play an important part in the temple year: the southernmost is called *Food-altar*² (13) and is open to the sky, its north wall being the façade of a special room, at a slightly higher level, called the *Pure Place*³ (14); it was in these two rooms that some of the preliminary rites of the Festival of Raiment and the New Year Festival were celebrated.

The north wall of the Central Hall was occupied by the façade of the Sanctuary and the doors of the corridor that surround it. The Sanctuary or Holy of Holies (15), the *Great Seat*⁴ as it is usually called, is in fact a small and complete rectangular chapel, with its own roof and no external lighting, set within the larger framework of the temple. Its principal contents were a great black granite naos, still to be seen there, containing the cultus images, and the portable boat-shrines of Horus and Hathor that were used in certain processions. In the Sanctuary was celebrated the daily liturgy.

Surrounding the Sanctuary, and separated from it by a corridor, is a series of small chapels. The first and most important of these (16), called *Mesen*,⁵ or the *Mansion of Valour*,⁶ or *Pleasant-to-live-in*,⁷ is situated on the axis of the temple immediately behind the Sanctuary. This room contained a naos of black granite that housed two shrines containing statues of Horus in falcon form and of Hathor. Close to the naos was a statue of another form of Horus, the Falcon of Gold. Also kept in this room were the two sacred lances of Horus.⁸

To the west of the Mesen-room lies the room called the *Crypt*⁹ (17), with its annexe (18) or *Mansion of the Prince*.¹⁰ These two rooms, together with the first room on the west side of the corridor, the *Privy Chamber of the Crypt*¹¹ (19), were

¹ E. iv. 6, 2; vii. 15, 9.

² E. iv. 6, 2; vii. 16, 1.

³ E. iv. 13, 7; vii. 13, 1.

⁴ E. iv. 13, 7.

⁵ M. Alliot, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées*, i. 314-25; quoted henceforth as Alliot, *Culte*.

¹⁰ E. vii. 13, 3.

⁶ E. iv. 6, 2; vii. 16, 1.

⁷ E. iv. 5, 9-11; 13, 12; vii. 15, 3-7.

⁸ E. iv. 5, 1; 13, 7.

⁹ E. iv. 5, 4; 13, 11; vii. 13, 3.

¹¹ E. iv. 5, 5; vii. 13, 4.

Mercy Seat
 20. The High in Is

specially connected with the cult and mysteries of Osiris.¹ To the south lay the *Throne of the Gods*² (20), and the *Mansion of Raiment*³ (21) which contained the provincial inventory and supplies of coloured cloths and unguent required for the temple services.

To the east of the Mesen-room are the *Mansion of the Leg*⁴ (22), devoted to Khonsu, and its annexe, the *Chapel of Hathor*⁵ (23). South of them are the *Throne of Rē*⁶ (24) in which Rē was supposed to rest and in which the evening service was celebrated, and the *Throne Room*⁷ (25).

The roof of the temple was reached by two stairways. At certain of the annual festivals the procession made its way up the winding eastern stairway (F) and proceeded along the east side of the roof to a small kiosk, called the *Place of the First Feast*,⁸ that originally stood in the north-eastern corner of the roof. This building is now lost, but it must have been similar to the kiosk of the same name that still exists on the roof of the Temple of Denderah.⁹ The kiosk had two doors, a main one on the south, and a smaller one on the west by which the procession made its way to the descending stairway that began at the north-west corner of the roof. The roof, and above all the Place of the First Feast, was the site of the final and most important rites of the New Year Festival.

The temple was surrounded by a massive stone wall which separated it from the rest of the sacred enclosure. Starting from the Pylon, the wall first formed the east and west walls of the Forecourt, but from the façade of the Pronaos northwards it formed the outer wall of the *Pure Ambulatory*¹⁰ which encircled the temple. This ambulatory was one of the more sacred parts of the temple enclosure; it was the route of processions, particularly at the Festival of Sokaris, and doors to east and west prevented the uninitiated from entering it. In the east

¹ E. vii. 13, 4-14, 1.

² E. iv. 5, 6; vii. 14, 1-2.

³ E. iv. 5, 6; vii. 14, 2.

⁴ E. iv. 5, 7; 13, 11; vii. 14, 3.

⁵ E. iv. 5, 7-8; vii. 14, 3.

⁶ E. iv. 5, 8.

⁷ E. iv. 5, 8; vii. 14, 5.

⁸ E. vii. 14, 4.

⁹ CD. i. Pls. 40-42; L. Borchardt, *Aegyptische Tempel mit Umgang*, pp. 14-17; Pls. 7 and 8.

¹⁰ E. vi. 12, 5; 348, 11-12.

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Wall of the ambulatory were two doors: the northernmost (G) led to a passage dug under the foundations of the wall itself and leading to the sacred well from which pure water for the temple service was drawn; the second door (H) to the south of this gave access to those parts of the temple enclosure that are now buried, and through it were brought all the food and offerings for the temple service, through it entered the temple staff in general, after having purified themselves in the sacred lake, in order to perform their duties in the temple, and finally through it the offerings were taken out of the temple after the service had ended and after the reversion of the offerings to the priests.¹

Apart from the Food-altar (13) and the openings in the façade of the Pronaos, the temple was without any external illumination² except what light filtered through the door between the inner and outer hypostyle, when it was open. The innermost parts of the temple were thus in complete darkness, and the light of the torches used during the services playing on brilliantly coloured reliefs, on the gilded surfaces of doors and shrines, and on the cultus vessels must have increased the sense of awe and majesty and grandeur. This feeling of mystery was heightened by the fact that as one progressed from hall to hall the floor level was raised slightly and the roof level was at the same time lowered.

Such was the setting for the many ceremonies that were celebrated in the temple. It is obvious that the foundation of such a temple must have been accompanied by elaborate ceremonies. Several detailed series of foundation ceremonies have been preserved in the temple, but I do not propose to dwell on them here since they can hardly be included among the normal year to year activities. When all had been completed, however, the temple was dedicated, *handed over to its lord*.³ It is fortunate that an abbreviated version of the Edfu ritual for the dedication of a temple has survived.⁴ The ceremony was

¹ E. vi. 8, 1-3; 348, 13-14; vii. 18, 3-6.

² There were, however, small windows in the eastern stairway.

³ See *JEA*. 32, p. 81, n. 32.

⁴ A. M. Blackman and H. W. Fairman, "The Consecration of an Egyptian Temple According to the Use of Edfu", *JEA*. 32, 75-91.

a combination of the Rite of the Opening of the Mouth and the daily temple ritual, which in essentials were practically identical rites. It is probable that the statues of Horus and the contemplar divinities were assembled in one of the halls of the temple, possibly the Outer Hypostyle (but see further, p. 187 below). The ceremonies that followed may be conveniently summarized under five heads. First, the statues were purified by libation and censuring and by the presentation of pellets of natron and incense for purifying their mouths. Then the mouths and eyes of the statues were "opened" by manipulations with a variety of instruments. There followed an elaborate toilet: the statues were anointed and arrayed with the headcloth, the four prescribed coloured cloths and the appropriate insignia. After the toilet, a repast was laid before the statues. In the Opening of the Mouth and the Daily Ritual this meal ends the ceremonies, but in the dedication ceremony at Edfu it is followed by a second opening of the mouth. It appears that at this point the priests visited each hall and chapel in the temple, censured and asperged it, and "opened the mouths" of the reliefs. The result of this final act was that not only the statues, but the entire temple, its reliefs and its furnishing became alive and active. "The divinities could now become immanent at will in their figures appearing in the reliefs, while the inanimate objects depicted therein became the actual equivalents of what they represented—food, vessels, floral offerings, and the like."¹ The ceremony was now ended, the statues were returned in state to their resting places, and a special meal was given to the priests and to the craftsmen who had taken part in the building and decoration of the temple. The dedication ceremony was repeated annually, so that year by year the temple was re-consecrated and its life renewed. At Edfu the date of this annual rededication is never explicitly mentioned, but the evidence of earlier times suggests that very probably it took place on New Year's Day² (see p. 187 below).

¹ *JEA*, 32, 90; see also *ibid.* pp. 84, 85.

² See *JEA*, 32, p. 81, n. 32, and the authorities there quoted, to whom should now be added *JNES*, 8, 340-1.

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The temple was now built, it had been consecrated and filled with life. What were the activities that were carried on within it? What were the services and festivals that were celebrated throughout the year in the house of the god?

The ceremonies performed in the temple were essentially of two kinds. On the one hand was the Daily Ritual with three main services in the interior of the temple; on the other hand were the calendar festivals, great feasts of varying duration observed at various dates throughout the year. The former were always celebrated within the temple by a limited number of priests, and the laity and general public had no access to them. The latter were always processional and involved stately processions of the divine statues, sometimes only in the temple itself, when the public were excluded, sometimes within the temple enclosure when perhaps the public, to a limited extent, may have been present, and sometimes to other temples outside the temple enclosure when of course the general public could have witnessed and accompanied the procession, though not the more intimate and sacred rites.

In his great study of the festivals of Horus at Edfu, Alliot has given a very fully documented reconstruction of the daily services in the temple.¹ The main outlines of this reconstruction are, I believe, quite correct, but in certain important details I do not think his views are supported by the texts. Alliot speaks of "regular" services and festivals. By "regular" he refers to all services in the Sanctuary, the ordinary daily ritual, and a more elaborate form which he calls "service solennel au sanctuaire". He considers that the latter type of service is concerned with the five great festivals of the lunar month and those of the three decades of the solar month, the difference between these and the normal daily liturgy being that at the "service solennel" the morning service was celebrated more elaborately and with greater pomp and ceremony, the midday

¹ M. Alliot, *Culte*, i. 1-179. Only the first volume of this valuable collection of material concerning the worship of Horus at Edfu has as yet been published. This first volume is concerned with the Daily Ritual, the Calendars, and the New Year Festival. Professor Alliot has published a summary of his complete study under the same title in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 137, 59-104.

and evening services being the same for both types of "regular" liturgy. He claims that all texts in the temple that do not lie on the path of the officiants in the ordinary service, which in his view is only from the middle of the Inner Hypostyle (5) northwards, belong to the solemn service, and that many texts on the actual route of the ordinary service equally concern the solemn service: he admits, in fact, that it is difficult to disentangle the two. Alliot's solution is to attribute all elaborate and rich ceremonies to the solemn service. Alliot further claims that only the two side doors (C and E) of the Inner Hypostyle were open for the daily liturgy, and that through them entered the libation water, the offerings, and the officiating priest. Since all other doors in the temple were, he claims, closed, the king or his deputy could not have entered through the main door of the Pronaos (2) and therefore the normal robing and purification in the House of the Morning (3) could not have been celebrated at the ordinary daily service but the officiating priest was purified at the sacred lake to the east of the temple, and, be it noted, outside the really sacred area.

Although it is certain that there were ceremonies much more elaborate than those of the ordinary daily service, there is nothing to indicate when they were celebrated. It is a reasonable assumption that there were special ceremonies at the festivals of the lunar and solar month, but the Edfu texts are conspicuously silent about them; there is no text that would lead one to suppose that they were a special and more elaborate form of the daily ritual. In the great calendar in the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu the lists distinguish very carefully between the ordinary daily ritual, the "festivals of the sky", and the "festivals of the times" or calendar festivals. It is important to note that at Medinet Habu the feasts of the lunar month are included among the "festivals of the sky".¹ At Edfu I only know of one possible reference

¹ *Medinet Habu* (ed. Chicago), iii. Pl. 148, 318, 367, 391; Pl. 150, 440, 452. Similarly, in the Edfu Nome List the only festivals listed under the Nome of Heliopolis are the "festivals of the sky", all those listed being days of the lunar month (*E.* i, 333, 13). Cf. also *JEA.* 38, 21; Pap. Harris 16b, 13; 34b, 6 = *Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca*, v. 20, 10; 40, 2.

a feast of the lunar month, and then only in a copy whose complete accuracy is unfortunately suspect. The passage in question, I believe, reads: *The sacred image of Him-who-is-on-his-great-throne is engraved upon its wall together with (those of) the gods who appear with him on every occasion of his feast of the (last) quarter.*¹ The verb "appear" is that normally used in the technical sense "to appear in procession". If my interpretation of this passage is correct, it would appear to indicate that the lunar and solar festivals were processional like the calendar feasts and that they were distinct from the daily liturgy. It would be safer in the present state of our knowledge to postulate only one type of daily service.

The contention that only the side doors of the Pronaos were open at the time of the daily services is contradicted by several passages. There is an explicit statement that the doors of the pylon *are opened in the morning when the Disk rises and are closed in the evening.*² Another text referring to the temple as a whole tells us *its doors are opened at dawn when his rays illumine the earth,*³ and elsewhere it is said of the Pronaos: *Its door-leaves are opened to the Court of Offerings (1) that Re' may be adored thrice daily. It is entered by the temple staff who perform their duties within it thrice daily.*⁴

The claim that the officiating priest in the daily service entered by the side doors is partly due to this misunderstanding about the opening of the temple, and partly to faulty interpretation of the texts on the side doors. Alliot considers that the priest who censed the libation water as it was brought into the temple was the officiant in the Sanctuary because he must have been the senior priest since he followed the priest who carried the water. Not only do the texts give no hint that any of the priests who entered by the side doors actually celebrated the service in the Sanctuary, but it is explicitly stated that the priest with the incense *preceded* the libation water,⁵ and hence no question of seniority arises. In theory it was the king who performed the service. In practice it is obvious that this was

¹ E. i. 368, 11-12. Alliot, *Culte*, i. 431 translates rather differently.

² E. viii. 58, 14-15.

³ E. i. 20, 1-3 (text on the left).

⁴ E. iii. 355, 7-8; cf. v. 2, 2-3.

⁵ E. ii. 139, 8.

impossible, but the texts give very little definite evidence on the question of the identity of his deputy. In a text concerned with the New Year Festival it is stated that it is the king himself in his capacity of the Great Prince (a special title of the High Priest of Edfu) who enters the chapel, mounts the stairs of the naos and unveils the face of the god.¹ Elsewhere, in obvious references to the daily ritual, we read: *I am a prophet, the son of a prophet. It is the King who commanded me to see the god*; ² or *It is His Majesty who commanded (?) the prophet to [adore] the god*.³ In other passages the king says: *I am he who gazes upon thy mysterious form. It is I who send the prophet to [see the god]*; ⁴ or *I am he who arrays Thy Majesty in raiment; the prophet acts according to my command*.⁵ Since the high priest was a prophet, the senior overseer of prophets in the temple, the texts just quoted may well refer to him. Neither the high priest nor any prophet is ever mentioned as entering by any side door expressly to officiate in the Sanctuary.

I feel equally doubtful about the omission of the rites of the House of the Morning⁶ from the preliminaries to the daily service. The libation water was drawn from the well dug under the east wall of the temple, obviously to ensure extreme purity, and it naturally follows that the waters of the sacred lake, which lay outside the temple wall, were not sufficiently pure for this purpose. It seems hardly likely that the officiating priest who entered the Holy of Holies to unveil, gaze upon, and touch the god should only be cleansed at the sacred lake, and that he should then have to cross a part of the temple enclosure that was less ritually pure than the temple proper. It is incredible that the chief officiant should have been in a state of less ritual purity than the libation. Since I hope I have demonstrated that all the temple doors were open at dawn, there seems no reason to deny that the officiant entered by the main door of the Pronaos

¹ E. i. 554, 3-4.

² E. iii. 83, 10.

³ E. ii. 144, 8; interpreted quite differently by Alliot, *Culte*, i. 15, with n. 2. For this and E. iii. 83, 10, see the parallels in the Rituals of Amun and Mut, P. Berlin 3055, 4, 6-7 = P. Berlin 3014, 3, 10-4, 1 = A. Moret, *Le rituel du culte divin journalier en Egypte*, p. 55.

⁴ E. i. 420, 13 = xii. Pl. 344.

⁵ E. i. 429, 15-16 = xii. Pl. 346.

⁶ Cf. A. M. Blackman, *The House of the Morning* (*JEA*. 5, 148-65).

and was purified in the House of the Morning. The priests who are mentioned as entering the temple after purification at the Sacred Lake were all junior priests who never penetrated the Sanctuary.

Let us now consider what happened in the Daily Service.¹ One of the most important points that emerges from Alliot's study is that every day there were three main services in the temple, at dawn, at midday and at evening, the morning service being by far the most important, and the midday service the least important. Alliot was the first to establish this very important point, which has been overlooked in all standard works on the cult and worship.

Before dawn an immense amount of preparatory work was necessary. It was the duty of two priests to fill the libation vessel from the sacred well (G), and then, one carrying the vase, and the other walking in front and censuring it, they marched round the ambulatory in anticlockwise direction and entered the temple by the door on the west (C) leading to the Chamber of the Nile (7) and thence to the Inner Hypostyle (5). In the ante chamber of the door and in the Chamber of the Nile the water was blessed and dedicated, and it was then the duty of the two priests to replenish all libation vessels. In the meantime, the offering was introduced by the door to the east of the Inner Hypostyle (E). In the abattoirs and kitchens to the east of the temple men had been busy long before dawn slaughtering an ox and preparing the varied offerings that were to be laid before the gods. At the appointed moment the offerings were carried through the door (H) in the enclosure wall and thence into the temple by the east door (E) of the Inner Hypostyle. The offerings were escorted and censured by priests, and it would appear that at the same time other priests who had duties to perform in the temple entered by the same door, having first purified themselves at the sacred lake. After the offerings had been purified and censured, they were taken into the

¹ For studies of earlier versions of the daily ritual see A. Moret, *Le rituel du culte divin journalier en Egypte*; A. M. Blackman, "The Sequence of the Episodes in the Egyptian Daily Temple Ritual", *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society* (1918-19), pp. 27-53.

Hall of Offerings (9), and eventually some of the libations and offerings must have been brought into the *Hall of the Ennead* (11) where were kept the portable shrines of the co-templar divinities.

Meanwhile the officiating priest had entered with due solemnity by the main door of the Pronaos. In the thickness of each jamb of this door is an abbreviated Declaration of Innocence which he presumably recited while entering. He then turned to the left and was taken to the House of the Morning (3), and there he was ceremonially purified, dressed and invested, and given a light meal. When all had been completed, and while hymns were sung, he marched in solemn procession towards the Sanctuary, whose doors were still closed and sealed.

It is evident that there was not room on the walls of the temple for the full series of ceremonies recorded in the Ritual of Amun. At Edfu only nineteen scenes from the daily liturgy are inscribed in the Sanctuary, and these must be interpreted as a selection of the more important ceremonies and not necessarily as a complete but abbreviated version special to Edfu. It is this same lack of space that is the most probable explanation of the complete absence of any mention of the preliminary rites, such as the twisting and lighting of the torch, the taking of the censer and incense, and the placing of incense on the flame, all of which were essential preliminaries to the service. It was at this moment, or as the doors of the Sanctuary were opened, that the Morning Hymn was sung. This great hymn is inscribed on the façade of the Sanctuary¹ and in it Horus, the co-templar divinities, the members and insignia of Horus, and the individual parts of the temple are addressed and bidden to rouse themselves from slumber. It seems a very long hymn to have been sung every day, but there must have been a Morning Hymn, either this or an abbreviated version.

The priest then entered the Sanctuary and advanced towards the naos. The ensuing service consisted of seven phases.

¹ A. M. Blackman and H. W. Fairman, "A Group of Texts Inscribed on the Façade of the Sanctuary in the Temple of Horus at Edfu", *Miscellanea Gregoriana*, pp. 397-428.

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First, the priest mounted the steps to the naos, broke the seals on the door, drew the bolts and opened the doors, thus revealing the statue of the god. Then followed the uncovering of the face of the god and the ceremony of seeing the god, when the priest recited: *I have seen the god, the Power sees me. The god rejoices at seeing me. I have gazed upon the statue of the Divine Winged Beetle, the sacred image of the Falcon of Gold.*¹ This was undoubtedly one of the most important moments in the whole service, the god had once more entered his statue and taken up residence in his house. The third phase consisted of the adoration of the god and was followed by the presentation of myrrh. The last-mentioned ceremony apparently symbolized the presentation of a meal (see below, p. 191), and takes the place of the Offering of Truth that occurs at this point in the Ritual of Amun. The three final phases were all connected with the toilet of the god. The statue was touched with unguent and the four coloured cloths prescribed by the ritual were presented. Then the statue was purified with water from the ritual green and red vases. Finally, the service concluded with a long series of censings and fumigations, the priest withdrew, and the shrine and the Sanctuary were once more closed. Here, again, Edfu diverges from the Ritual of Amun, in which the purification precedes the dressing of the statue, but in general the two liturgies are closely similar.

While these ceremonies were being performed in the Sanctuary, other priests visited the chapels that open off the corridor, and probably all other parts of the temple as well, and performed an abbreviated version of the rites that were being simultaneously celebrated in the Sanctuary itself. Thus the whole temple and its gods were awakened, washed, dressed, fed, and made ready for another day.

It was probably immediately after this service that the rites called the Reversion of the Divine Offerings were performed.² Naturally only a small proportion of the offerings brought into the temple was symbolically placed upon the

¹ E. i. 26, 4-6; cf. the close parallel at Denderah, MD. iii. 61b. For a much different translation see Alliot, *Culte*, i. 79.

² Cf. JEA. 35, 85.

altars of the gods. After the service had ended and the god was satisfied with his offerings, they reverted to the priests, were taken out of the temple through the eastern doors (E and H), and were then divided among the priests in due proportion according to rank.

Details of the midday service¹ are exceedingly meagre. It was certainly shorter and much less important than the morning service. Alliot considers that it consisted essentially of the offering of libations and the replenishing of vessels throughout the temple, no offerings were brought in and the Sanctuary remained closed. While this may be so, it is necessary to point out that there are at least four texts that clearly mention the bringing of offerings, as distinct from libations, into the temple thrice daily, and that these offerings include various kinds of bread, flowers, geese, and grain.²

The evening service³ took place just before sunset. It was in the main a repetition of the morning service, but on a less elaborate scale. The most important difference was that it seems to have been celebrated in the room called the Throne of Re (24) and not in the Sanctuary. It was here that the soul of Re was supposed to retire to rest at night and it was from here that he rose to the sky at dawn.

Such were the three main services that were duly celebrated every day throughout the year. Were they the only activities within the temple on ordinary days? This is a question to which no final answer can yet be given, but three curious facts ought to be mentioned. A text in the east door of the Pronaos speaks of *the spells for lustrating the great, sacred images of the majesty of Re in the twelve hours of the day*;⁴ another in the Library states that *the Chief Lector-priest did his duty in it in the twelve hours of the day*;⁵ lastly, a text on one of the jambs of the door of the room called Throne of Re tells us *the prophets pass along its path to the Palace of the Behdetite to uncover the face of Him-of-pleasant-life* (an epithet of Horus the Behdetite) *from eventide without cease through the twelve (?) hours of the*

¹ Alliot, *Culte*, i. 107-20.

² E. vi. 105, 2-3; vii. 83, 16-84, 2; 207, 7-10; 239, 2-4.

³ Alliot, *Culte*, i. 121-32.

⁴ E. iii. 356, 1.

⁵ E. iii. 339, 9-10.

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night, provisions being in their hands in order to be laid upon its altar . . . is satisfied with the offerings, and the gods and goddesses who are in his train, they eat with him.¹ It is difficult to escape the conclusion that certain rites were celebrated in the temple each hour of the day and night, but of the nature of these ceremonies we know nothing.

In the temple are two calendars of festivals,² as distinct from the ordinary daily services, that were celebrated at Edfu during the year. Although the record is unfortunately incomplete in parts, the calendars themselves and scattered crumbs of information from other texts show that over forty³ special festivals were celebrated in the temple in the course of a single year, festivals that varied in length from one to fifteen days. Most of these festivals are little more than names and we know nothing about their nature and development. It is probable, moreover, that some festivals have been omitted from the list. During a great part of the fourth month of the year, the Fourth Month of Inundation, special festivals of Osiris were celebrated in all temples of Egypt. At Edfu three rooms were specially connected with the cult of Osiris (Rooms 17, 18, and 19 on the plan), and contain a portion of the text of the Osiris Mysteries, the Leg of Osiris was supposed to be kept in the temple, and there is even a boastful claim that Osiris was mummified at Edfu: ⁴ it is certain that there must have been festivals of Osiris, but the calendars almost completely ignore them, except for references to the Festival of Sokaris on the 26th of the month.⁵ If some of the rooms on the roof had survived, we might have been in a better position to speak of what happened at Edfu, but at Edfu alone there is not sufficient material to enable us

¹ *E.* i. 282, 12-15.

² *E.* i. 359, 15-18 = xii. Pl. 324; v. 397, 5-401, 5; 394, 10-395, 7 = xiii. Pls. 490, 491, 489. The most recent published translations are those of Alliot, *Culte*, i. 206-15. A third calendar at Edfu (*E.* v. 348, 4-353, 6; 354, 2-360, 2 = xiii. Pls. 485, 486) is, as Alliot has pointed out, in reality a calendar of the festivals of Hathor at Denderah (Alliot, *op. cit.* i. 251-62; translation, *op. cit.* i. 219-39).

³ The calendar of Tuthmosis III at Karnak mentions no less than fifty-four calendar festivals (*JEA.* 38, Pl. IX, frag. gg; pp. 20-1).

⁴ *E.* v. 164, 6-7; cf. 163, 17-164, 1.

⁵ *E.* v. 399, 1-6; 6, 7-8; vi. 9, 7-8. For scenes connected with this festival see *E.* v. 163, 16-165, 2; vi. 136, 11-142, 6; 281, 12-282, 13.

to draw a complete picture and an adequate account of the Osiris Mysteries will have to await the accurate and complete publication of the abundant materials from Denderah and Philae. Only four of the great annual festivals can be reconstructed in any detail or accuracy. These festivals are the New Year Festival, the Coronation of the Sacred Falcon, the Festival of Victory, and the Sacred Marriage, and it is to these that we must now turn our attention.

New Year's Day in Egypt coincided, at least when the calendar and the year were in step, with the traditional day of the rising of the Nile. The ceremonies on this day, the herald of the life-giving inundation, are therefore naturally primarily concerned with renewal, the renewal of life and fertility, for the gods, for Egypt, and her people, and above all for Pharaoh on whom the welfare of Egypt depended, and this renewal is symbolized by the union of the sun's rays with the statue of the god: the rooms called Food-Altar (13) and Pure Place (14), the stairways to and from the roof, and the Kiosk, the Place of the First Feast, on the roof are specially designed to facilitate this all-important union.

The first complete study of the New Year Festival is that of Alliot.¹ The following account of the ceremonies follows Alliot in its broad lines, but it is only fair to Alliot to point out that it differs from him in three respects. In the first place, it is not absolutely certain that at Edfu the Festival lasted eleven days. The ceremonies began on the thirtieth day of the Fourth Month of Summer (the last day of the old year), continued on the five epagomenal days, and according to Alliot ended on the fifth day of the First Month of Inundation. The difficulty here is that the calendar entries for the fourth and fifth days of that month contain no reference to the New Year Festival but are called respectively *The Festival of the Behdetite*, and *The Festival of Horus the Behdetite*.² Moreover, the calendar of Kom Ombo³ clearly states that the festival ended on the fourth day of the month. A final solution of this problem cannot yet be

¹ Alliot, *Culte*, i. 303-433.

² *E.* v. 397. 6.

³ De Morgan, *Ombos*, i. 314, no. 426.

ferred, but I am reluctant to make as positive a declaration as Alliot regarding the duration of the festival.

Secondly, Alliot has attempted to prove that the Place of the First Feast was the name of the Kiosk on the roof and also of the room called Food-altar (13) and hence divides the ceremonies into two phases: (a) the days before New Year's Day when the ceremonies took place in and between the Mesen-room (16) and Food-altar and Pure Place (14), and (b) New Year's Day and the following days when the ceremonies extended to the roof and the kiosk. No text at either Edfu or Denderah applies the term Place of the First Feast to any part of the temple other than the Kiosk on the roof. Alliot's view is based on the fact that at Denderah the room equivalent to the Food-altar at Edfu is sometimes called the *Court of the Place of the First Feast*.¹ If this means anything, it surely means that the room cannot be the Place of the First Feast; otherwise, one might also call it the *Pure Place* since an infrequent name of the same room is *Court of the Pure Place*.² Since the Edfu calendar explicitly states that on the last day of the year and on the epagomenal days the god went to the Place of the First Feast, I assume, contrary to Alliot, that both before and after New Year's Day the ceremonies included a procession to the roof.

Lastly, Alliot denies that any of the toilet episodes took place on the roof. This is also impossible to sustain, not only because an epitome of the ceremonies at Denderah clearly refers to detailed toilet episodes after Hathor had entered the Kiosk,³ but both at Edfu and Denderah the toilet requirements are carried up to the roof and at Edfu there is a particularly clear statement that the toilet was performed there.⁴ In my view there were toilet episodes in both the Pure Place and the Kiosk.

The New Year ceremonies did not affect the Sanctuary and the statues that were kept in it, but started in the Mesen-room

¹ CD. iv. 185, 14; 186, 5.

² J. Dümichen, *Baugeschichte des Denderatempels*, xiv, 10.

³ CD. v. 117, 1-4 = MD. iii. 37 i: the most recent study is by Daumas in *Ann. Serv.* 51, 384-8. Cf. also MD. iv. 11 = J. Dümichen, *Allägyptischen Kalendarinschriften*, 92-3.

⁴ E. i. 555, 11-14.

(16). The king or his deputy, accompanied by the senior priests of the temple, entered the room, and performed the opening rites of the daily service: he mounted the steps of the naos, opened it, and revealed the face of the god. After a brief adoration, the shrines of Horus and Hathor were removed and placed on separate, rectangular, gilded supports, each surmounted by a canopy on four columns, and each having a metal ring at the four corners. Nine priests, usually called the *Companions*, were assigned to each shrine and its support and were responsible for carrying it in all the processions of the day; they supported the shrines on their hands and by means of cords passed round their necks and then through the rings attached to the support. These priests impersonated the four sons of Horus, the four sons of Mekhentienirty, and Mekhentienirty himself, who does not seem to have acted as porter, but brought up the rear of each group of porters rather like an overseer.¹ The procession then formed up, and in double file, with the Sacred Lance of Horus before Horus and the Lance of Khonsu before Hathor, made its way along the corridor that surrounded the Sanctuary and so eventually reached the Food-altar (13) and the Pure Place (14). In the meantime, particularly rich offerings, including burnt offerings, had been placed on all altars throughout the temple and above all in the Forecourt, the Court of Offering (1).² The shrines of Horus, Hathor, and all the co-templar divinities were now grouped in the Pure Place (14), facing south, offerings were made to them, the statues were unveiled, and then the toilet episodes of the daily ritual were repeated in very rich and elaborate form to the accompaniment of special hymns.

It was now time for the procession to reform and make its way to the roof. The route was from the Food-altar (13), into the Central Hall (11), thence to the Hall of Offerings (9)

¹ Presumably owing to lack of space the reliefs of the eastern stairway depict either two or four priests, cf. *E.* ix. Pl. XXXVIII *e* and *o* (two priests), Pl. XXVII *b* and *e* (four priests). That there were in reality nine is assured by the repeated mention of the sons of Horus and Mekhentienirty and Mekhentienirty himself, and by references to the nine "Companions" or "Porters" (*E.* i. 414, 9; 549, 15; 554, 8; 560, 1-2; 571, 7-8). At Denderah the nine are clearly depicted and named (*MD.* iv. 9).

² *E.* i. 553, 15-554, 1.

where it turned to the left and, passing through the door (F), made its way up the winding stairway on to the roof and eventually to the Kiosk. We possess a particularly detailed description of the procession. Since each file was essentially the same, I describe only that of Horus. The first section of the procession was composed of priests, probably fifteen, carrying the sacred standards: their function was to prepare the way, to open it, and to remove all evil and danger from the path of the god. Behind them came more priests, some of them masked, impersonating divinities who were carrying food, drink, clothing, and other offerings. Now came the immediate escort of the god composed of the senior priests, the High Priest in the rear, nearest to the shrine: a lector priest marched at the head, and the other priests carried clothing, semi-precious stones, incense and libations. Immediately behind these priests marched a man dressed in the royal costume and carrying the Sacred Lance of Horus, and behind him came the queen and the king, barefooted and looking over their shoulders at the shrine of the god immediately behind them: the queen rattled sistra as she walked, the king burned incense. Then came the portable shrine of Horus, carried by the nine Companions. After the god followed other priests, each carrying one of the co-templar divinities in his or her portable shrine, and finally each file was closed by a fan bearer.

The statues of the gods were introduced into the Kiosk and, all facing south, were grouped to either side and behind Horus. While further offerings were made, the ritual was once more performed. The statue was unveiled, the old clothing removed, the statue was anointed, dressed and a meal was offered. The supreme moment of the ceremony must undoubtedly have been the unveiling of the face of the god, and this presumably happened at midday. At that moment the rays descended on the statue, and that mystic union of the sun and the god that was the whole purpose of the ceremony was effected. After these ceremonies, the procession reformed, passed through the west door of the Kiosk and eventually regained the temple and the respective resting places of the gods by descending the western stairway.

Two further points which, as far as I know, have not previously been mentioned in discussion of this festival, should now be discussed. In the calendar of Kom Ombo¹ reference is made to an "opening of the mouth" at the First Feast. Although this ceremony is not mentioned in any of the texts of the New Year Festival at Edfu or Denderah, it is very significant, I think, that the Edfu calendar tells us that on the 19th day of the First Month of Summer (the ninth month of the year) there took place the following ceremonies: *Procession of this august god, Khonsu of Behdet, to the roof of the temple; uncovering the face; clothing in raiment; offering unguent; singing praises; performing the opening [of the mouth]. . . .*² The importance of this passage is that it undoubtedly refers to ceremonies on the roof similar to those of the New Year Festival, and it confirms the testimony of Kom Ombo that the opening of the mouth was part of the ceremonial. If I am correct in assuming an opening of the mouth on New Year's Day, we have a new and very important fact. The traditional time for the dedication of a temple was either on the eve of New Year's Day,³ or on New Year's Day.⁴ I suggest, therefore, that the ceremonies on the temple roof on New Year's Day included the annual rededication of the temple and its gods: the union with the sun not only brought renewal of fertility and welfare to Egypt, it renewed for another year the life and powers of Edfu, Horus and the gods who lived with him in the temple.

All the ceremonies just described, though they directly affected the well-being of the people, were hidden from the outside world, the doors of the temple were shut while they were being celebrated, and no member of the general public witnessed them. Hitherto it has been assumed that the day ended with the return of the procession to the secondary sanctuary. In a calendar at Denderah, however, we read: *Now after the ceremonies of the divine service have been completed, when the 8th hour of the day comes, performance of all the ceremonies of bringing out in procession this goddess, Hathor the great,*

¹ De Morgan, *Ombos*, ii. 52, no. 596.

² E. v. 400, 8-401, 2.

³ F. L. Griffith, *The Inscriptions of Siut and Dér Rifeh*, Pl. 7, 298.

⁴ Griffith, *op. cit.* Pls. 6, 277-8; 7, 297.

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Lady of Denderah, Eye of Re, in her Uplifter-of-Beauty,¹ together with her Ennead, to the Great Court of the Sky.² Uniting with her father; seeing her beauty by the sun-folk. Entering her house in slow march. Resting in this her place.³ These words can surely only mean that in the afternoon, after the New Year ceremonies, Hathor and the co-templar divinities were brought out and displayed to certain privileged people, but not to the public in general, in the Outer Hypostyle Hall of the temple; the mention of the processional barque proves that this could not have been a procession to the roof, for the stairway was too narrow to admit the barque and its carriers. Although this is not mentioned at Edfu, the ceremonies at Edfu and Denderah are so similar that it would seem that there was a reasonable possibility that at Edfu also Horus was brought out and displayed, probably in the Forecourt, one of whose names is the *Great (court of) the Sky.⁴*

It is reasonable to enquire whether there was any difference between the ceremonies before and after New Year's Day, for it seems inherently improbable that precisely the same rites were performed throughout the festival, without any special difference on the important New Year Day. Unfortunately, the texts and reliefs give us no help on this point, and one is compelled to rely on speculation. I feel that it is probable that the processions and the ceremonies in the temple and on the roof on the six days before New Year Day were merely preliminary and conducted on a modest scale. The real union with the sun obviously was consummated on the first day of the year, which was further marked by being the day of the annual rededication of the temple. I feel also that New Year's Day and the following days were distinguished from those that preceded by special ceremonies connected with the cult

¹ The portable boat-shrine kept in the Sanctuary.

² *Wb.* ii. 214 (16) strangely identifies this with the roof of the temple of Denderah. The fact that it contained columns (*MD.* ii. 13c), and that the boat-shrine could be taken there makes this identification impossible. That it was the Pronaos of Denderah was correctly recognized many years ago by Dümichen, *Baugeschichte*, p. 4, and unnumbered plan of Denderah.

³ *MD.* i. 62 f = Brugsch, *Thesaurus*, 365.

⁴ *E.* v. 6, 10; cf. vii. 18, 8-9.

of the reigning king and his ancestors, which, as Alliot rightly emphasizes,¹ played such a prominent part in the ceremonies of the New Year Festival.

The second great Festival we have to consider is the Coronation of the Sacred Falcon, which was celebrated on the first five days of the First Month of Winter (the fifth month of the year). Once again, Alliot is the first scholar to have made a study of the festival and to have suggested the correct order in which the reliefs are to be studied.² The details are relatively easy to reconstruct thanks to a magnificent set of eight great scenes, accompanied by very long texts, on the first two registers of the inner face of the north wall of the enclosure, supplemented by numerous but scattered texts in other parts of the temple.

The falcon-headed statue of Horus, crowned with the Double Crown, was taken from the naos in the Sanctuary (15) and placed on a light, portable litter, open at the sides but surmounted by a light canopy. The litter was carried by masked priests, those in front wearing falcon masks, and those behind jackal masks; they represented the ancestors, the kings of the archaic kingdoms of Hierakonpolis in Upper Egypt and of Buto in the Delta. The procession was probably very similar in organization to the procession of the New Year Festival. In front came the priests carrying the standards, then the chief members of the priesthood, the god in his litter, and finally priests bearing the statues of the gods in their shrines. A feature of the procession was that it proceeded in silence, *no man speaking to his fellow*.³

¹ Alliot, *Culte*, i. 358-60. Cf. the Decrees of Canopus and Memphis: hieroglyphic text, *Urk.* ii. 137, 10-138, 4; 195, 6-8; 211, 12-212, 13; translation of the Greek text, E. Bevan, *A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, 210.

² Alliot's detailed study will appear in his second volume. He has published a preliminary account, "La fête égyptienne du couronnement du roi au temple d'Edfou sous les rois Ptolémées", *CRAIBL* (1948), pp. 208-19, and a short summary in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 137, 88-95. The main texts, in Alliot's order, are: *E.* vi. 93, 2-99, 16; 262, 11-269, 12; 100, 2-104, 7; 269, 14-274, 7; 143, 12-152, 12; 298, 2-304, 12; 152, 14-157, 2; 305, 2-309, 7. A hieroglyphic summary of the whole ceremony is given in *E.* vi. 102, 3-103, 6. I have also used my own photographs of the first four scenes, and the complete set of photographs of the Berlin Academy, nos. E. 18-28, 93-106. See also H. Junker, "Der Bericht Strabos über den heiligen Falken von Philae im Lichte der ägyptischen Quellen", *WZKM.* 26 (1912), 42-62. ³ *E.* vi. 102, 5.

The procession passed through the temple, through the great doors of the pylon, and having passed the gate in the south wall of the temenos, turned to the left and marched to the Temple of the Sacred Falcon. Here the litter turned and faced the shrines of the gods who, with their porters, were assembled before it. The moment for the selection of the new king had now arrived, and the method was obviously oracular. One by one the name of each divinity was called so that Horus might indicate the one on whom his choice had fallen. None of the gods thus called was chosen, presumably the litter of Horus either remained still, or made a movement of recoil as each name was called. Then the procession enters the court, either the Forecourt or the Hypostyle, of the Temple of the Sacred Falcon, and while the litter of Horus is stationed in the doorway, the falconers bring in a number of the sacred falcons who had been bred in the sacred grove, and eventually one of these was chosen, and recognized as the heir of the god and the new king.

The second part of the ceremony now began. The procession, now including the Sacred Falcon, reformed and retraced its way to the Forecourt (I) for the Ceremony of Recognition. Having entered the Forecourt, the gods and their attendants entered the door in the east wing of the pylon and emerged upon the roof of the main door, between the two wings of the pylon: this was the *Balcony of the Falcon*,¹ or *Window of Appearance*.² It is obvious that this was in order that Horus might display his heir, the newly chosen Sacred Falcon, to the people: there is no indication who these people were, but presumably there was an assembly of priests and other privileged people in the Forecourt and before the pylons. It was probably at this point that two litanies were sung: first, the Litany of the Happy Year, and the then Litany of Sakhmet, the purpose of which was to ensure the protection of the Sacred Falcon from all kinds of harm and danger.

The procession then descended from the balcony and entered the temple for the third part of the proceedings, the

¹ E. vi. 93, 11.

² E. vi. 102, 9.

Coronation. For the first part of the coronation service the falcon was placed under a light canopy on a rectangular block elaborately carved in imitation of the primitive palace façade, the *serekh*¹ and was then anointed, invested with a ceremonial collar, and presented with the Symbol of Eternity and the four posies of Horus the Behdetite, Re, Hathor, and Atum. The second part of the ceremony was concerned with the investiture and protection of the new ruler. The falcon and Horus were placed side by side on seats,² each being on the back of a figure of a lion. The god was presented with the royal insignia and with numerous amulets, his lips were touched with milk and long hymns were sung for the protection of the god and his house, the ground on which he stood, the bed on which he slept and the air he breathed, and the spells for the protection of the divine body were recited.

When all these ceremonies had been completed, it was time for the final phase, the Banquet. For this purpose the procession formed again and returned to the Temple of the Sacred Falcon. There an elaborate Grace before Meat was sung³ while the king presented choice meats to the falcon, the cut-up pieces of flesh symbolizing the destruction of the enemies of the god and the king.⁴ The actual banquet is represented by a scene entitled *Burning myrrh. Bringing the god to his meat.*⁵ As in the daily service (see above, p. 180), the offering of myrrh symbolized an actual meal, the accompanying formula telling us that *The scent of myrrh is for thy nose, it fills thy nostrils, thy heart receives the meat-portions on its scent.*⁶

The Banquet concluded the official ceremonies. While the Sacred Falcon remained in his temple, Horus was carried back to his shrine in the Sanctuary of the main temple, and the populace gave themselves up to merriment and feasting.

The striking parallelism between these rites and our modern coronation ceremony needs no elaboration. One further point,

¹ E. xiv. Pl. 553.

² The reliefs actually depict the Sacred Falcon in front of Horus, but it is perhaps better to imagine them seated side by side.

³ A. M. Blackman, "The King of Egypt's Grace Before Meat", *JEA.* 31, 57-73.

⁴ *JEA.* 31, 72.

⁵ E. vi. 305, 2.

⁶ E. vi. 305, 3-4.

however, requires brief comment. It must be stressed that throughout these ceremonies there is complete identity between the Sacred Falcon, Horus the Behdetite and the Pharaoh. The festival was very much more than just the selection and coronation of a Sacred Falcon, it was also the annual renewal of the coronation of the reigning king. The first day of the First Month of Winter, the first day of the festival, is named in the calendar as *the day of the New Year Feast of Horus the Behdetite*.¹ The significance of this is, as Gardiner demonstrated in his review of Frazer's *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*,² that this day follows immediately after the great Osirian festivals of the fourth month of the year. On the last day of that month there took place both the resurrection of Osiris, as "a dead king recalled in the tomb to a semblance of his former life", and his interment. On the following day, the first day of the fifth month, his son Horus assumed the kingship. Hence this is the date that was apparently considered fitting for the accession of any Pharaoh, and that was also the conventional date for the *Sed*-festival. It is these facts that explain the significance of the date and nature of the Coronation of the Sacred Falcon.

The third great annual festival which we have to describe was the Festival of Victory, celebrated on five successive days beginning with the twenty-first day of the Second Month of Winter (the sixth month of the year). Unlike the other festivals we are describing, no detailed account of the various ceremonies has come down to us. The long texts specially connected with the festival are of a special type and could not have included all the rites, and it is a matter for speculation what other ceremonies were performed.

The main texts concerned with the festival are preserved on the first and second registers of the inner surface of the western enclosure wall. They are clearly defined and separated from all other scenes on that wall by being given in reverse order.³ In the first register is the text of what may conveniently

¹ *E. v.* 399, 7.

² *JEA.* 2, 121-6, especially pp. 122-4.

³ See Chassinat's observations, *E. vi.* 55-6, 104.

be called a Sacred Drama.¹ In the second register is the text generally known as the Legend of the Winged Disk,² followed by a shorter text whose title refers to the presentation of a beverage composed of grapes and water.³

The exact nature of the texts in the first register is a matter of dispute. In our original study Professor Blackman and I presented it as a drama consisting of a Prologue, three acts and an Epilogue.⁴ This, however, has been disputed by Drioton,⁵ who denies that the texts are really dramatic, and claims that in reality they embody two versions of an ancient drama concerned with the victory of Horus, which, with some additional material, have been amalgamated to form a series of hymns for liturgical use. Alliot,⁶ on the other hand, disputes both these views, claiming that the text is no mystery or drama but that it embodies a series of ritual actions. These divergent opinions cannot be discussed here in detail. Since Alliot's final study has not yet appeared, detailed criticism of his views would be premature and unfair, but his case does not appear to be proved, it does not seem to consider all the evidence, and he can hardly be correct in including ceremonies from the Festival of Sokaris. Drioton's study is one of the most ingenious and brilliant that has appeared for many a day, but the picture it presents is, I believe, purely fictitious. That the text contains earlier material is obvious, but the philological grounds for the isolation of the two postulated earlier dramas (two words that occur nine times in some 350 lines of printed text) are not only quite inadequate for their purpose but demonstrably incorrect. Other grave objections could also be raised to Drioton's view. In the following account, therefore, I adhere to the view that the text in the first register is, in the

¹ E. vi. 60, 6-90; xiii. Pls. 494-514.

² E. vi. 108, 15-132, 5; xiii. Pls. 518-33.

³ E. vi. 132, 7-136, 9; xiii. Pls. 534, 535.

⁴ A. M. Blackman and H. W. Fairman, *The Myth of Horus at Edfu*, II: "The Triumph of Horus over his Enemies: A Sacred Drama", *JEA.* 28, 32-8; 29, 2-36; 30, 5-22.

⁵ E. Drioton, "Le texte dramatique d'Edfou", *Cahiers des Annales de Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, no. 11, Cairo, 1948.

⁶ *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 137, 95-103.

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form that has survived on the wall of the temple, that of a sacred drama.

Since the Sacred Drama is found in the first register, it would seem certain that it must have been enacted earlier in the day than the scenes of the second register. What preceded it we do not know, but undoubtedly the statue of Horus must have been brought from the Sanctuary to the Sacred Lake, on the edge of which there must almost certainly have been a small kiosk. The action of the play took place partly beside the lake and partly on its waters, in the presence of priests and a large concourse of the faithful who acted as chorus. The chief participants were the king, a Lector, priests who impersonated the gods, and a chorus. There was little action or real acting, the important point being the ranting or declaiming of set speeches with the minimum of formal, stilted gestures; there is little "drama" in our sense of the word, and no characterization. To us it appears as rather dull stuff, enlivened by a few passages of genuine literary merit, but then it was not written for us or for people with our ideas. But to the Egyptian beholders the words and setting, and above all the underlying religious and political ideas, made it real, dramatic, exciting, and intensely significant.

The Prologue sets the tone of the drama with its praise of the king and its statement: *Here begins the bringing to pass of the triumph of Horus over his enemies.*¹ Act One, divided into five scenes, is the Ritual of the Sacred Harpoon: ten harpoons, accompanied by appropriate words and gestures, are in turn implanted in a figure of a hippopotamus. The two scenes of Act Two are concerned with rejoicing over the victory: in the first scene Horus, seated in his galley, and the young harpooners are invoked; in the second scene the people rejoice over Horus crowned and invested with the insignia of kingship. Act Three, the celebration of the victory, consists of two versions of the dismemberment of Seth, separated by an Interlude. Finally, the Epilogue declares that Horus is triumphant and that the enemies of the gods and the king are overthrown.

¹ E. vi. 61, 2.

It is significant that the play begins and ends with the king. The dramatic enactment of the victory of Horus, the formal statement of the triumph of Horus and the king, made certain that the enemies of Pharaoh were overthrown and destroyed and thus ensured that for another year Pharaoh, his people, and the whole land of Egypt had victory and peace.

The main text of the second register, the Legend of the Winged Disk,¹ is no ordinary liturgical or ritual text, still less is it dramatic. It takes the form of a long account of the fighting between Horus and Seth, interspersed with numerous and tedious puns on the various actions and on the places mentioned. Its climax is the statement that the Winged Disk is placed in every temple throughout Egypt, and the text goes on to explain that the Winged Disk is Horus the Behdetite, who is pre-eminent in Upper and Lower Egypt, who overthrows the enemy, and in whose name the living and dead are inscribed. The text ends with a piece of pure magic: a winged beetle in writing is to be placed on the breast of the king on the day of trouble, the appropriate spell is to be recited, and as a result the king will not be afraid and his enemies will be destroyed immediately. It is clear that the text as a whole is designed to assert and prove the claim of Horus the Behdetite to the overlordship of Egypt, and to emphasize that he can and does protect the king. It is significant that the whole legend takes the form of a historical document and commences with a mythological date: *In the year 363 of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Re-Harakhte*. This looks remarkably like one of those appeals to historical precedent, real or fictitious, of which the Egyptians were so fond, and I would suggest that this section of the festival was conceived as a supplement to the Sacred Drama, that it consisted of the recitation of the history of the victories of Horus, which were thus presented in the guise of a historical document to prove his claim to supremacy.

The final section of the text is ostensibly connected with an offering of drink, and of oryx, ibex, and long-horned and short-horned cattle which, as we know, symbolize the enemies

¹H. W. Fairman, "The Myth of Horus at Edfu, I: The Legend of the Winged Disk", *JEA*. 21, 26-36.

of the king and the gods. It directly continues the concluding passages of the Legend of the Winged Disk by elaborating the spell which is to be recited over the winged beetle placed round the neck of the king, whose enemies are immediately brought to nought, in conformity with one of the fundamental principles of Egyptian magic, by the bare assertion that they are afraid and powerless. This is followed by the statement that the defeated enemies are despatched to the four points of the compass, there to form the different races of mankind, apart, of course, from the Egyptians, and by a further recital, with the inevitable puns, of further incidents in the wars of Horus. The whole text appears to be an appendix to the Legend of the Winged Disk, and its basic purpose seems to be that of a final, magical, and protective rite at the end of the ceremony.

The Sacred Marriage,¹ the last of the great festivals that we have to discuss, is in many ways the most interesting. It was essentially a popular festival, to a far greater extent than any of those already described; a very large proportion of the ceremonies took place outside the temple area and, in varying degree, affected and interested the whole of Upper Egypt from Denderah to Elephantine.

The festival was celebrated at Edfu from the day of the New Moon in the Third Month of Summer (the eleventh month of the year) and ended on the day of the Full Moon, a total of fifteen days. The preliminaries actually commenced, however, fourteen days earlier² at Denderah when Hathor boarded her great river-going processional barge and was towed up-stream towards Edfu in the midst of a great fleet of boats bearing priests and the faithful. The procession stopped on the way at Thebes, where Hathor visited Mut of Asheru, Komir, between Esneh and Hierakonpolis, and Hierakonpolis, opposite the modern El Kab. It is possible, though not stated, that there may have been stops at other places, and it is easy to imagine that, as the glittering procession made its slow progress, excited crowds danced and rejoiced on the river banks. The period of the festival was a time of peace and gladness: *The*

¹ E. v. 29, 9-33, 16; 124, 8-129, 11; 130, 17-136, 4; 34, 2-35, 3.

² E. vii. 26, 9-12.

*inhabitants of Edfu are in jubilation, shouting for joy to the height of heaven. . . . The great water-flood, it has stilled its raging, the Nile rejoices [pacifying?] them that are in the water, while the crocodiles are all quieted and none are able to dart up.*¹

The procession arrived at the quay to the north of Edfu at the eighth hour of the day on the day of the New Moon and was there met by Horus of Behdet and his following and a deputation from Elephantine. Hathor disembarked and proceeded with Horus to an adjacent temple and there various ceremonies were performed, the most important being the Opening of the Mouth, an offering of the first fruits of the field, the presentation of the field, the driving of the calves, the offering of Truth and numerous food-offerings. The gods then boarded their ships, and accompanied by the Mayors of Komir, Hierakonpolis and Elephantine and a host of pilgrims, set sail for Edfu, presumably by a canal joining the river at Etbo to a place in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple. On the way the procession stopped at a place called the Mound of Geb where further ceremonies took place, including another Opening of the Mouth, the celebration of the ritual and rich offerings and burnt offerings, and then pursued its way. Eventually the boats arrived at Edfu, and Horus and his bride entered the enclosure by the eastern door in the brick enclosure wall and so across the enclosure and into the Forecourt (I) by the door in its south-eastern corner (B). This concluded the ceremonies of the day, this was the marriage proper, and Horus and Hathor spent their marriage night in the Sanctuary.

The next morning, the second day of the lunar month, there was a subtle change: the emphasis is no longer on the marriage, which is not mentioned, but instead we read of a fourteen-day Festival of Behdet which commenced on this day. The procession formed up, at its head the five sacred lances, all the visiting deputations, priests and doubtless most of the townsfolk followed, and all made their way from the temple, across the desert to the Burial-ground of Behdet, some distance to the west or south-west. There they stopped at

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the Upper Temple, and in addition to offerings of *bread, beer, bulls, birds, and every good thing*, many burnt sacrifices, and the singing of hymns, there were performed the making oblation to the Divine Souls, and the ceremony of treading the grave. After this, everybody gave themselves up to merrymaking for a time. The procession then departed from the Upper Temple and proceeded to the Hall of the House of Life, a building whose position is not known but which was probably a dependency of the main temple. Here a series of exceedingly complicated rites was performed, the chief items being the slaughter of a red goat and a red ox,¹ profuse offerings of every description, the despatching of four geese to the compass points, each bearing to the gods of the appropriate quarter the message: *The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Horus the Behdetite, great god, lord of the sky, has possessed himself of the White Crown and has assumed the Red Crown*, and then a priest called "His-beloved-son" took a bow and shot to south, north, west, and east. The nature of the subsequent rites changed and became more prophylactic. A hippopotamus of red wax inscribed with the names of enemies was brought, the enemies of the king were entered on a clean sheet of papyrus, a hippopotamus of sand was made and *every harmful thing was done to them*,² and afterwards there were performed the ceremonies of trampling on the fishes, the treading down and trampling on the foe by the king, and the smiting with the sword. These were then followed by an interpretation, which clearly explains that all these were the symbols of the king's enemies who were thus destroyed. By this time it was evening; after drinking in the divine presence, the gods retired, and the people gave themselves up to a night of merriment around the temple.

The ceremonies of the second to fourth day of the Festival of Behdet were approximately similar to those of the first day, except that on each the main ceremonies at the Upper Temple took place at a different "mound". For the fifth to thirteenth day of the festival the details are meagre in the extreme, but as far as can be gathered the celebrations were on a vastly reduced

¹ Red is the evil, unlucky colour, the colour of Seth.

² E. v. 134, 2.

scale, there does not appear to have been any procession to the necropolis, and the ceremonies all appear to have been performed within the temple. Finally, on the day of the Full Moon, the fourteenth day of the Festival of Behdet, it was time for Hathor to return to Denderah. In the same state as at her arrival she was escorted to the temple or chapel at Etbo and there elaborate farewell ceremonies took place. The Opening of the Mouth was performed, offerings were made, the crew of the ship of Horus marched past, the ceremony of treading the grave was performed yet again, the adoration of the sacred harpoon was recited, and finally Hathor boarded her barge and slowly sailed away northward to Denderah.

The above description is the merest outline of the extremely complicated rites which the texts give us in no little detail. There emerge, however, a number of points of the greatest interest and significance. It is clear that the festival was not a unity. The obvious division is into two main parts: the Sacred Marriage on the first day, or more precisely the afternoon and evening of the first day, and the subsequent Festival of Behdet, itself divided into two sections of four and ten days.

But there is more to it than this. The striking feature of the ceremonies is the emphasis throughout on ceremonies, all of which, as is now well known, were essentially rites of the harvest festival: the offering of the first fruits, the offering of the field, the driving of the calves,¹ the treading of the grave, and the despatching of the geese to the compass points are all well-known features of the harvest festival. Even the trampling of the enemy under-foot is clearly to be equated with the scattering of grain and trampling it under-foot at the harvest festival. But here a curious point emerges. We are accustomed to regard the harvest festival as a ceremony immediately preceding the reaping of the crops and its traditional date is in the First Month of Summer.² Even when the year and calendar were in order, the third month of summer would have covered

¹ A. M. Blackman and H. W. Fairman, "The Significance of the Ceremony 'Hwt Bhsu' in the Temple of Horus at Edfu", *JEA.* 35, 98-112; 36, 63-81.

² H. Gauthier, *Les fêtes du dieu Min*; see also H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 188-90.

our May to June, long after harvest which in Upper Egypt is in April, but at the time that our texts of the festival were engraved, the Third Month of Summer would have been even later in the year, probably in July to August, months after harvesting and threshing, when the Nile was already rising. In my mind there can be no possible doubt that the Sacred Marriage at Edfu was essentially a harvest festival, in reality that of the First Month of Summer, but a harvest festival performed out of due season.

But there is even more. It is well known that these Egyptian harvest festivals were speedily Osirianized and that they became funerary festivals. This also is markedly obvious at Edfu. The visit to the Upper Temple was to a sacred necropolis, where were buried the Divine Souls to whom offerings were made during the festival. These Divine Souls were presumably the ancestral gods of Edfu. A big series of texts¹ deals almost exclusively with these gods and their connection with this particular festival; they tell us that they were nine in number, and name them, and they tell us that the annual visit of Horus and Hathor brought these dead gods life and light.

It is thus evident that the Sacred Marriage is a very complex festival. The marriage itself is an intimate part of the harvest, for it ensured fertility and an abundant crop. At Edfu it is combined unmistakably with harvest rites and with the cult of the ancestors. It is the perfect Egyptian example of the anthropologist's ideal pattern of sacred marriage, linked with harvest rites and the cult of the ancestors.

We have now hastily surveyed a year's activity in the temple of Edfu. It is natural to ask ourselves what was the attitude of the priesthood to these manifold activities. In what spirit did they approach their duties? Egyptian temple inscriptions are never personal, they never inform us in set terms of the feelings and reactions of the priests, but some of the doors of the temple bear remarkable addresses to the priests entering the temple that throw light on the question. All these have

¹ E. i. 173, 3-174, 7; 382, 4-15; ii. 51, 3-52, 8; 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; iii. 323, 5-12.

been collected and translated by Alliot,¹ and two extracts will have to suffice. On one door, for instance, we read: *Everyone who enters by this door, beware of entering in impurity, for God loves purity more than millions of possessions, more than hundreds of thousands of fine gold. His food is Truth, he is satisfied with it. His heart is pleased with great purity.*² Or again: *Turn your faces to this temple in which His Majesty has placed you. He sails in the heavens while seeing what is done therein, and he is pleased therewith according to its exactitude. Do not come in in sin, do not enter in impurity, do not utter falsehood in his house, do not covet things, do not slander, do not accept bribes, do not be partial as between a poor man and a great, do not add to the weight and measure, but (rather) reduce them; do not tamper with the corn-measure; do not harm the requirements of the Eye-of-Re (i.e. the divine offerings); do not reveal what you have seen in the mysteries of the temples; do not stretch forth the arm to the things of his house, do not venture to seize his property. Beware, moreover, of saying "Fool!" in the heart, for one lives on the bounty of the gods, and "bounty" one calls what comes forth from the altar after the reversion of the divine offerings upon them. Behold, whether he sails in the heavens, or whether he traverses the Netherworld, his eyes are firmly fixed upon his possessions in their (proper) places.*³ The cynic may comment that if such exhortations were necessary, the priests must have fallen very far short of the ideal. It can be admitted that there must have been bad priests, but far more important than such considerations is the ideal. These texts set before the priests a goal and a high ideal. We shall not go far wrong if we assume that there were many priests who in sincerity and humility attempted to follow this path.

For the people in general there is little to be said. It is clear that for the majority of the people there was no direct contact with either daily service or with many festivals, and no participation in any intimate or sacred rites. On certain occasions, such as the Coronation of the Sacred Falcon and the

¹ Alliot, *Culte*, i. 181-95. Similar texts exist at Denderah and Kom Ombo, *MD*. i. 15 c; 16 a; De Morgan, *Ombos*, ii. 245, no. 878.

² *E*. vi. 349, 4-6.

³ *E*. iii. 360, 361, 5.

Festival of Victory, it is reasonable to assume that some of the provincial notables and probably also the members of the lay fraternities of the temple were admitted to the enclosure and perhaps even to the Forecourt, but no one other than a priest ever penetrated more deeply into the temple. The ordinary man in the street had to content himself with the knowledge that these secret rites were for his ultimate benefit. He could, above all, join in the more public festivals and processions, and he could always avail himself of the free meals and rejoicings that always accompanied such festivals. That he did so with zest and gusto is recorded for us at more than one point on the temple walls. The following extract from a description of popular rejoicing at a festival is typical: *He stands opposite his city, he sees his temple enriched with all its provisions, his city in festivity, its heart rejoicing, all its lanes in gladness. . . . Its provisions are more numerous than the sand of the shore: all kinds of bread are in it as numerous as grains of sand, long-horned and short-horned oxen are more numerous than grasshoppers: A bird pool for birds is in it. Gazelle and oryx and ibex and their like, the smoke of them, it reaches heaven; the Green Horus-eye (wine) runs in its quarters like the inundation flowing forth from the Two Caverns; myrrh is on the brazier together with incense, it is smelled a mile away. It (the city) is bestrewn with faience, gleaming with natron, garlanded with flowers and fresh herbs. The prophets and the fathers-of-the-god are clad in fine linen, the king's suite are arrayed in their regalia, its youths are drunk, its citizens are glad, its young maidens are beautiful to see, rejoicing is round about it, festivity is in all its quarters, there is no sleep in it until dawn.*¹

We must not, however, take away the impression that the common man's only contact with his god and his temple was one of orgy and self-indulgence. Though not admitted to the temple, to many the temple, its services and its god were real, and were needed. A series of texts on the south gate of the temenos shows us that this belief in the god did exist, and that provision was made for the needs of the people to pray and

¹ E. iv. 3, 1-8.

make their offerings. There we read that *it is the standing-place of those who have and those who have not in order to pray for life from the Lord of Life;*¹ or *The place for hearing the petitions of all petitioners in order to judge Truth from Falsehood. It is the great place for championing the poor in order to rescue them from the strong;*² or again *The place outside which offerings are made at all times consisting of all the produce of the servants.*³ The texts just quoted demonstrate that immediately outside the south gate of the temenos the ordinary people were able at all times to come to pray, to offer petitions, to appeal for justice, and to lay their own humble offerings before the god. The temple was a living entity, the varied activities that took place within it were for the common good, and the man in the street was not blind to his god but in his humble way saw in him a help and a support.

¹ E. viii. 162, 16-17.² E. viii. 163, 1-2.³ E. viii. 164, 11.