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*Heh(u)* ("Infinity")  
A PERSONIFICATION OF AN ASPECT  
OF THE NILE INUNDATION IN THE TEMPLES  
OF DENDARA AND EDFU

*ABSTRACT:* The article takes a closer look at a specific feature of the Nile, and more in particular an aspect of its life bringing inundation known to the ancient Egyptians priests as Hehu ("infinity"). This facet of the inundation occurs over a dozen times among the gifts brought by offering bearers in hydrological processions on the soubassement in the Horus temple of Edfu, the Hathor temple of Dendara and the small Isis temple of Dendara between the reigns of Ptolemaios IV Philopator (221-204 BC) and Emperor Nero (54-68 AD). The study of the inscriptions accompanying this specific personification of the Nile inundation indicates the existence of patterns in the distribution of these texts not only within a single temple (e.g. from one chapel to the next), but also between temples over time and space. Many of the inscriptions also show the use of stylistic literary devices, such as alliteration or paronomasia.

*KEY WORDS:* Nile inundation - Hydrological procession - Dendara - Edfu - Ptolemaic and Roman era

The river Nile played a crucial role in bringing Eugen Strouhal for the very first time to the lands of Ancient Egypt and Nubia. The construction of the High Dam at Aswan, as decided upon by the Arab Republic of Egypt in the second half of the 1950s, would as a result permanently flood the Nile valley from Aswan to the area between the second and third cataract (creating the present day Lake Nasser) and in the process

submerge hundreds of archaeological sites. At the request of both the Egyptian and Sudanese governments, UNESCO launched in response an international rescue campaign with the aim to save monuments by for instance transferring temples to higher ground as well as by extensively documenting numerous sites via surveys and excavations. The Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology of the Charles

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University in Prague, under the directorship of Zbyněk Žába, participated throughout the 1960s in the UNESCO campaign, focusing on the area of Lower Nubia between Qertassi and Wadi Korosko and carrying out both an epigraphic and archaeological

survey. Eugen Strouhal directed the archaeological research, with a main focus on the sites of Wadi Qitna and Kalabsha-South (Strouhal 1984, 1989). Throughout their stay in Lower Nubia, the base camp of the Czechoslovak team was located on a catamaran,



FIGURE 1. Eugen Strouhal on the felucca that transported the Czechoslovak team members and the Egyptian workers from Quft between the base camp in Tafa and the so-called fortress of Qertasi in 1961 (Photo: Zbyněk Žába; courtesy of the Czech Institute of Egyptology, Charles University, photo 1961-V-Z60-09).

*Heh(u)* ("Infinity"). A personification of an aspect of the Nile inundation in the temples of Dendara and Edfu

the *Sadiq al-Nuba* ("Friend of Nubia"), floating on the Nile (Strouhal 1989: 123–131) (Figures 1 and 2). Next to the archaeological research, Eugen Strouhal also took care of the health of both the Czechoslovak team members as well as the Egyptian and Nubian workmen – among whom he became known as *doktour tawil*, "the tall physician" (Verner 2016: 35) (Figure 2).

Given the fundamental part the Nile played throughout Eugen Strouhal's time in Nubia, as well as his own essential role as a life-saver for all involved participants, it feels appropriate to dedicate a paper in his memory to a feature of the Nile, and more in particular to an aspect of its life bringing inundation (Eg. *Hꜥpy*) known as *Hehu* (*hḥ(w)*) or "infinity" – a facet regularly occurring in hydrological processions on the so-called *soubassement* of the Edfu and Dendara temples.

The *soubassement* – the lowermost area of a temple wall, often separated from the first register with scenes by a horizontal inscription – of most Egyptian temples

built during the Ptolemaic period (332–30 BC) and subsequent Roman era (30 BC – ca. 300 AD) contain long rows of offering bearers bringing in procession a series of goods, such as the produce of the field or specific regions but also aspects of the Nile inundation, to the main deity/deities of the temple. These processions might, at a first glance, give the impression of being merely repetitive, monotonously duplicating one offering bearer after another, row upon row. The inscriptions accompanying each figure contain however invaluable information, almost of an encyclopaedic nature, on the land of Egypt and its surrounding territories, providing for instance detailed descriptions of a geographic, cult-topographic and religious nature for each Egyptian *nome* or province. Jean Yoyotte (1994: 685–686) initially divided these *soubassement*-processions into four basic types: a) geographic, b) hydrologic and c) economic processions and d) a combination of male Nile gods (*hꜥpy*) alternating with female field goddesses (*sh.t*). The many contributions presented during the *Tagung*

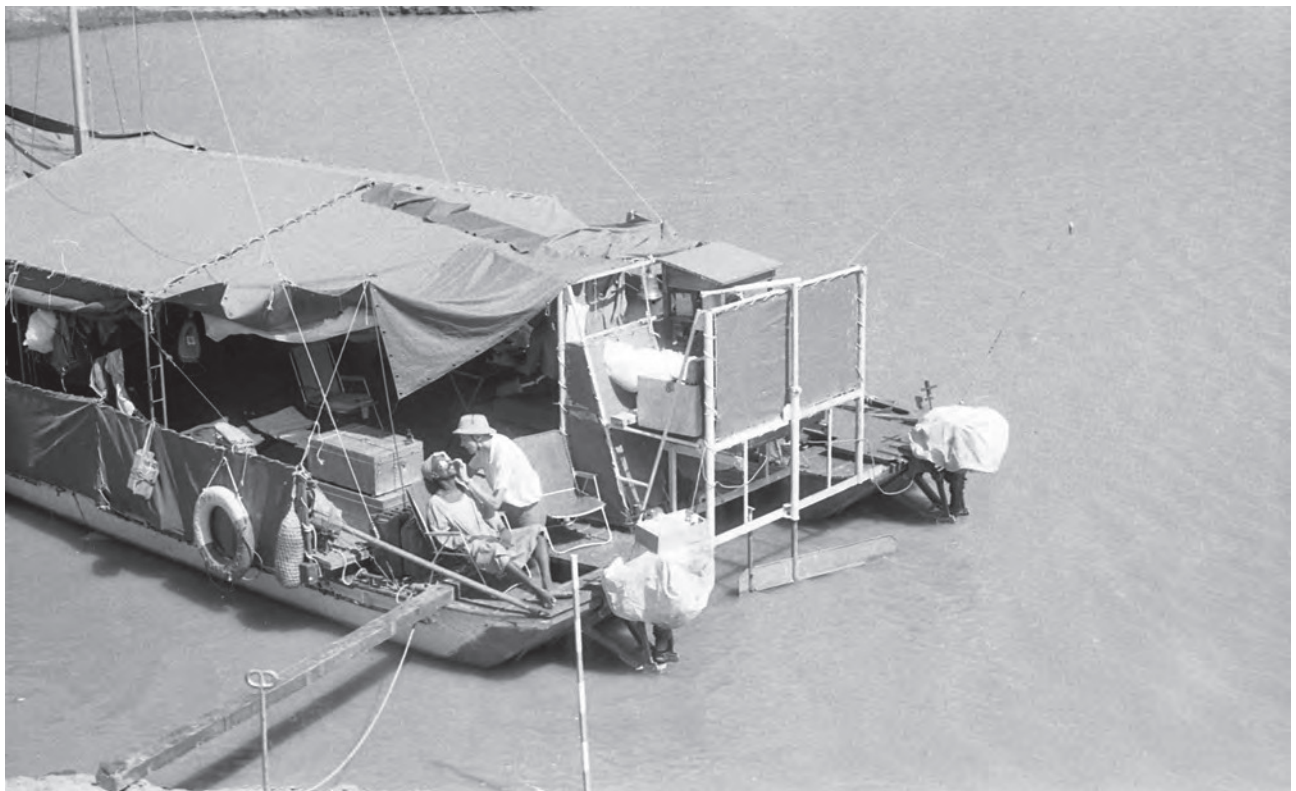


FIGURE 2. Eugen Strouhal treating the eyes of a Nubian in his "ordinance" aboard the *Sadiq al-Nuba* in 1961 (Photo: Jaroslav Novotný; courtesy of the Czech Institute of Egyptology, Charles University, photo 1961-VI-N23-59).

*Altägyptische Enzyklopädien: Die Soubasements in den Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, organised in 2012 at the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, as well as the subsequent publication of its proceedings (Rickert, Ventker 2014) clearly indicates that the situation is much more complex than initially envisaged by Yoyotte as, for instance, different types of procession are regularly combined into one, making it often difficult to generalise and categorise. Overall one can distinguish *soubasement*-processions containing geographic and/or cult-topographic information, with calendrical and/or chronological aspects, with a religious-cultic content, as well as processions providing products of all sorts to the temple (basic overview in Baumann 2014: 1050–1056). Among the later type one can also include what Yoyotte (1994: 685–686) identified as hydrological processions (now Tattko 2014).

In hydrological processions offering bearers bring a large number of personifications of different aspects of the Nile inundation to the main deities of the temple, providing the temple and its inhabitants with the produce of the land – the fertile soil for plants to grow was understood as a direct result of the inundation. Concomitantly the inundation, in all its aspects, was also closely associated with the notion of purity, and floodwater hence played an important role in purification rites in the temple. This type of procession is attested a total of 65 times – either as a stand alone or in combination with other types – in 17 temples of the Ptolemaic-Roman period throughout Egypt and Nubia (overview in Tattko 2014: 382–437). Over 50 individual personifications of a particular aspect of the Nile inundation are currently known by name, but in numerous cases the exact meaning of the Egyptian term designating a specific personification is problematic, if at all understandable (Coppens 2014: 470–471, Tattko 2014: 367–368). Among the exceptions one finds the personification known as *hh(w)* – *Heh(u)* or "Infinity". Kurth Sethe (1929: 64–65) and Penelope Wilson have suggested that this designation originally derived from the verb *hh* "to be remote", perhaps as a reference "to the remote source of the flood" (Wilson 1997: 674). By Ptolemaic times the term had become much closer associated with the noun *hh* ("infinity") and the god Heh. In the inscriptions of the hydrological processions the name of the *Heh(u)*-inundation is indeed almost always written with the sign of a seated god, either with his arms raised and a sun-disk (e.g. Document 2a) or a *renpet* or year-sign on the head (e.g. Documents 1b

and 2d), but especially holding a *renpet*-sign in each hand (e.g. Documents 1a, 1d, 1e, 2f, 2g); a clear reference to the god Heh as a personification of infinity. The offering of the symbol *hh* in a temple context is often associated with life and abundance (Borghouts 1977) – two concepts that are also profusely expressed in the inscriptions associated with this specific personification of the inundation (see further).

The *Heh(u)*-inundation ("Infinity"), together with three other aspects of the inundation that can be with certainty identified – namely *nwn* ("Primeval, chaotic water"), *kk(w)* ("Darkness") and *ni(3)w* ("Emptiness") (Tattko 2014: 367) – represent moreover the four male primordial deities of the Ogdoad of Hermopolis (Sethe 1929: 74–78). This foursome also played a central role in the Theban religious landscape of New Kingdom and Ptolemaic-Roman times (Klotz 2012: 174–185; Zivie-Coche 2009, 2013, 2015), as well as in other regions of the latter era (e.g. in Dendara: Coppens, Janák 2015). These four male deities, together with their female counterparts, also symbolise aspects of the primeval ocean from which the inundation sprang forth.

The *Heh(u)* or "Infinity" inundation recurs regularly among the gifts brought by offering bearers in the *soubasement*-processions in the Horus temple of Edfu (5 times, see *Table 1* and Appendix, Documents 1a–e), the Hathor temple of Dendara (7 times, Documents 2a–g) and the small Isis temple of Dendara (twice, Documents 3a–b), but it does not appear in any other hydrological procession elsewhere in Egypt, with the exception of a single occurrence in the Opet temple in Karnak (Document 4a).

The first occurrence of the personification dates to the reign of Ptolemaios IV Philopator (221–204 BC) and is located on the east wall of the sanctuary of the Horus temple of Edfu. The youngest known occasion when *Heh(u)* appears in a hydrological procession is during the time of Emperor Nero (54–68 AD), when the interior of the pronaos of the Hathor temple in Dendara received its decorative program. Of the 15 appearances of this specific personification (*Table 1*), 11 times it is part of a hydrological procession *sensu stricto*, thrice it occurs in a combination of a hydrological and agricultural procession – with male Nile offering bearers alternating with female field goddesses (i.e. Documents 1c, 1e and 2g) – and a single time, in the case of Karnak's Opet temple, it features in a geographical procession (Document 4a).

The overview of all occurrences of the personification in processions in *Table 1* indicates that

TABLE 1. Overview of the occurrence of the *Heh(u)* inundation in soubassement-processions in Egyptian temples of Ptolemaic and Roman times.

Temple	Text	Location	Date	Wall	Procession Type	U./L. Egypt	Position	Opposite
Horus temple, Edfu	1.a	Sanctuary	Ptolemaios IV	East	Hydrological	Upper Egypt	6 of 15	Keku ('Darkness')
	1.b	Chamber of the Nile	Ptolemaios VI	South	Hydrological	Upper Egypt	6 of 17	Keku ('Darkness')
	1.c	Pronaos exterior	Ptolemaios IX and Ptolemaios X	East	Agricultural and hydrological	Upper Egypt	23 of 30 and 12 of 15	ḥry
Hathor temple, Dendara	1.d	Enclosure wall interior	Ptolemaios IX or Ptolemaios X	West	Hydrological	Lower Egypt	10 of 18	Hapy
	1.e	Eastern doorway from court	Ptolemaios X	East	Agricultural and hydrological	Upper Egypt	17 of 24 and 9 of 12	no opposite scene
	2.a	Sanctuary	Cleopatra VII	East	Hydrological	Upper Egypt	6 of 14	Keku ('Darkness')
	2.b	Sanctuary	Cleopatra VII	West	Hydrological	Lower Egypt	12 of 14	mšty
	2.c	Wabet-chapel	Cleopatra VII	East	Hydrological	Upper Egypt	2 of 9	wgʒ
	2.d	Hall of the offerings	Cleopatra VII	South	Hydrological	Lower Egypt	5 of 25	wʾs
Isis temple, Dendara	2.e	Laboratory	Cleopatra VII	North	Hydrological	Upper Egypt	7 of 8	mwy
	2.f	Storeroom F'	Cleopatra VII	North	Hydrological	Upper Egypt	6 of 9	sʾr.-field
	2.g	Pronaos interior	Nero	East	Agricultural and hydrological	Upper Egypt	13 of 26 and 7 of 13	lbb
	3.a	Vestibule D / Offering hall	Augustus	North	Hydrological	Upper Egypt	11 of 15	Hehu ('Infinity')
	3.b	Vestibule D / Offering hall	Augustus	South	Hydrological	Lower Egypt	11 of 15	Hehu ('Infinity')
	4.a	Naos, exterior rear wall	Augustus	East	Geographical	Lower Egypt	8 of 16	not preserved

no obvious pattern exists regarding the exact position of *Heh(u)* in the processions, except for a predominance in appearing in an Upper (ten times) rather than a Lower Egyptian procession (five times). It is likewise impossible to establish a recurring pattern regarding the offering bearer *Heh(u)* is paired with in the procession on the opposite temple wall. Thrice the opposite personification is *Keku* ("Darkness"; Documents 1a, 1b and 2a), while once *Heh(u)* follows immediately upon *Keku* in a procession (Document 3a). *Keku*, like *Heh(u)*, represents another aspect of the aforementioned primeval ocean; an obvious association to the ancient Egyptian mind.

In case of the *Heh(u)*-inundation appearing in a combined procession (e.g. agricultural and hydrological procession), *Table 1* indicates first the overall position of the inundation in the combined procession and secondly its position in the hydrological procession *sensu stricto*.

In essence, the appearance of offering bearers bringing the *Heh(u)*-inundation does not differ fundamentally from any of the other figures within hydrological processions on the temple *soubassements*. All offering bearers are portrayed wearing the typical headdress of papyrus clumps (Lower Egypt) or lotus buds (Upper Egypt) on top of a long wig. A strand of the wig falls in front of the shoulder while its rear profile is often visible behind the shoulder. All figures are depicted with pendulous breasts and full heavy stomachs, and wear a large collar and a belt with stripes of cloth covering the genitals. The offering bearers hold with both hands a platter with two *hes*-vessels, covered by papyrus or lotus blossoms and separated by a *was*-scepter. Long stems, ending in a papyrus or lotus blossom and the sign of life (*ankh*), are falling down from their hands towards the ground. Occasionally the tray will be held in a single hand, while the offering bearer performs a libation with a *hes*-vessel in the other hand (Documents 2a and 2b). In a single instance the tray contains a variety of bread offerings and other products that are also mentioned explicitly in the accompanying inscription (Document 1e). The offering bearer can be preceded by an animal, such as a bull (Document 1d) or an oryx antelope (*oryx-gazella dammah*; Documents 2c and 2d).

In appearance nor position does the *Heh(u)*-inundation thus stand out from its many counterparts in hydrological processions. A study of the inscriptions accompanying this specific personification of the Nile inundation brings to light interesting patterns in the distribution of these texts not only within a single temple

(e.g. from one space to the next), but also between temples over time (visually expressed in *Figure 3*). Many of the inscriptions also show the use of stylistic literary devices, such as alliteration or paronomasia.

The inscriptions accompanying the offering bearers follow a basic pattern, very well known from a variety of similar *soubassement*-processions (e.g. Coppens 2014: 468 or Tattko 2014: 367). The inscriptions consist of two basic components: a first one providing information on the offering bearer and aspect of the inundation presented, and a second one characterizing the divine recipient. The latter component is in the case of the *Heh(u)*-inundation only present in the two inscriptions from the Isis temple in Dendara (Documents 3a and 3b).

The basic structure of the text is as follows:

- Introduction of the king: *ij.n* + royal titulary + *hr=k/t* ("The king has come to you").
- Identification of the divine recipient + epithets.
- Offering formula: *in=f n=k/t* ("so that he would bring to you") + personification of an aspect of the inundation *hh(w)* ("Infinity") + more specific information on the inundation.
- Characterization of the divine recipient: nominal sentence: *twt r=t* + epithets ("For you are ...").

The part of the inscriptions that provides specific information on the inundation is interesting from a stylistic point of view as well as for understanding the relation and possible transmission of parts of the inscription(s) within a single temple and between temples. In most inscriptions this passage is divided over 4 phrases, each one beginning with a verbal form (either a *participium* or a *sdm(n)=f* construction). In half of the inscriptions the *Heh(u)*-inundation is immediately followed by the verb *hh* as a *participium*, namely *hh(w)* *hh* ("The inundation that carries/transportes ...") - clearly a play upon words that sound alike (paronomasia; Documents 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2d, 2e, 2f, 2g). The recipients of what is transported by the inundation (always *nh* or "life") are almost always the *hmw* or "temple servants", illustrating the repeated occurrence of the first sound in a series of multiple words: *hh(w)* *hh* *nh* *n* *hmw* (Documents 2a, 2b, 2d, 2f, 2g). Other examples of alliteration in a single phrase are for instance *hsmn=f* *h.t r h<sup>c</sup>d3/hd* "It cleanses the temple from wrongdoing/impurity" (Documents 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c) or *hh ... htm.tw m hh n hhw* "The inundation ... equipped with millions upon millions (of offerings)" (Documents 2b and 2c). Next to the inundation itself (*hh(w)*), *h* is in

several texts the first sound of all following verbal forms at the beginning of each phrase. In the inscription accompanying the gift of the inundation on the east wall of the sanctuary of the Horus temple of Edfu (Document 1a) one finds for example:

*hh* - "The *Heh(u)*-inundation"

1) *hh* - "that carries/transportes ..."

2) *hw* - "that rushes ..."

3) *h3p.n=f* - "It (i.e. the inundation) conceals ..."

4) *hsmn=f* - "It cleanses ..."

The frequent occurrence of stylistic literary devices in these inscriptions is not accidental, but rather illustrates the deliberate act of their composers to choose - out of a plethora of possible synonyms - precisely nouns and verbs that start with the sound *h*, based on the Egyptian term of this particular aspect of the inundation - *hh(w)*. A similar situation has been observed by the author in a hydrological procession in the Chamber of Linen and Oils in Dendara (Dendara IV, 112-117, 129-134; Cauville 2001: 200-207, 222-227) where a clear link can be established between the name of the inundation and the offering it brings (e.g. the *W3d-wr* inundation presents *w3d.t*-linen or the *Stf* inundation brings *sty-hb* oil). In this perspective it is interesting to note that the names of the ten sacred oils were by Ptolemaic times standardised (Koura 1999: 289-290). This might indicate that, in this specific case, the offering (i.e. the name of a specific sacred oil) determined the name of the personification of an aspect of the Nile inundation associated with it and not the other way around. The subsequent alliteration follows upon the first letter(s) of the name of the offering, e.g. the *sty-hb*-oil was brought by the *Stf*-inundation *r swr st=t m sti=f* "to enlarge your seat with its scent/perfume" (Coppens 2014: 470-471).

The core information regarding the *Heh(u)*-inundation is already found in the oldest document from the sanctuary of the Horus temple in Edfu (Document 1a; reign of Ptolemaios IV Philopator). Interestingly enough a very similar text was engraved on the east wall of the sanctuary of the Hathor temple in Dendara a century and a half later (Document 2b; reign of Cleopatra VII). The information, following the expression *in=f n=k hh* ("so that he - the pharaoh - would bring you the *Heh(u)*-inundation") consists of the four phrases:

- hh nh n km3.n=f* (Dendara: *n hm.w=t*) - "that carries/transportes life for the ones that he created" (Dendara: "for your temple servants")

- 2) *hw* (Dendara: *hw=f*) *n-m3wt r bnd nb* (Dendara: *r h.t-ntr-šps.t*) - "that/it rushes anew to every field" (Dendara: "to the Temple-of-the-Venerable-One")
- 3) *h3p.n=f* (Dendara: *ii=f m*) *d.t=f r shb wdhw* - It conceals its body (Dendara: "it comes in its form/completely") to make festive the offering tables
- 4) *hsmn=f* *h.t r hcd3* - It cleanses the temple from wrongdoing

The main characteristics of the inundation can thus be described as a) bringing life to (a specific group of) people, b) inundating the fields, c) providing for the food to be placed upon the offering tables in the temple and d) cleaning the temple of all forms of impurity and wrongdoing. The same ideas are expressed in the inscription from the Chamber of the Nile in Edfu (Document 1b) and the offering hall in the Hathor temple of Dendara (Document 2d), with the added descriptive information on the actual inundation: "It rises up unto your districts, it rises over the river banks of your fields" (*hy=f r rww=k ts=f r wdb n tpw=k*) and "It embraces the arable land as much as it wants" (*hpt.n=f hnbw r mrr=f*) respectively. The results of the inundation are mentioned as "turning the fields green, refreshed entirely" (*sw3rh.n=f ww w3d.ti m d.t=s*, Documents 2g and 2f), but also as "It creates for you hundreds of thousands (of plants), that are firm without that they are becoming weak" (*m3=f n=k hfnw rwd iwty dcd.n.tw=s*n, Documents 1c and partly 2f). Two very similar inscriptions from the Hathor temple (Documents 2b and 2c) provide more specific information on the provisions for the offering table, stating that the inundation is "equipped with millions upon millions (of offerings)" (*htm.tw m hh n hhw*) and "it fills the temple" (*hn=f h.t*) with either "hundreds of thousands of offerings" (*hfnw n htp.w*) or "bread, meat and beer" (*t3-iwf-hnk.t*). The products for the offering tables are also mentioned in several inscriptions from the Hathor temple in Dendara - "it equips your abode with its provisions, it causes offerings to appear firmly upon your offering tables, redistributing the (bread) offerings to the Ennead" (*pr=f pr=t m wnmyt=f shpr.n=f iht rwd tp wdhw=t psš snw n psd.t*, Document 2e) - and the Horus temple of Edfu "abundant of excellent provisions, that provides provisions according to your decree" (*wr 3hw.t di k3w hft wd.t=k*, Document 1d).

On the basis of the expressions used in the four key phrases describing the effect and function of the *Heh(u)*-inundation, especially since at times very

similar Egyptian terms were used, it is possible to identify a core group that transcends a single temple (Figure 3). The basic text is found in both the sanctuary at Edfu as well as over a century and a half later in the sanctuary of the Hathor temple at Dendara (Documents 1a and 2a). The inscriptions from the Nile chamber in Edfu (Document 1b) and the offering hall in Dendara (Document 2d) are clearly variants on the same theme, for a large part using the same Egyptian expressions. In the Horus temple it is more difficult to establish clear links between the different inscriptions based on the expressions used. In most cases similar topics are expressed, such as references to the effects of the inundation or the offerings. The lack of clear links between individual inscriptions is not so surprising if one keeps in mind that the decorative program including all texts related to the *Heh(u)*-inundation were engraved on the walls over a period of many generations - from the reign of Ptolemaios IV Philopator to the era of Ptolemaios X Alexander.

In the Hathor temple one can more easily identify three distinct groups of texts that have both some phrases in common with the core group (Documents 2a and 2d), but also a set of expressions of their own. The first group, consisting of Documents 2b and 2c,

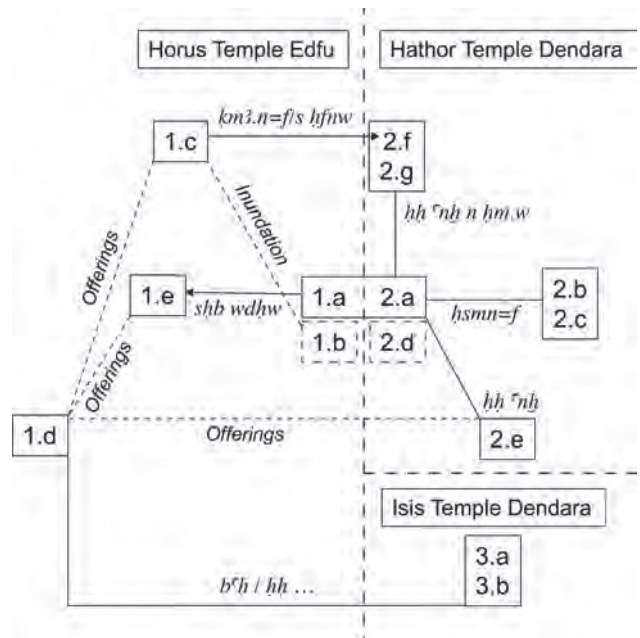


FIGURE 3. Schematic overview of the relation between individual texts based on the use of similar Egyptian expressions (uninterrupted line) or similar topics (interrupted line)

shares the expression  $hsmn=f h.t$  ("It cleanses the temple") with the core group, while using among themselves the phrases  $h̄tm.tw m h̄h n h̄hw$  ("Equipped with millions upon millions (of offerings)") and  $hn^c=f h.t$  ("It fills the temple"). The second group, Documents 2f and 2g, open, like the core group, with  $h̄h n̄h n h̄m.w$  ("that transports life for the temple staff"), and use between themselves the phrase  $h̄pt/sh̄n.n=f h̄nbw r mrr=f sw̄3rh̄ ww w̄3d.ti m d.t=s$  ("It embraces the arable land as much as it wants, turning the fields green, refreshed entirely"). A final stand-alone group is formed by Document 2e, sharing only the opening expression  $h̄h n̄h n$  ("that transports life to ...") with the core group (and in part with the opening phrase of the previous group of inscriptions), but nothing else with any of the other groups of texts. All of these inscriptions, with the exception of Document 2g (reign of Nero), were distributed over the temple walls during the time of Cleopatra VII. This group of inscriptions is much more coherent as a whole: the basic text in the sanctuary (Document 2a) was clearly copied from the oldest example in Edfu (Document 1a, temple sanctuary, reign of Ptolemaios IV Philopator) and used as an inspiration for all other associated texts within the Hathor temple of Dendara.

The inscriptions related to the *Heh(u)*-inundation in the Isis temple at Dendara (Documents 3a and b) follow a different pattern, containing a lot less information on the inundation and its effects. Only the use of the synonymous verbs  $h̄h$  ("that floods every place",  $h̄h s.t nb$ ) and  $b^c h̄$  "to flood" ("flooding for you the storerooms"  $b^c h̄ n=t̄ šn^c.t$ ) indicate a link with the other groups of text and perhaps in particular with Document 1d on the interior of the enclosure wall of the Edfu temple which states of the inundation that "it floods your abode" ( $b^c h̄=f pr=k$ ). Finally, the inscriptions found with the inundation on the Opet temple of Karnak has next to nothing in common with any of the texts from Edfu or Dendara (see appendix for translation).

The analysis of a single aspect of the Nile inundation, known as *Heh(u)* or "Infinity", eloquently illustrates the complexity involved for the ancient Egyptian editor-priests when composing the inscriptions to accompany a singular facet of the inundation. A process that was to be multiplied manifold as hydrological processions often consisted of over a dozen personifications of the Nile inundation. The individual inscriptions indicate the creation – on the part of the priests – of a deliberate interaction between the intrinsic meaning of the noun  $h̄h$  ("infinity, abundance, life") and the detailed information provided on the character and function of the inundation in the texts. Concomitantly the priestly composer intentionally selected nouns and verbs beginning with the sound  $h̄$  to be used in the inscriptions. The overview of the individual texts indicates moreover that the main characteristics associated with the *Heh(u)*-inundation (i.e. bringing life, inundating the fields, providing food for the offering tables and cleaning the temple of impurity) were shared not only within a single temple over many generations, but also between temples separated by hundreds of kilometers and a period of a century and a half.

The numerous gifts the *Heh(u)*-inundation, as well as any other personifications of an aspect of the Nile inundation in the hydrological processions, continuously bestowed upon the temple and its lands was in essence not very different from the processions of servants that regularly cover the walls of the last resting places of many Egyptians, providing the deceased with the produce of the fields to enjoy for eternity after death. As the river Nile itself provided the initial impetus for Eugen Strouhal to journey to Egypt and Nubia – the land and its inhabitants, old and modern, subsequently forming such an important part of his life – it is my sincere wish that the *Heh(u)*-inundation might continue to provide him in the afterlife with the produce of the life-bringing Nile *ad infinitum*.



**Appendix: Transliteration and translation of all relevant passages related to the *Heh(u)* ("Infinity") aspects of the Nile inundation in *soubassement*-processions**

**1. Edfu, Temple of Horus**

**Document 1.a.** Sanctuary, East wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Edfou I, 324, 9-11, pl. XII).

*ii.n* King *hr=k Hr-Bhdy ntr 3 nb p.t in=f n=k hh hh nh n km3.n=f hw n-m3wt r bnd nb h3p.n=f d.t=f r shb wdhw hsmn=f h.t r hcd3*

"The king has come to you, Horus Behdety, the great god, the lord of heaven, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for the ones that he created, that rushes anew to every field. It conceals its body to make festive the offering tables, it cleanses the temple from wrongdoing".

**Document 1.b.** Chamber of the Nile, South wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Edfou II, 251, 7-9, pl. XLIVc).

[...] *in=f n=k hhw hh nh n km3.n=f h3y n-m3wt r bnd [nb? ...] m nmt.t=f r dt=k hy=f r rww=k ts=f r wdb n tpw=k h3p.n=f d.t=f r shb wdhw=k hsmn=f h.t-Rc r hcd3*

"[...] so that he would bring to you the *Hehu*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for the ones that you created, inundating/rushing anew to (every?) field [...] in its course towards (the edge of) your fields. It rises up unto/towards your districts/regions, it rises over the river bank of your fields, it conceals its body to make festive your offering tables, it cleanses the Mansion-of-Ra from wrongdoing".

**Document 1.c.** Exterior of the pronaos, East wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Edfou IV, 368, 4-6, pl. CXI).

*ii.n* King *hr=k Hr-Bhdy ntr 3 nb p.t in=f n=k hhw ir htp.w hr ssm hnwt=f<sup>1</sup> m s3.t=k mnh 3.wy=f km3=f n=k hfnw rwd iwty dcd.n.tw=sn*

"The king has come to you, Horus Behdety, the great god, the lord of heaven, so that he would bring to you the *Hehu*-nile inundation, that provides the offerings and leads your canals in your fields with excellent arms, it creates for you hundreds of thousands (of plants), that are firm without that they are becoming weak".

<sup>1</sup> For this reading, see the parallel text in Edfou VI, 227, 1-2 and Kurth 2014: 402.

**Document 1.d.** Interior of the enclosure wall, West wall, Lower Egyptian procession (Edfou VI, 34, 1-3, pls. CLV; Kurth 2014: 54).

*ii.n* King *hr=k Hr-Bhdy ntr 3 nb p.t hnty ht-pw-n-Rc-Hr-3hty-m-sp-tpy in=f n=k hh wr 3hw.t di k3w hft wd.t=k bcf=f pr=k n pr im=f*

"The king has come to you, Horus Behdety, the great god, the lord of heaven, who is the first of the Palace-of-Ra-Harakhte-at-the-First-Time (i.e. Edfu), so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, abundant of excellent provisions, that provides/places provisions/nourishment according to your decree. It floods your abode with that what comes out of it".

**Document 1.e.** Eastern doorway from the courtyard to the ambulatory, East wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Edfou VI, 226, 3-5, pl. CLIX, Kurth 2014: 400).

*ii.n* King *hr=k Hr-Bhdy ntr 3 nb p.t in=f n=k hhw nb p3k.w shb wdhw hr w3h snw tp tt=k di=f ih.t nfr.t [...]*

"The king has come to you, Horus Behdety, the great god, the lord of heaven, so that he would bring to you the *Hehu*-nile inundation. Lord of the *paq*-bread offerings, who makes festive the offering table by placing the *senu*-bread offerings upon your offering table, who provides perfect offerings [...]"

**2. Dendara, Temple of Hathor**

**Document 2.a.** Sanctuary, East wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Dendara I, 38, 1-3, pl. XLVII; Cauville 1998: 64-65)

*ii.n* King *hr=t H.t-Hr wr.t nb.t Twn.t ir.t-Rc in=f n=t hh hh nh n hm.w=t hw=f n m3wt r ht-ntr-sps.t ii=f m d.t=f r shb wdhw=t hsmn=f ht-s3s.t r hcd(3)*

"The king has come to you, Hathor, the great one, the mistress of Dendara, the Eye of Ra, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for your temple staff. It rushes anew towards the Temple-of-the-Venerable-One, it comes in its form (i.e. completely) to make festive your offering tables, it cleanses the Temple-of-the-Sistrum from impurity/wrongdoing".

**Document 2.b.** Sanctuary, West wall, Lower Egyptian procession (Dendara I, 58, 1-3, pl. XLVII; Cauville 1998: 92-93)

*ii.n* King *hr=t H.t-Hr wr.t nb.t T3-rr in=f n=t hh hh nh n hm.w=t htm.tw m hh n hhw hn=f h.t-mni.t m t3-iwf-hnk.t hsmn=f ht-s3s.t r hcd*

"The king has come to you, Hathor, the great one, the mistress of Tarer, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for your temple staff. Equipped with millions upon millions (of offerings), it fills the Temple-of-the-Menat

with bread, meat and beer, it cleanses the Temple-of-the-Sistrum from impurity".

**Document 2.c.** *Wabet*-chapel, East wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Dendara IV, 236, 4-6, pl. CCCVI; Cauville 2001: 380-383)

*ii.n* King  $hr=\bar{t}$  *H.t-Hr* *wr.t nb.t Twn.t ir.t-R<sup>c</sup>* *in=f* *n=\bar{t}* *hhw m hpt m imht htm.tw m hh n hhw hn<sup>c</sup>=f h.t-nhm hr hfnw n htp.w hsmn=f ht-ntr=t r h(°)d(3)*

"The king has come to you, Hathor, the great one, the mistress of Dendara, the Eye of Ra, so that he would bring to you the *Hehu*-nile inundation, in rushing in/from the *Imhet*-cavern, equipped with millions upon millions (of offerings). It fills the Temple-of-Joy under hundreds of thousands (i.e. an infinite number) of offerings, it cleanses your temple from impurity/wrongdoing".

**Document 2.d.** Offering hall, South wall, Lower Egyptian procession (Dendara VII, 65, 13-15, pl. DCIV)

*ii.n* King  $hr=\bar{t}$  *S.t wr.t mw.t-ntr nb.t B.t-di in=f n=\bar{t}* *hh hh<sup>c</sup> nh n hm.w=\bar{t} hpt/shn.n=f hnbw r mrr=f shb.n=f wdhw=\bar{t} n hr.t-hrw r<sup>c</sup> nb sp-sn n 3b*

"The king has come to you, Isis, the great one, the god's mother and mistress of Iatdi, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for your temple staff. It embraces the arable land as much as it wants, it makes festive your offering tables with daily requirements every single day without cessation".

**Document 2.e.** Laboratory, North wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Dendara IX, 134, 13-15, pl. DCCCLXXX)

*ii.n* King  $hr=\bar{t}$  *H.t-Hr wr.t nb.t Twn.t ir.t-R<sup>c</sup>* *in=f* *n=\bar{t}* *hh hh<sup>c</sup> nh n tpyw-<sup>c</sup> pr=f pr=\bar{t} m wnmyt=f shpr.n=f iht rwd tp wdhw=\bar{t} psš snw n psd.t*

"The king has come to you, Hathor, the great one, the mistress of Dendara, the Eye of Ra, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for the ancestors. It equips your abode with its provisions (for a parallel of this expression, see e.g. Edfou I, 583, 7), it causes offerings to appear firmly upon your offering tables, dividing out/redistributing the (bread) offerings/cakes to the Ennead" (for parallels of the expression, see a.o. Edfou I, 463, 16-17 and 579, 17).

**Document 2.f.** Storeroom F', North wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Dendara XI, 164, 4-7, pl. 98 and 120)

*ii.n* King  $hr=\bar{t}$  *H.t-Hr wr.t nb.t Twn.t ir.t-R<sup>c</sup>* *in=f* *n=\bar{t}* *hhw hh<sup>c</sup> nh n hm.w hpt/shn.n=f hnbw r mrr=f sw3rh.n=f ww w3d.ti m d.t=s km3.n=s<sup>1</sup> hfnw n hm=\bar{t}*

"The king has come to you, Hathor, the great one, the mistress of Dendara, the Eye of Ra, so that he would bring to you the *Hehu*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for the temple staff. It embraces the arable land as much as it wants, it turns the fields green, refreshed entirely (*lit.*: "in its body"), it creates hundreds of thousands (of offerings) for your majesty".

<sup>1</sup> One would expect the suffix =f instead, but the writer might have been confused due to the occurrence of a suffix =s at the very end of the previous passage.

**Document 2.g.** Pronaos interior, East wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Dendara XIV, 96, 12-14; Cauville 2011: 132-133)

[*ii.n*] King [ $hr=\bar{t}$ ] *H.t-Hr nb.t Twn.t sšm nh n nh.w in=f n=\bar{t}* *hh hh<sup>c</sup> nh n hm.w=\bar{t} hpt/shn.n=f hnbw r mrr=f sw3rh ww w3d.tw m d.t=s*

"The king has come to you, Hathor, the great one, the mistress of Dendara, who conducts life to the living, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, that carries/transport life for your temple staff. It embraces the arable land as much as it wants, turning the fields green, refreshed entirely (*lit.*: "in its body")".

### 3. Dendara, Temple of Isis

**Document 3.a.** Vestibule D, North wall, Upper Egyptian procession (Cauville 2007: 227, 16-17, pl. 201; Cauville 2009: 210-211)

[*ii.n*] King  $hr=\bar{t}$  *S.t wr.t mw.t-ntr s3.t Nw.t in=f n=\bar{t}* *hh hh s.t nb [...]=f twt nb.t htp.w sdf3 [...]*

"The king has come to you, Isis, the great one, the god's mother and daughter of Nut, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation, that floods every place [...]. For you are the mistress of offerings, who provisions [...]".

**Document 3.b.** Vestibule D, South wall, Lower Egyptian procession (Cauville 2007: 255, 16-18, pl. 217; Cauville 2009, 246-249)

*ii.n* King  $hr=\bar{t}$  *H.t-Hr wr.t nb.t Twn.t ir.t-R<sup>c</sup>* *in=f* *n=\bar{t}* *hh r tr=f n rnp.t b<sup>c</sup>h n=\bar{t} šn<sup>c</sup>.t m nfr.w twt hnw.t nfr.t iwty m33 hr tp=s bi3ty.t wr.t m ntrw.t*

"The king has come to you, Hathor, the great one, the mistress of Dendara, the Eye of Ra, so that he would bring to you the *Heh*-nile inundation at its time of the year. It floods for you the storerooms with

perfect produce. For you are the perfect mistress, there is not seeing (anyone) above her, the marvellous one, (the) great (one) among the gods".

#### 4. Karnak, Opet temple

**Document 4.a.** Naos rear wall, East wall, Lower Egyptian procession, (Opet I, 192; Opet II, pl. 15; Paulet 2006)

wsjr wnn-nfr m<sup>3</sup>c-hrw nswt ntr.w jj.n King hr=k  
jn<sup>2</sup>j=f n=k h<sup>c</sup>pj h<sup>h</sup>.w hr w<sup>3</sup>y=f phr hp m<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>.w=f jw=f m  
w<sup>c</sup> r m<sup>33</sup> sfj.t=k sn.t=k <sup>3</sup>s.t m s<sup>3</sup> h<sup>c</sup>.w=k sbj.w=k hr m-  
h<sup>n</sup>w-n<sup>c</sup>.t shwn kn s<sup>3</sup>=k hnt mskt.t ntk d<sup>3</sup>j nwn nmt.t=f  
r m<sup>3</sup>nw shr sbj.w m jw=f

"Osiris-Wennefer, justified, king of the gods. The king has come to you, so that he would bring to you the inundation, (namely) the Hehu-nile inundation under its flood water, which turns around and hastens with its barques. It comes from w<sup>c</sup> (i.e. most likely the w<sup>c</sup>-m-h<sup>n</sup>w or 7<sup>th</sup> Upper Egyptian nome) to see the awe-inspiring majesty of you. Your sister Isis is the protection of your limbs, while your enemies fall in the interior of the chamber of disputing. You son is brave in Mesketet-bark/morning-bark. You are the one that traverses Nun, while your stride is directed towards the west; the one that makes the rebels fall when he comes".

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