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REMARKS ON THE CONCEPT OF WIND IN THE TEXTS OF THE TEMPLE OF ESNA

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the concept of wind in the texts of the temple of Esna. It presents a detailed analysis regarding the wind in the ancient Egyptian representation. It investigates the function of the wind in the different contexts and the deities who were linked to it in the temple of Esna.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على بعض الأفكار الخاصة والمتعلقة بالرياح كما ورت في ثنايا نصوص معبد إسنا ، كذلك تقدم تحليل حول رؤية المصريين للرياح وإبراز الأدوار المختلفة لها من خلال النصوص المختلفة، والمعبودات التي ارتبطت بها بمعبد إسنا .

KEYWORDS

Wind, Breath of life, Esna, Khnum Shasehotep

الكلمات الدالة

الرياح، نفس الحياة، إسنا، خنوم، شاس حتب.

INTRODUCTION

The scope of this paper is limited to the discussion of the concept of the wind at Esna temple. Two different terms indicated the wind, *t3w*¹ and *nf*.² They vary in nature between the hymns which were dedicated to Khnum, the main god of the temple and one of the minor deities, the offering texts³ and sometimes the processions of the Hapy.⁴ The study presents a detailed analysis of the wind in the ancient Egyptian representation by trying to know the original source of the wind and which way it blows in the ancient

¹ *Wb*, V 350 (12)-352 (29).

² *Wb*, II 250 (15-18).

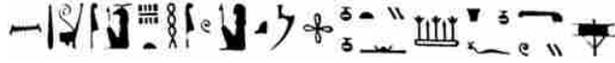
³ One of the most offerings linked to the wind in the temple is the plumed crown. Here the double plumes crown equaled with wind upon the head of god: see, *Esna* VI, 512. The plumes of this crown are depicted usually as the four forms which could indicate the four winds: see, *Esna* VI, 512, 1; Haikal, F., "An Unusual Ostrakon from The Beit El-kretleya Museum", in: *Hommages a' Jean-claude Goyon*, IFAO, 2008, 242-245.

⁴ As the source of the country's prosperity which comes annually with the inundation and life to all beings see, *Esna* II, 54, 16; *Edfou* VIII, 154, 10.

Egyptian mind. Furthermore it investigates the religious functions of the wind and the gods and goddesses connected with it.

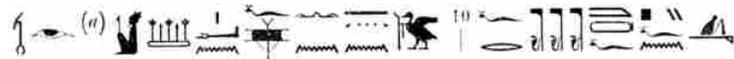
I. The original source of the wind and which way it blows

According to the following texts, the wind is usually blows by Khnum and Osiris as it began in the first time as a kind of combination of the attributes of Shu and Tathenen:



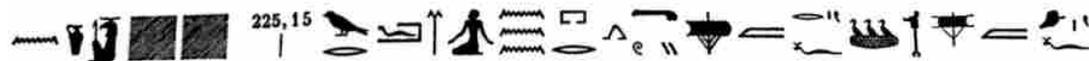
N Hnm-Pth-Šw km3 wnnw s3c.n.f t3w.

“O, Khnum–Ptah-Shu, who created the existences, who began the wind”.¹



Wsir s3c nfw nn t3 n km3.f r ntrw ntrwt m rn.f pfy n T3-tnn.

“Osiris, who began the wind, when there was no earth he created yet for the gods and goddesses in his name Tathenen”.²



N Hnm [...] wr pr m Nwn pr t3w m r.f mhw m fnd.f.

“O, Khnum [...], the great one who came forth from Nun, the wind came forth from his mouth (and) the northern wind from his nose”.³

A text from Edfu shows that the four winds came forth from the nostrils of Horus. The text reads:



Nswt-bity 3py t3w 4 pr.sn m fnd.f.

“The king of Upper and Lower Egypt, winged solar disc, the four winds⁴ came forth from his nose”.⁵

¹ *Esna* III, 225, 40. The same idea is attested at Kom Ombo with Sobek by saying: *ntk b3 Šw t3w di tp.f m 3ht* “you are ba of Shu, the north wind who shows himself in the inundation season”. See Gutbub, *Kom Ombo*, 1995: No. 192; De Morgan, *Kom Ombo*, No. 795.

² *Esna* VI, 494, 9-10.

³ *Esna* III, 225, 39, 40.

⁴ For the four winds which were represented in the Ptolemaic and Roman temples see, Gutbub, *Kom Ombo*, 328-353; De Morgan, *Kom Ombo*, 169, No. 217; De Morgan, *Kom Ombo*, 1909: No. 938; Gutbub, *Kom Ombo* 329, fig. 126a: Woodhouse, S., “The Sun God, His Four Bas and the Four Winds in the Sacred District at Sais: the Fragment of an Obelisk (BM EA 1512)”, in S. Quirke (ed.), *The Temple in Ancient Egypt. New Discoveries and Recent Research*, London, 1997, 133; Gutbub, A. “Die Vier Winde im Tempel von Kom Ombos”, in Keel, O. (ed.), *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst. Eine neue Deutung der Majestaetsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4*, Stuttgart, 1977, 328.; De Wit, “Les génies des quatre vents au temple d’Opet”, *Chron Eg* 32, 1957, 25-29.; Riggs, Ch., “Archaism and Artistic Sources in Roman Egypt. The Coffins of the Soter Family and the Temple of Deir el-Medina”, *BIFAO* 106 (2006), 315-332; Gutbub, A., “Die vier Winde in Ägypten”, in: Othmar Keel (ed.), *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, Eine neue Deutung der Majestaetsschilderungen in Jes. 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4*, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 84/85, Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, (1977), 328-353.

⁵ *Edfou* III, 19, 18: See also V, 268, 3-4.

Khnum of Esna is also regarded as a primeval *ba* that gave the first breath for himself by himself and then created the four winds of the four directions:



b3 t3w imn kh3 3t r hpr p3 ifd t3w im.f pr w^c nbw im.sn m bw mr.f w^c m rsyt ky m mht ky r^c-nb imntt i3bt.

“The *ba*, the hidden wind, strong in the moment of attack, who created the four winds from himself, all ones from them are coming forth to the place where he loves, one for the south, the other for the north and the other ones are daily for the west and east”.¹

Furthermore, an inscription shows that the wind came forth from the throat of Khnum:



Nhp k3w ntrw s3w t3 ndb hr ndb.wy.f pr.sn t3w mw m kbbt.f.

“Who fashioned the *kas* of gods, branch of earth, the whole earth is upon his two wings, they make the wind and water is coming forth from his throat”.²

As for the ceramicist, Khnum of Esna, he shaped the created beings on the pottery’s wheel. He took breath of life force as a wind coming forth from his mouth:



Wnnwt nb hpr sn m ^cwy.f hnm n.f wnnwt dr hr nhp.f ^cnh ^cnh.tw im.f t3w ^cnh n tp r.f

“All existences, he created them upon his two arms, he fashioned all the existences upon his pottery wheel, the living one who gives life from him, the wind of life is upon his mouth”.³

Two texts indicate the role of Khnum of Esna and a subordinate deity, Shuemhery, fastening onto and holding the wind in their fists in order to breeze all of beings. These two texts read:

¹ *Esna* III, 377, 2.

² *Esna* VII, 628, 11, 12.

³ *Esna* II, 70, 14, 15; III, 225, 14. I inclined that this sense is linked to pushing the wind by tailing the two lips together as it shown in the sign (D135) ⤴. This could be compared with a text from Dendera which describes Hathor reading pr TAw n anx im spty.s. “the wind which comes forth from her two lips”, see *Dendera* IX, 96,5. This force of life which the primeval god breathed it into the man to animate him is defined as the spirit of god in the holy Bible.;see *John* 20:22 and in *the holy qura'n* see, Alsadjda: 19.

In the version, which is attested only at Edfu temple, the text shows that the wind existed by the fire which came from the mouth of Horus Behdety. It reads:



Hr Bhdty ntr ʕ3 nb pt iry t3w m hh n r.f.

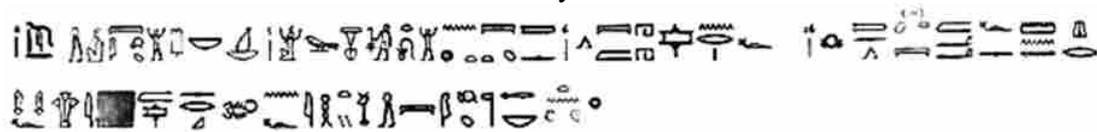
“Horus Behdety, the great god who created the wind by the flame of his mouth”.¹



Ir t3w m hh n r.f ʕhy pt n b3.f km3 t3 n shm.f.

“who creates the wind by the flame of his mouth, who raises the heaven up for his *ba* and creates the land for his form”.²

In other context comes with a subordinate deity from Edfu as:

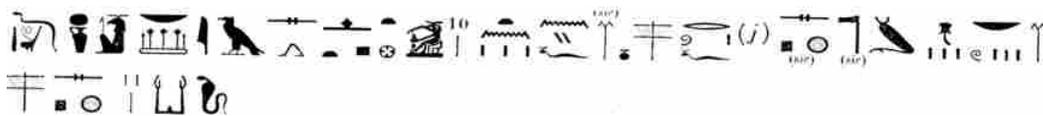


dd mdw in In-hry Šw s3-Rʕ k3 šwty nb wrt Hh wr sm3sw tw3 nnt ts pt m hh n r.f nswt-bity ts nnt m ʕwʕy.f smn t3 hr tbt.f hʕy m t3w srk n.f ihty In-hry Šw s3-Rʕ ntr ʕ3 nb tnw.

“Words spoken by In-Hery Shu, son of Re, lord of the white crown, Heh, the great one, who raises the sky, who lifts up the heaven from the breath of his mouth, king of Upper and Lower Egypt, who raises the sky on his two arms and places the earth beneath his sandals, who comes like the breath to make the throat breath from him, In-Hery Shu, son of Re, the great god, lord of lifetime”.³

II. The religious functions of the wind

1- Wind was the primeval power of the creation. Khnum of Esna and Khnum of Shasehotep were the creators of all the manifestations of life from the wind which came forth from their mouths.



dd mdw in Hnm nb Š3s-htp nhp.tn m nf n r.f shpr ʕwt nbw m t3w r.f shpr k3w nbw.

“Words spoken by Khnum, lord of Shasehotep⁴, who creates you from the wind which he breathes from his mouth, he creates all the animals from the breath of his mouth, he creates every *ka*”.⁵

¹ Edfou III, 19, 14; see also, Edfou VIII, 103, 15, 16.

² Edfou VII, 134, 14.

³ Edfou I, 314, 4-7.

⁴ This city is the capital of the 10th nome of Upper Egypt. It is located at the western bank of the Nile a few kilometers to the south of the modern city of Assyut. For more see, Saunerone, S., “Villes et legends d’Egypte”, *BIFAO* 62 (1962), 33-37.; Montet, P., *Geographie de l’Ancienne*, II, p.125.; Kurth, D., *Edfou VII*, 600; Edfou VI, 220 (1).

⁵ *Esna VI*, 510, 9-10. The same meaning occurred in *Esna III*, 328, 5. This concept is also known from Kom Ombo. The primeval Sobek was represented as: *tAw smsw sxpr wnnt TAw n anx [...]*; “the eldest



N Hnm nb Twnt rdi t3w s[hpr] wnnw nb hpr sn im.f.

“O, Khnum, lord of Iwnyt, who gives the wind in order to create all the existences, they are created from him”.¹



Nbi.n.f ʿwt m nf.n r.f.

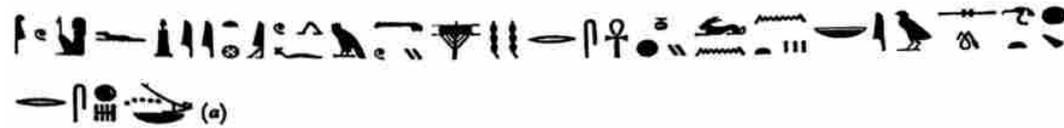
“He created the animals from the wind of his mouth”.²

2- Wind is a vital force which makes the plants to bloom or grow :



nf.f pw 3h3h km3h.

“This is his wind which makes the branches bloom”.³



Šw nb Twnt ii.f m t3w ndm r sʿnh wnnwt nb r srd 3hr r shpr prt nb

“Shu, lord of Esna who comes as a sweet wind to make all the existences live and to cause the field grows and to cause the creation of all the seeds”.⁴

3- Wind is the force which makes the grain ripen fully :



Nb sht hnm snt.f mht t3w (r) srd rwiw.

“Lord of the field, who created his sister and the northern wind to grow the straw”.⁵

wind which creates what exists, the wind of life [...]”. See Gutbub, *Kom Ombo* no. 160. SERaT Scene No. 210381.

¹ *Esna* III, 225,14.

² *Esna* II, 17, 32.

³ *Esna* II, 366.(6-8). ; V, p.172-n.(jj) .

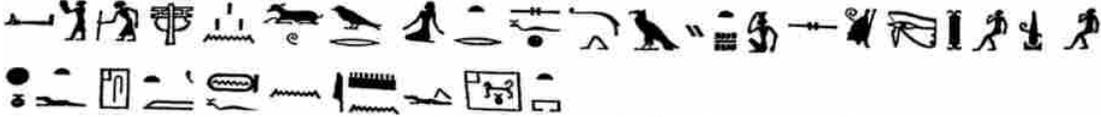
⁴ *Esna* III, 355, 6.

⁵ *Esna* III, 107, 2.



di hnm r ht ms s3 m sni r it.

“Who gives the breath to the body (womb) to o give birth the son in resemble of the father”.¹



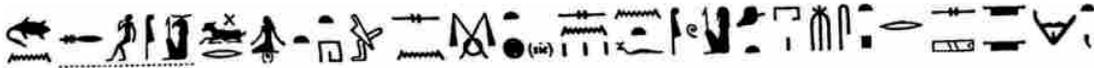
di t3w n iwrt r sfh 3tp.s swd3 n wdh hnt hwt.s m rn.f n Imn hnt hwt-nmit.

“Who gives the wind to the pregnant to loosen her load (pregnancy); he protects the weaned child before her mansion in his name Amun, the foremost of the bed”.²



Ir.i n.k t3w hnc tm3t.k m hpr.i pfy n Imn shd.i t3wy m hrw n mswt.k.

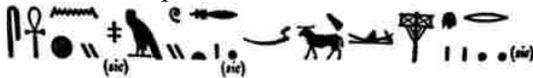
“I give you the wind with your mother in that my form of Amun, I illuminate the earth in the day of your birth”.³



snđ n Hnm iwrt thi.sn dmdt.sn ntf Šw hnt Pr-mst r sni k3t.

“Fear from Khnum, the pregnant who trespass their appointed time, he is Shu, the foremost of the house of birth to open the wombs”.⁴

6- Wind is the life force. Khnum of Esna is the god who breezes breathe to the fetus within wombs through the wind which he pushes from his mouth. Many texts point to this function:



s^cnh imy ht m t3w tp r.f.

“He causes what in the body (womb) survive by the wind upon his mout”.⁵

¹ *Esna* III, 378, 14; Cf. rdi TAw Hr msxnt, “who gives the wind in Meskhent”, *Phila* I, 175, 5, 187, 4, 194, 14. Urk VIII, 132k.

² *Esna* III, 377, 4.

³ *Esna* III, 300, 3.

⁴ *Esna* III, 366, 2.

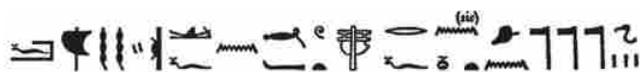
⁵ *Esna* III, 378, 17.



mn n.t sššt r sh^{cc} ib.t m hn.f shm r sš nšn n hm.t sh sn f3i sn t3w r shtp ib.t m hrt -hrw.

“May you receive seshest-sistra to rejoice your heart by its music, the sekhem sistra is to suppress the anger of your majesty; they hit and present the wind to rest your heart daily”.¹

10- The wind is the breath of life.



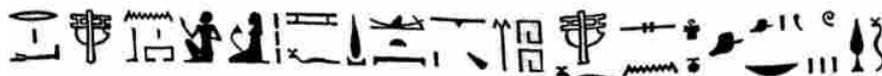
pr t3w ndm im.f n mht r fnd n ntrw rmt.

“The sweet wind of the north comes forth from him to the nostrils of the deities and people”.²



[ith].f fnd.sn m t3w im.f sns n hnmtj.sn m [...].

“He fills their nostrils with the wind (which comes forth) from him, their noses breathe from [...]”.³



rdi t3w n bw nb mr.f d3i pt t3 m hh.f sns n hnmtj nb im.f.

“Who gives the wind to the people whom he loves, who cross the heaven and the land on his wind, all nostrils breathe from him”.⁴



rs b3 n Šw t3w hnt Twnt t3w n nh skr rmt m nf pr m r.f

“Wake up, o the ba of Shu in front of Esna, the breath of life which makes the throat of people to breathe from the wind which comes forth from his mouth”.⁵

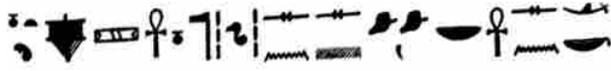
¹ *Esna* VII, 582, 5.

² *Esna* III, 378, 10.

³ *Esna* II, 17, 31.

⁴ *Esna* III, 268, B.

⁵ *Esna* III, 259, 5.



ntk t3w n ʕnh n ntrw rmt sns n hnty nb ʕnh.sn im.k.

“You are the breath of life to the deities and people, every nostril breathes and lives from you”.¹



t3w n ʕnh n nty nb.

The breath of life to all existences”.²



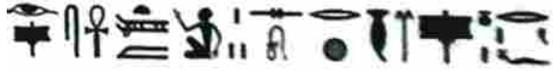
t3w n ʕnh n ntrw rmt Hr Bhdty ntr ʕ3 nb pt.

“The breath of life of the deities and people, Horus Behdety, the great god, lord of the sky”.³



Bhdty ntr ʕ3 nb pt t3w n ʕnh ʕnh im.f di ʕnh.

“Horus Behdety, the great god, lord of the sky, the breath of life from him, who gives life”.⁴



Tr t3w sʕnh tmw swrh m t3w r.f.

“Who creates the breath to make people live and refresh by the wind of his mouth”.⁵

11- Wind is the southern boundary of the reigning pharaoh. This aspect was revealed in the texts of Edfu:



hyn n.f rsy r-drw t3w mht .f r r-ʕ kkw.

“His southern boundary is to the limit of the wind; his northern wind is to the limit of the darkness”.⁶

¹ Esna II, 156, 17.

² Esna II, 180, B.

³ Edfou V, 147, 7-8; Cf. Edfou VIII, 31, 13

⁴ Edfou, V 211, 8; 259, 7; Cf. Edfou II, 24, 123.

⁵ Edfou III, 145, 10-11.

⁶ Edfou II, 24, 132; 35, 13; 95, 2-3.

CONCLUSION

The former texts indicate that wind was an invisible and vital power of the deity who produced the first creation from his spittle or the breath which came forth from his two lips. This mythical breath was the moving power for the creation of the universe to shape the creatures. The northern wind, which helps in the navigation of the sun-god's boat during his nightly journey, grants the continuity of the Egyptian cosmos. The god's breath was a vital force which helps babies and placenta to pass through the cervix in labor time. This philosophy reflects the mercy of the god who helps usually in hardship. This help came in the form of a sweet wind which touches the distressed hearts. The texts which have been studied above showed that the ancient Egyptian was expert with botany. The different texts represented wind as a force which makes the plants to be bloomed and grains to be grown.

Wind is linked to the underworld. It is the breath of resurrection as the first soul breathed into the baby. The same process can be imagined to provide the died boy with the breath of life to reawaken him up from the Death.

A few texts assert that the beautiful sound, which makes the deities cool and satisfied, is the wind which arises from the sistera. Wide documents used the term of wind to indicate the limit of the king's domain. In Egypt, the path of the wind seems to blow from one end of the earth to another. The texts depict the southern boundary with wind and the northern limit with the limits of darkness. The textual evidence which has been discussed, indicate that wind is strongly linked to Khnum, Menhet, Heka, Osiris, Amun and Shu-em-hery at Esna.¹. This relationship could be attributed to the nature and the function of the god as it is the case with the air-god Shu or the primeval feature as it is the case with the rest of the deities who caused to make the wind blows in the primeval time.

¹ She bears the titles nbt TAw lady of the wind, see *Edfou* IV, 109,5; nDmt TAw, sweet of wind, see, *Edfou* XV, 56.

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