GODS IN DWELLINGS

Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East

Michael B. Hundley
GODS IN DWELLINGS

Copyright © 2013 by the Society of Biblical Literature

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by means of any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to the Rights and Permissions Office, Society of Biblical Literature, 825 Houston Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 USA.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hundley, Michael B., 1978-
Gods in dwellings : temples and divine presence in the ancient Near East / Michael B. Hundley.
    pages cm. — (Writings from the ancient world supplements / Society of Biblical Literature ; no. 3)
    Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Temples—Middle East—History—To 1500. 2. Middle East—Religion.
I. Title.
BL1060.H86 2013
203'.509394—dc23

2013035222

Chapter 2

Egyptian Temples

Analysis begins with some of the most magnificent monuments that have survived from the ancient world, namely, the Egyptian temples, which have piqued the interests and inspired the imaginations of generations. Although it will include evidence from earlier and later temples, my examination will focus on the New Kingdom since its temples mark the height of the long tradition of Egyptian religious architecture and some of its most impressive structures remain more or less intact.¹

Although various factors favor an accurate reconstruction, limits to a complete understanding remain. Few of the original temples remain standing,² none of which are entirely intact, and many of which have been altered over the years by successive rulers.³ In addition, these remains largely hail from “Upper Egyptian sites where the single model is the New Kingdom type at Thebes, taken up in the Ptolemaic period for example at Edfu.”⁴ This type was built for festival processions, a model not shared by all.⁵ Other temples undoubtedly presented different forms

¹ As a brief overview of Egyptian chronology (after Emily Teeter, Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011], xv–xvii; see also Ian Shaw, ed., The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 479–83; see more fully Jürgen von Beckerath, Chronologie des pharaonischen Ägypten [MÄS 46; Mainz: von Zabern, 1997]), the Old Kingdom, consisting of dynasties 3–8, lasted from 2686 to 2125 BCE, the First Intermediate period (dynasties 9–11) from 2160 to 2055, the Middle Kingdom (dynasties 11–14) from 2055 to 1650, the Second Intermediate period (dynasties 15–17) from 1650 to 1550, the New Kingdom (dynasties 18–20) from 1550 to 1069, the Third Intermediate period (dynasties 21–25) from 1069 to 664, the Saite period (dynasty 26) from 664 to 525, the Late period (dynasties 27–31) from 525–332, the Ptolemaic period from 332 to 30 BCE, and the Roman period from 30 BCE to 295 CE. Because of its anomalous and short-lived nature, New Kingdom Amarna will not feature in our analysis. This omission is by no means an admission that it played no part in religious formation in the New Kingdom (see, e.g., Jan Assmann, The Search for God in Ancient Egypt [trans. D. Lorton; New York: Cornell University Press, 2001], 198–221).


³ Badawy, History of Egyptian Architecture, 177; Snape, Egyptian Temples, 28–29.

⁴ Quirke, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 76.

⁵ Ibid.
than those pervasive in the south, yet knowledge of these forms is unfortunately lost with the temples (e.g., the great temples at Memphis and Heliopolis). However, there is some evidence that the southern New Kingdom temples were part of a single architectural strand extending back at least to the Middle Kingdom and through the time of the last pharaohs and into the Greco-Roman period. For example, although little remains of the large temples built in the delta during the reigns of the last pharaohs (eleventh–fourth centuries BCE), enough evidence exists at Tanis to indicate that its general organization differed little from its Theban predecessors.

In addition to the archaeological difficulties, it is also difficult to differentiate cleanly between the mortuary and divine temples (the former primarily was dedicated to the cult of the deceased king and the latter to the cult of the various nonhuman deities of the Egyptian pantheon). Many scholars rightly hold that the traditional distinction, which sharply differentiates between temples of the gods and temples of dead monarchs, is problematic. "The function and symbolic characteristics of all Egyptian temples were both too varied and too intertwined to support this distinction." For example, the worship of (nonhuman) deities fea-

---


7. As noted (ch. 1 n. 18), the terms "pharaoh" and "king" will be used interchangeably; the latter will feature for the sake of consistency across cultures.

8. New Kingdom temples had the same basic elements as Middle Kingdom temples, albeit on a grander scale, while later temples carried on and in some ways added to the earlier New Kingdom tradition. The temple of Setet at Elephantine provides especially clear evidence of the gradual expansion of a temple from a tiny sanctuary between two rocks to a large temple centuries later (Werner Kaiser, Günter Dreyer, Robert Gempeler, Peter Grossmann, and Horst Jaritz, "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine: Siebter Grabungsbericht," MDAIK 33 (1977): 64–83). Regarding the continuity, see, conveniently, Wightman, Sacred Spaces, 99–104, 126–43. See also, e.g., Dieter Arnold, Die Tempel Ägyptens: Götterwohnungen, Kultstätten, Baudenkämper (Zurich: Artemis & Winkler, 1992); Byron E. Shafer, ed., Temples of Ancient Egypt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); on the temple of the last pharaohs, see further Arnold, Temples of the Last Pharaohs (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).


tasures prominently in mortuary temples, while mortuary elements were also occasionally present in the divine cult temples. However, the categories may be too entrenched to casually eschew and may remain useful. The signifiers “divine” and “mortuary” temples developed for a reason, and even if the clear-cut differentiation they presume is artificial, real differences remain. The present study focuses primarily on the temples of the Egyptian deities, since god temples and the gods in those temples are our explicit interest. Nonetheless, given the overlap, it also draws from the related mortuary temples.

STRUCTURE

The “Standard” Temple Plan

In the New Kingdom, the so-called standard temple plan emerged in the Theban region. From the most elaborate, the sacred precinct of Amon-Re at Karnak (figs. 2.1 and 2.3), to the smaller and more typical temple of Khonsu at Karnak (figs. 2.2 and 2.3), most temples adhered to the same general design. It was characterized by several distinctive features: an entrance pylon, a walled courtyard, a hypostyle hall, an offering room, and a sanctuary, many of which were incorporated into a single, large, direct-axis, and symmetrical structure.

---

12. See, e.g., Teeter, Religion and Ritual, 57. The term “divine” temple is also problematic since Egyptian kings were often deified upon death.

13. Quirke proposes to amend “mortuary temple” to “temple of the royal cult” (Ancient Egyptian Religion, 81), while Shafer offers the designation “royal cult complex” (“Temples, Priests, and Rituals: An Overview,” in Temples of Ancient Egypt, 4).

14. Notably, the two temple “types” have different names (“mansion of the god” and “mansion of millions of years”) and tenures (though there is little indication that many mansions of millions of years remained in use after their proprietor’s death; Wilkinson, Complete Temples, 25).


17. Badawy, History of Egyptian Architecture, 176–80; Snape, Egyptian Temples, 29;
Fig. 2.1. The three prominent sacred precincts at Karnak (for Amun, Mut, and Montu), constructed primarily during the New Kingdom. Processional avenues between precincts were lined with ram-headed sphinxes. In addition, a number of smaller temples to kings and pharaohs appear, including the temple of Khonsu in the top right corner of the Amun precinct. From Wightman, Sacred Spaces, fig. 2.18.
KARNAK, TEMPLE OF KHONSU

Fig. 2.2. The well-preserved temple of Khonsu at Karnak, which characteristically displays the pylon gateway leading into the court, the small hypostyle hall leading into the temple core, the bark chapel, the vestibule or offering room, and the sanctuary at the rear (room 9). Note how space becomes increasingly smaller as one moves toward the sanctuary. Groundplan from The Temple of Khonsu, Vol. 1: Scenes of King Herihor in the Court (OIP 100; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1979), 57. Sideview from Wightman, Sacred Spaces, fig. 2.15.
Fig. 2.3. Groundplan of the temple of Amon-Re at Karnak, the largest ancient Egyptian temple, which grew by a slow process with the addition of new courts, pylons, and the hypostyle hall westward (with the majority of work completed during Dynasties 18 and 19). From Wightman, Sacred Spaces, fig. 2.19.
Many temples also were surrounded by several subsidiary structures or quaternary spaces, such as a sacred lake (fig. 2.1), kitchens, workshops, administrative buildings, magazines, storehouses, and priestly residences. The larger sacred precinct, with temple and auxiliary structures, was often surrounded by mud-brick walls, which were constructed with alternating concave and convex sections (especially in the Greco-Roman period but also presumably in the New Kingdom).


In the processional temple model, as at Karnak, the sacred precinct began further out at the Nile or a canal connected to it with a landing quay. The processional paths that connected the landing quay to the main entrance of the temple and occasionally connected temples by land (e.g., Karnak to Luxor) were frequently lined with sculptures. The sphinx, with a leonine body and a human or other animal head, was an especially common form (fig. 2.4).20

The pylon is noted as the most distinctive feature of Egyptian architecture.21 It consisted of a pair of massive trapezoidal towers connected by a bridge decorated with solar images, forming a gateway that marked the entrance to the larger tem-

---

*Amon-Re*, 29–33. Since the walls were constructed of mud-brick, little evidence remains of earlier walls.


Fig. 2.6. View of several columns of the hypostyle hall of the temple of Amon-Re at Karnak, completed by Ramesses II in the thirteenth century. Photo by the author.

ple structure.\(^{22}\) Flag poles often framed the entrance portal.\(^{23}\) Especially in larger temples, obelisks were “often erected in pairs before the temple entrance proper [i.e., the outer pylon] and only came to be enclosed within the temple form as the precincts grew and new pylons were added.”\(^{24}\) In several larger temples, these obelisks were accompanied by colossi, gigantic statues of the kings,\(^{25}\) which together abutted the entrance pylon (as at Luxor; fig. 2.5).\(^{26}\)

Crossing the threshold of the pylon, one stood within the temple complex, enclosed on all four sides by walls and thus part of a single physical structure. This structure was subdivided into various sections by walls and doors (e.g., the

---

22. Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 5. Occasionally, as in the Amun temple of Karnak with six pylons in succession, multiple pylons were constructed by successive rulers.


25. Ibid., 59–60.

Fig. 2.7. Reconstructed cross-section of the hypostyle hall. Note the much larger central columns along the processional path, which “bloomed” in the sunlight coming in through the lattices, unlike the smaller columns with closed bud capitals. From Wightman, *Sacred Spaces*, fig. 2.20.
Khonsu temple at Karnak; fig. 2.2), with all but the court roofed. The first unit was a large open-air court, referred to as the “forecourt” since it stood directly before the roofed temple building and was surrounded on all four sides by the walls of the temple complex. This forecourt was “usually of the same width as the hypostyle hall and on a rectangular plan. [It was] bordered on one or more of its sides with a portico of columns or pillars, with abutting Osiris statues of the pharaoh and other royal and private statues. The statuary here was smaller and less obtrusive than that outside the pylon.

Progressing inward, the next unit was the hypostyle hall, which lay directly behind the open-air court. Its entrance, and indeed the threshold of the roofed temple building, was marked by another gateway set along the same axis as the pylon, yet smaller and less obtrusive. This hypostyle hall, so designated because of the often larger central columns, was usually covered and broader than it was deep. Inside, the viewer encountered multiple columns arranged symmetrically throughout the hall, except along the central processional axis (figs. 2.6 and 2.7).

Proceeding through another monumental doorway, one would encounter the temple core, incorporating primary, secondary, and tertiary spaces (fig. 2.8). At the heart of the temple core along the central axis lay the sanctuary, which housed the divine statue in the small enclosed shrine, i.e., the inner sanctuary.

27. Physical breaks in the larger structure (e.g. in the Amun temple at Karnak) were often the result of additional building phases.
28. In Egyptian the terms used for the court varied depending on architectural style and column type (Patricia Spencer, The Egyptian Temple: A Lexicographical Study [London: Kegan Paul, 1984], 63-89; Wilkinson, Complete Temples, 62).
32. With the continual expansion of the temple precincts, e.g., in the Amun temple at Karnak, the large statues standing in the outer court today once stood outside the temple’s first pylon.
34. Wilkinson, Complete Temples, 65. Although not entirely intact, evidence of covering exists in the temple of Amun at Karnak, the temple of Seti I at Abydos, and at the later temple of Khnum at Esna.
35. The doors were made of wood and thus no longer exist. However, there is ample, especially textual, evidence of their existence (see, e.g., Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 179–82, 205–11).
36. The temple core consisted of the area around the temple’s central sanctuary, which housed the divine cult image.
37. The shrine consisted of two parts: a stone outer enclosure and a smaller double-doored wooden enclosure within it that housed the cult image. At times, there were multiple sanctuaries for multiple deities, commonly grouped in a triad (e.g., the bark-chapel of Seti...
Fig. 2.8. View from the temple core of the sacred precinct of Amon-Re at Karnak looking outward along the central, processional axis of the hypostyle hall. Note the height of the columns and the darkness of the temple core. Photo by the author.

In contrast to the hypostyle hall, the sanctuary was often longer than it was wide. If the cult included a processional element, there was often “a ‘bark chapel’ with a pedestal to support the ‘bark’ or ship-shaped litter with its cabin,”38 which either occupied a separate room or, in smaller (especially later) temples, the same room as the primary cult image (fig. 2.9).39 The sanctuary was frequently surrounded

---

II at Karnak). Although ostensibly an Osiride temple, the temple of Seti I at Abydos was unique among preserved temples in having seven sanctuaries for the seven deities and one for the deified pharaoh himself (Badawy, History of Egyptian Architecture, 214).

by various auxiliary rooms (tertiary spaces), including cult rooms for other deities, offering chambers, storerooms for cultic objects, and treasuries. In several temples, such as the Khonsu temple at Karnak, a vestibule sometimes containing an offering table stood between the bark chapel and the sanctuary.

Finally, elevation played a significant role in several temples. This tendency was more pronounced in later periods yet already existed in the New Kingdom. For example, in the temple of Khonsu at Karnak, a raised platform, leading up to the porch, separated the temple core from the court. In several cases, the aisles narrowed and floors sloped upwards, while the ceiling within the temple complex descended, so that in the sanctuary the ceiling was at its lowest while the floor was at its highest (fig. 2.2).

42. See the temple groundplan in fig. 2.2 and The Temple of Khonsu, 1:57, and pl. 2.
Adornment

Although the temple façades now display a monochromatic austerity, in ancient times the Egyptian temple was awash with color. More than mere decoration, color carried rich symbolic associations that could vary according to the context. For example, green was associated with fresh vegetation and by extension vigor and regeneration. Depicting Osiris with green skin thus served to signify his resurrection or regeneration. Likewise, blue was associated with the night sky, the primordial waters from which the sun arose each day, and the especially precious lapis lazuli. Drawing on these associations, from the Eighteenth Dynasty onward Amon-Re was depicted with bright blue skin.


46. In other contexts Osiris had black skin.

47. “The color referred both to the primordial waters of lapis lazuli and to the skin of the
Fig. 2.10. Images of the king smiting his helpless enemies on the pylon at the Greco-Roman Philae Temple. Photo by the author.

Although most remaining shrines, like the temples in which they appear, are austere stone enclosures, in antiquity they were more lavishly adorned befitting their divine resident. For example, “one is described as having a ceiling and walls of gold, a floor of ‘pure silver,’ door leaves of hammered copper, and ‘figured images in fine gold,’” while another from Dynasty 26 is described as “one block of granite, [with] the august shrine of electrum, ornaments, divine amulets, [and] all sacred objects were of gold and silver, and all precious stones.”

Reliefs and inscriptions were practically ubiquitous in the Egyptian temple complex. For example, from the time of Thutmose III, observers of the pylons were often met by an enormous relief of the pharaoh smiting his helpless enemies

---

48. See Teeter, Religion and Ritual, 43 and the references cited therein.

49. There is also some evidence that reliefs were plated with precious metals (see briefly Golvin and Goyon, Karnak, Ägypten: Anatomie eines Tempels, 125).
before the god of the temple (fig. 2.10).\textsuperscript{50} Ramesses II expanded on this theme at Luxor, displaying in relief a “full pictorial and textual account of his prowess in the battle of Qadesh.”\textsuperscript{51} In addition, although not present on the pylon itself, ritual scenes become more prominent on the outer walls from the time of Ramesses II onward.\textsuperscript{52} These scenes were likely connected with popular worship, serving as access points to the deities who were otherwise off limits in the heart of the temples.\textsuperscript{53}

Although they may seem unduly repetitive to the modern observer, a closer examination reveals that each detail in the reliefs was purposeful,\textsuperscript{54} often relating to the function of the various rooms and arranged with respect to locational markers:\textsuperscript{55}

Upper Egyptian gods, symbols, and crowns appear in the southern half of the temple, and Lower Egyptian elements are found in the northern half. Scenes of processions, boating, or wars follow the same geographical direction as their actual prototypes. Asian enemies are attacking from the north of the temple entrance, African enemies from the south. Offering bearers move from the entrance to the sanctuary, the divine barque is carried from inside to the court. Outside walls were often used for public statements, such as offering and festival lists and royal immunity edicts ... Barque processions and feasts for the gods, such as the Luxor festival in the Luxor temple, appear properly oriented in the courts and hypostyle halls. Representations of offering bearers marching from the temple gate into the sanctuary supply the altars with offerings. Scenes of the daily maintenance of the cult image surround the walls of the statue sanctuary.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{50} Baines, “Palaces and Temples,” 313. See further Sylvia Schoske, “Das Erschlagen der Feinde: Ikonographie unnd Stilistik der Feindvernichtung im alten Ägypten” (2 vols.; Ph.D. diss., Heidelberg University, 1982); Emma Swan Hall, The Pharaoh Smites His Enemies: A Comparative Study (MÄS 44; Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1986).

\textsuperscript{51} Quirke, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 78. Ramesses III even went so far as to emblazon pictures of himself fighting the enemies of his namesake, Ramesses II, which Ramesses III himself never fought. Inscriptions accompanied the battle reliefs, indicating that the campaigns were carried out for the sake of the king of the gods and not the kings themselves (see, e.g., the annals of Thutmose III; Lichtheim, AEL 2:29–35). For other examples, see Dagmar Stockfisch, “Bemerkungen zur sog. ‘libyschen Familie,’” in Wege öffnen: Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach (ed. M. Schade-Busch; AAT 35; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 315–25.

\textsuperscript{52} Constance S. Heinz, Die Feldzugsdarstellungen des Neuen Reiches: Eine Bildanalyse (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001).

\textsuperscript{53} See, e.g., Brand, “Veils, Votives and Marginalia,” esp. 57–64.

\textsuperscript{54} Quirke, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 80.

\textsuperscript{55} See esp. Arnold, Wandrelief und Raumfunktion.

\textsuperscript{56} Arnold, “Egyptian Temples,” in OEANE 4: 177.
Within the sanctuary, reliefs of the king faced inward presenting offerings to the god(s), who faced outward toward the king. In several cases, pictures and inscriptions represented the gods returning blessings to the offering pharaoh. Within the storerooms, walls often depicted the kinds of offerings stored therein, and slaughter-rooms were designated by scenes of slaughter.\textsuperscript{57} Even seemingly mundane royal epithets were often purposeful. At Karnak, for example, the inscription that the king “is beloved of Ptah” marked the route taken by the offerings from the main complex to the small sanctuary of Ptah.\textsuperscript{58} Symmetry also played a key role, as in the hypostyle hall of Seti I and Ramesses II at Karnak, where the scenes followed a careful pattern in which “each scene must complement those around it and those facing it directly and diagonally across the hall.”\textsuperscript{59}

In addition to the ubiquitous reliefs and inscriptions, various architectural elements were artistically crafted. For example, natural elements predominated in the hypostyle hall, such as the forests of papyrus or lotus columns and the stars adorning the ceiling,\textsuperscript{60} while offering scenes featured in the sanctuary (fig. 2.11).

\textsuperscript{57} Cf. Badawy, \textit{History of Egyptian Architecture}, 182.

\textsuperscript{58} Quirke, \textit{Ancient Egyptian Religion}, 80.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60} The stars were especially prevalent in the Ptolemaic temples, yet were still present in
USE

On a basic level, the temple was "intrinsically the 'house of god' and not a gathering place for the congregation."61 This was reflected in the terms used to describe the temples.62 Pr can be roughly translated as "estate."63 When referring to the divine estate, pr designated the totality of the deity's possessions, both in terms of the land and the people who made their livings from it.64 Thus, it included everything within the outer wall of the divine sphere as well as various elements owned by the deity, both in the temple vicinity and further afield. Hwt nfr refers more specifically to the god's house,65 the temple complex, within which the deity's image was kept.66 Both terms intimate that the temple was the deity's house, its residence amid its larger estate, much akin to that of a contemporary monarch.67 As the god's residence in the midst of human community, the temple was the point of contact between human and divine and the locus of divine service, performed by the kings in the reliefs but primarily by the priests in reality.

From the temple structure, we may also identify the function of some of its constituent parts. In addition to serving as an impressive introduction to divine space, the sphinxes outside of the divine compound extended divine space, forming a clear passage along which processing deities could travel without ever leaving

---


62. The Egyptian temple was unique in that the purpose of the structure and its various rooms were inscribed on the walls of the temple. Thus, much of the "use" section is explicitly dictated by the structure and may be somewhat repetitive.

63. Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 14–20, 27.

64. This included the priests as well as peasants, shepherds, miners, and artisans (Assmann, The Search for God, 28–29).

65. Perhaps it could be more accurately rendered "cult center." Hwt likely originated in the mortuary sphere to refer to the cult center of the king (Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 21–27, 43–55).

66. Ibid., 46, 55; Assmann, The Search for God, 28–29. See also r-pr (Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 37–42). Once again, the temple complex refers to the primary roofed temple building and the walled, unroofed court and includes the hypostyle hall and the sanctuary.

67. For further implications of divine anthropomorphism, see the ideology section. The names of the temples and their various parts likewise could express the quality of the building or indicate the primary cultic recipient. For example, the temple of Thutmose III at Deir el Bahri was called "Most Splendid," while the northern part of the hypostyle hall at Karnak built by Seti I was called "Temple of the Son of Mernamun in the house of Amun" (Badawy, History of Egyptian Architecture, 155-6).
divine space. The walls and gateways throughout the complex served respectively to separate the divine sphere into significant spaces and to grant access to those spaces. Each of the other structures in the divine precinct contributed to divine service and/or appropriate contact with the divine and together they indicated the broader scope of the temple. In addition to their protective and propagandistic role, statues and the reliefs of deities and of the king also served as objects of veneration. Visible from the gate and on the exterior walls, they functioned as access points to the hidden deities or as accessible manifestations of deities themselves because the common person could get no closer to them.

The open-air court, which seems to have been a liminal zone, carried its own purpose. In processional temples like Karnak and Luxor, courtyard reliefs are dominated by festival scenes, which include processions of the divine bark, indicating that festivals were the court’s primary purpose. As such, it was likely a gathering place for the common people, at least during festive occasions. In addition, several New Kingdom inscriptions on the walls and statues in the courts indicate that petitions of people were heard at these locations. Furthermore, Gee suggests that a term used for the forecourt (\textit{wb3}) implies that the area was open to the public, instead of the common conception of being open to the sky. It also seems to have been a gathering place for the statues of prominent private individu-

68. See Spencer, \textit{The Egyptian Temple}, 179–220, 260–92 for the multiple terms used to describe doors and walls.


70. Regarding terms for court, of which \textit{wsh} is perhaps the most frequent, see Spencer, \textit{The Egyptian Temple}, 4–13, 63–98.


als, whose inscriptions often implored passersby to pronounce their names and to recite the appropriate offering formula. The presence of these statues indicated that the individual represented was in some way present. In fact, texts such as the Harris Papyrus indicated that statues depicting or describing daily offerings were functionally equivalent to an individual presenting them himself. The presence of scenes of procession and a wayside chapel, as at Karnak, also suggest that the procession of the divine bark passed through the courtyard.

Although wall reliefs and inscriptions abound in the hypostyle hall, it remains difficult to identify precisely the purpose of the hypostyle hall beyond its role as mediating space.

Quite dissimilar architectural backgrounds and building concepts defined the variety of forms brought forth and whereas the function of each room of the Egyptian temple can normally be determined from its name and from the scenes on its walls, the hypostyle hall has no specific name, nor is there a specific repertoire of scenes.

Despite these difficulties, the wall reliefs allow for a general reconstruction, which predominantly portray offering and ritual scenes focusing on the royal cult. Processional scenes also appear in the Great Hypostyle Hall of Karnak and perhaps also in the festival hall of the Akhmenu at Karnak. However, although often associated with processions, none of the other Theban hypostyle halls depict processions in their reliefs. Instead, processional scenes, as noted above, feature in the open courts. In fact, since the later roofed festival hall of the Akhmenu and the Great Hypostyle Hall were originally open courts, “it becomes evident that scenes of barque processions belong to the open court and not to the hypostyle

75. Wilkinson, Complete Temples, 62–63. By placing their statues in the courts, individuals were careful to situate them where they received the most traffic, especially during festival times (Arnulf Schlüter, Sakrale Architektur im Flachbild: Zum Realitätsbezug von Tempeldarstellungen [AAT 78; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009], 485). For evidence from the Old and Middle Kingdoms, see Alexandra Verbovsek, “Als Gunstzeichen des Königs in den Tempel gegeben...”: Private Tempelstatuen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches (AAT 63; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004).


78. Refai, “Great Hypostyle Hall,” 393.


Thus, it would seem that the hypostyle hall was especially associated with exalting the king and in the case of the Amun temple of Karnak was also an assembly point for the divine barks as they waited to process. The bark chapel served as the resting place for the bark when it was not in transit, while the bark itself served both as the means of divine transport and as a protective shield around the deity as it traveled, as indicated by its name ssm-hw ("protected image"). The vestibule before the sanctuary with its table likely served as a primary place for presenting offerings.

The sanctuary served as the abode of deity and the locus of daily service, clearly represented by the presence of the cult statue and the wall reliefs. "The subject of the [wall] scenes was almost invariable: the king offered to a god or gods, while they gave him gifts symbolic of life, prosperity, and power." In short, this room embodied the purpose of the temple, to house and serve the gods in order to receive divine blessing. The auxiliary rooms that surrounded the sanctuary served as complements to the sanctuary and the temple complex itself. The wall scenes often indicated their specific use (e.g., scenes of slaughter decorated a slaughter area and scenes of various items being stored designated a storeroom).

STRUCTURAL COMMUNICATION

As noted, Egyptian temples are unique among ancient Near Eastern temples in that their reliefs communicate through word and image the function of the various rooms, the proper behavior in them, and even access. In addition to being

81. Ibid.; see also Arnold, Wandrelief und Raumfunktion, 106–7.
82. Regarding the latter, see Refai, "Great Hypostyle Hall," 395–96. For a helpful three-dimensional reconstruction of bark processions, see Elaine A. Sullivan, "Visualizing the Size and Movement of the Portable Festival Barks at Karnak Temple," BMSAES 19 (2012): 1–37.
83. In the New Kingdom, it seems that veils also were used to partially shield the cabin shrines from view (Christina Karlshausen, "L'évolution de la barque processionnelle d'Amon à 18° dynastie," RdE 46 (1995): 119–37; idem "L'iconographie de la barque processionnelle divine en Égypte au Nouvel Empire" [Ph.D. diss., Université Catholique du Louvaine, 1997], 305–10). The bark chapel likewise served as mediating space within the temple, further distancing the sanctuary from the outer entrance and mediating access to it.
84. Regarding terms for sanctuaries, see Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 99–146, of which k3r is especially prominent in referring to a temple sanctuary, portable shrine, or bark shrine. On the daily service, see ch. 8.
86. A word of caution is necessary at this point. Although wall scenes often indicated the function of the particular rooms, there is no one-to-one relationship between scene and action. In other words, the presence of a wall scene does not always mean that the action it depicts took place in that location.
functional, the architecture of Egyptian temples made an impression that can still be felt today. As today, in ancient times it would have immediately elicited awe, an appropriate response given the nature of the temple as the home of the deity. In addition to being evocative, temple architecture gave shape to divine space, creating a home, and physically and emotionally mediating contact between the resident deity and its human visitors.

Walls, portals, and their adornments in particular demarcated the temple complex into clear zones, whose functions were made known on the wall reliefs. At the same time, these features heightened the importance of the overall space and of the hierarchical importance of its parts, which increased as one moved beyond boundaries and ever closer to the center. The importance of these thresholds may be underscored by the overabundance of terms meaning "door" or "gate."87 Indeed, the temple was masterfully created to express in physical form the ideology of the temple builders, to communicate subconsciously to the observers the appropriate behavior and emotional response, and to impress on them the importance of compliance. Again, the divisions were likely communicated unconsciously by the structure itself, thereby reinforcing in the observers the boundaries and behavior expected of them and providing powerful impetus to behave appropriately.88

The wall surrounding the divine sphere visually and viscerally communicated the separation of divine space from its surroundings. The doorway marked the liminal zone, the meeting point of two distinct areas and the threshold over which the other could be accessed. Although the enclosure wall was constructed of the same material as mundane dwellings, its special status was indicated by its undulating form and association with the deity. The auxiliary structures surrounding the temple complex indicated that divine space included more than a home; in some contexts, it was even a self-sufficient world unto itself, in practice as well as in theory. Since these structures stood within the outer enclosure, they were associated with the divine sphere and thus shared in its special status. However, since they remained outside the temple complex and its pylon gateway, they were only secondarily important.89

Next, the pylon gateway, as the most impressive (and thus seemingly primary) boundary, separated the temple complex emphatically from everything around it, even the subsidiary structures within the divine sphere.90 As the most visibly

87. Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 179–216. The "profusion of terms for walls in the Egyptian language" likewise testifies to their importance in dividing spaces (p. 283; see further 260–92).

88. It is also interesting to note that the decoration on doors related to the interior rooms to which they granted ingress, in effect serving as an introduction to the space they protected (Friedhelm Hartenstein, personal communication).


90. The presence of purification basins, scenes, and chapels as well as the scenes adorning
massive and arresting element of the Egyptian temple, the pylon functioned as an appropriate introduction to the deity’s house. The prominence of this boundary is especially fitting since, as the most visible element in the entire divine sphere, the entrance to the temple complex was in many ways the face of the divine abode, indicating like no other element the importance of the space it protected. It must also be noted that the primary temple route was not meant for humans, as evidently no priest ever penetrated through this succession of doorways from the outside to the inside (except when carrying the divine image). Outer doors were usually shut, while the priests were on duty. After purifying themselves in the sacred lake, they would enter through the side door. When the temple doors opened on festival days, it was the deity who made its way through them as it left the temple in procession and returned.91

In addition to the prominent pylon portal, the architecture itself and its adornment, clustered around the entrance portal, highlighted both the threshold and the importance of the zone beyond it. For example, the obelisks adjacent to the pylon served as towering markers for all to see, proclaiming the special nature of the place,92 while the reliefs of the king demonstrated his prominence and potency, suggesting his role as both protector of the divine sphere and as mediator between human and divine. As such, the architecture visually and viscerally reinforced the appropriate response and the appropriate behavior, indicating that only the ritually pure could be granted access.93 In addition, the temple complex was constructed largely of stone, quarried elsewhere and often brought from great distances. The stone likely indicated the strength and permanence of the temple,94 and served effectively to differentiate it from the both the mundane sphere, including the royal palace, and the auxiliary elements within the divine sphere.95

Once through the pylon, the portal flanked by the twin towers, the scene changed again, indicating a new zone. The court was open to the sky, bounded by pillars and often containing smaller, less obtrusive statues of the king and select private individuals. The court served as a transitional area attached to the temple

92. Regarding the obelisks as boundary markers, see Gundlach, “Temples,” 368, 371. It seems that these obelisks were located only within the sacred precinct yet originally constructed outside of the main temple complex.
94. Incidentally, it also facilitated the use of reliefs and ensured their preservation (Assmann, The Search for God, 30).
95. Egyptians also used different kinds and colors of stones in temple construction (Friedhelm Hoffmann, personal communication).
structure yet separated from its roofed core. It mediated between inside and outside spaces by distancing the sanctuary from the enclosure entrance and allowed some access to inside the temple complex (in its court) without really being inside the temple (indoors).

Through another occasionally raised entrance, the hypostyle hall as a domed structure with a forest of thick columns with floral capitals marked a new zone, with distinct structural markers to delineate its boundaries. With the floor sloping gradually upward while the ceiling descended, one would have felt like he was ascending into a different realm. The air would be darker; the ceiling had stars; statuary was at a minimum. No longer consumed with militarism and displays of power and protection, the wall scenes were more intimate in nature, suggesting the increasing intimacy and importance of the space. In these reliefs, the king was always present with the primary deity and its divine compatriots, making offerings to the gods and receiving their blessing in return (e.g., via the symbol for life [ankh (*nh)]). The scenes here as elsewhere were animated with life; the images and inscriptions were arranged in sequence signifying motion.

Another doorway marked the transition between the hypostyle hall and the temple core, which was itself divided into various rooms. In many New Kingdom temples, the bark chapel was appropriately situated before the sanctuary to begin the deity's procession outward and to further isolate the sanctuary from the outside. When a vestibule appeared between it and the sanctuary (e.g., in the Khonsu temple), it like the court served to mediate space by isolating the core of the divine residence, the sanctuary, from the rest of the temple building.

By far the most important room, the divine sanctuary emerged at last. Several factors converged to herald its special status. The room was shrouded in the deepest darkness, and often surrounded by a ring of corridors and support chambers. When illuminated, here and nowhere else one would discover the shrine contain-

96. Rather than surrounding the temple, the court preceded the main building and formed a single architectural unit with it (see ch. 4 for the importance of this connection).

97. The multitude of columns did not serve to conceal the sanctuary from view [contra Snape (Egyptian Temples, 36) and others], for there was a clear passageway along the central axis from the entrance through the pillars to the sanctuary (Wilkinson, Complete Temples, 65). Instead, the closed doors likely served as visual and physical barriers.

98. See ch. 8 for a fuller analysis of ritual activity and the ritual scenes. The ubiquity of the king in this and all other temple spaces stressed his primary role as mediator between human and divine.

99. These isolating spaces ensured that although the spaces grew increasingly smaller toward the sanctuary, the proportions remained the same, such that the temple was often rectangular in shape (Wightman, Sacred Spaces, 993). This separation and isolation grew more pronounced in the Ptolemaic temples, descendants of the standard temple type, as the sanctuary was isolated by both corridors and layers of wall (Assmann, The Search for God, 30–33).
ing the resident deity. The ceiling likewise reached its lowest point while the floor was at its peak. The wall scenes at this stage were intimate and purposeful, focusing on the ruler’s presentation of offerings to the resident god, frequently reciprocated with divine blessing. The room also was situated along the central axis, on a line from the pylon gateway, practically at the farthest point from that gateway. As the heart of the temple, the cult statue lay nestled in the deep darkness, in the smallest room, in the most remote and well-protected area of the entire massive complex.

The entire temple complex highlighted the importance of this sacred core. Each unit and each boundary communicated to the observers their progression further and further from the mundane sphere and into the divine sphere, into the very residence of the gods on earth. This feeling was only heightened by the symmetry of the direct axis temple, which suggested order and perfection. As such, one would feel increasingly privileged to access increasingly important and intimate space and increasingly compelled to follow the rules of the divine residence. The structures in the divine sphere thus effectively reinforced the already entrenched importance of the divine sphere over the rest of the world and the relative importance of its various zones. By giving shape to it with stone, the Egyptians likewise communicated that the temple and its boundaries were inviolate.

**IDEOLOGY**

In a dangerous and volatile world, where order was constantly under threat on a local and cosmic scale, the Egyptians constructed temples both to bring divine presence and favor to their world and to have some measure of agency in the divine world. The gods’ preferred abode was the sky or heaven, while the underworld was the home of the deity’s body to which his *ba* (b3)

---

100. Other rooms occasionally appeared behind the sanctuary, yet they were clearly secondary, serving the needs of the sanctuary as storerooms, treasuries, slaughter rooms, etc., as well as smaller shrines to other deities.


(translated roughly as “soul”) was united nightly. The gods had little natural contact with the human realm, appearing at times only at the periphery. The temple and, more precisely, the cult statue within it was the Egyptian solution to divine absence, a way to localize the deity within the human sphere, at the heart of human community. Although not always so neatly presented, Egyptian theologians systematized the divine presence as threefold: the god’s ba was in the sky, his corpse was in the underworld, and his cult statue was on earth. Since divine presence and blessing could not simply be assumed, the temple was constructed to be as enticing an abode as possible, with lavish offerings and some degree of separation from the mundane world. With the temple functioning as intended, regular presence and regular and regulated service enabled contact and communication between the human and divine spheres, granting humanity some degree of security and agency in an otherwise insecure world. In fact, successful cult service was considered absolutely necessary for prosperity on individual, corporate, and cosmic levels.

In the temple as heaven on earth, the king, imbued with the divine ka-spirit, was the primary human actor (in theory if not in practice). The king’s gifts and services to the gods were often classified as the “eye of Horus” and as maat (m3rt). In Egyptian mythology, Thoth recovered, healed, and returned to Horus the eye he lost to Seth. Offerings equated with this “sound eye” (wḏ3t) of Horus, like the eye itself, thus represented the reestablishment of order after the incursion of chaos, or more generally “embodiment of every alleviation of lack or need.” Offerings equated with maat, cosmic order, naturally served to strengthen the cosmic order. Together the “eye of Horus” and maat repre-

102. Regarding the ba as “soul,” cf. the qualifications of James P. Allen, “Ba,” in OEAE 1:161-62; see further chapter 8. Regarding the divine connection to heaven and the underworld, see Hornung, Conceptions of God, 229.

103. Hornung, Conceptions of God, 128.

104. On the relationship between the deity and its image, see ch. 8.


107. Thompson, “Cults,” in Redford, ed., The Ancient Gods Speak, 64. Although the king had other civic duties, such as ruling in accordance with maat, appropriate divine service in the temple was absolutely necessary for any prosperity.


109. See further Assmann, Maat: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten (Munich: Beck, 1990); Teeter, The Presentation of Maat: Ritual and Legitimacy in Ancient Egypt (SAOC 57; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1997).
sented two sides of the same process, reestablishing lost order and strengthening existing order.\textsuperscript{110} By presenting both to the gods, pharaoh played his part in upholding cosmic order.

The king was presented in more guises than as a mere obeisant. Nonetheless, in each he fulfilled his role as the preserver of\textit{ maat} on earth. Throughout the temple, the pharaoh featured prominently. However, as one moved outward from the center, representations of the king became increasingly larger and more militaristic. His statuary too, absent from the sanctuary, became more pronounced as one moved outward. Giant colossi of the pharaoh adjoined the pylon and an even larger relief of the king smiting his enemies adorned it. Such martial images were consonant with the tenor of the pylon. Its imposing exterior proclaimed both power and protection, and the prominence of a pugilistic pharaoh there ensured that all observers recognized him as the powerful protector, the preserver of divine order. The giant colossi demonstrated his prowess, and their seated position may have indicated his watchfulness and even his rest after conquering all opposition. The image of the king smiting his enemies was emblazoned upon the face of the pylon, showing his power over his enemies, seen as the forces of chaos, which were antithetical to the upkeep of\textit{ maat}.\textsuperscript{111} At the same time, the presence of a deity to witness the slaughter indicated both divine protection of the pharaoh and reciprocal royal protection of the divine and the temple complex. Thus, to outsiders the king was an indomitable force holding chaos at bay, while within he was a tender and beloved servant of the gods.

In addition to being propagandistic, the varied portrayal of the king was consonant with the larger Egyptian worldview. Outside of the temple, as the representative of the gods and with their support, the king upheld\textit{ maat} on earth and protected the temple from the encroachment of chaos. Thus, the pharaoh as ever-present pugilist was a suitable image for the face of the temple complex. Within the temple, however, the gods held sway.\textsuperscript{112} Rather than defending\textit{ maat} with his god-given might, as the only suitable servant of the gods, the king presented \textit{maat} as an obeisant in the form of an offering; thus his images featured in all contact between human and divine, in procession and especially in intimate service.

Although constructed of elements of the terrestrial world, the temple was nonetheless made suitable for its divine resident. As the home of the deity who defied explanation, the temple shared in its ineffability. The temple represented a

\textsuperscript{110} In Egyptian terms, together they signified what is “sound and perfect” (Englund, “Offerings,” 279–80; see, e.g., Quirke,\textit{ Ancient Egyptian Religion}, ch. 3, entitled “Preserving the Universe: Kingship and Cult”).

\textsuperscript{111} As already noted, the statuary and decoration also served an intercessory function, stressing the king’s role as mediator between human and divine.

\textsuperscript{112} Nonetheless, the transition was apparently gradual as the hypostyle hall stresses divine support of the king.
meeting of disparate worlds, with elements of each commingled to form a place somewhat unnatural to both. Since no sufficient human analog existed, figural representation abounded to approximate the essence of the divine abode and the reality enacted therein. Temple builders incorporated into the temple structure elements from their worldview, particularly their mythology, available to us primarily in the preserved texts. In addition, although not as prevalent as in Mesopotamia and Hittite Anatolia, there is some late evidence that the temple itself was considered alive, animated through the opening of the mouth ritual.

On a fundamental level, the Egyptians pictured their gods as human-like with human-like needs. As such, Egyptians crafted their temples and temple service to meet the deities’ human-like needs and appetites. In the temple, the gods served as the “lords of cities and proprietors of huge landed estates” governed by various servants who made their livings from them. The temple resembled a contemporary home in terms of the structure and the basic needs of its inhabitant. Like humans, the deity required and received more than words of adoration. It too had

113. In addition, the structure carried a political agenda, as the king sought to paint himself, his kingdom, and the patron deity in the best possible light.

114. For a summary, see Tobin, “Myth,” 239–45. However, the Egyptian textual record is somewhat problematic. “Despite its obvious importance in religion of ancient Egypt, [myth] appears to have belonged largely to the domain of oral literature (Jacobus van Dijk, “Myth and Mythmaking in Ancient Egypt,” in CANE, 3:1697).” Instead myths were “often alluded to in various non-narrative texts, such as hymns to the gods or ritual texts” (ibid). Van Dijk plausibly suggests myths were largely absent from the early written record because they were “originally transmitted orally, perhaps because knowledge of them was restricted to those directly involved in the state cult: the king and the fairly small group of high officials that later developed into the professional priesthood (p. 1698).” See also Katja Goebbs, “A Functional Approach to Egyptian Myth and Mythemes,” JANER 2 (2002): 27–59, who argues that the nature and purpose of myths lay in their flexibility. See further Assmann, “Die Verborgenheit des Mythos in Ägypten,” Göttinger Miszellen 25 (1977): 7–43; Jürgen Ziedler, “Zur Frage der Spätentstehung des Mythos in Ägypten,” Göttinger Miszellen 132 (1993): 85–109; H. Roeder, “Mit dem Auge sehen: Ägyptisches und Ägyptologisches zum Auge des Horus,” Göttinger Miszellen 138 (1994): 37–69.

115. Assmann, The Search for God, 45.

116. Ibid., 27.

117. Ibid., 28–29.

118. Bell, “The New Kingdom Divine Temple,” 133. The role of the temple as the physical home of the god was reflected in the appearance of a New Kingdom temple; the open courtyard, pillared hall and hidden sanctuary might be said broadly to coincide with the parts of an ordinary Egyptian house, with the semi-public space for entertaining visitors and the more private areas, such as the bedroom, at the rear of the house (Snape, Egyptian Temples, 10).
physical needs which were met by physical means, such as food, drink, bathing, and clothing.\textsuperscript{119}

Nonetheless, the deity was not simply envisioned as one of humanity. The temple was thus crafted to suit the divine otherness, often carrying cosmic significance. Creation was mirrored, even present, in the temple construction. For example, the columns in the hypostyle hall represented the aquatic marsh plants that sprang up around the primeval mound of creation.\textsuperscript{120} The large number and variety of column types reflected the diversity of the vegetation in the primordial swamp at creation.\textsuperscript{121} The lower registers of the walls repeated this motif in various ways.\textsuperscript{122} The floor sloped upward to the sanctuary, the highest point, which served as the primeval mound of creation, the first land to emerge from the watery abyss. As the divine chamber, the sanctuary and especially the shrine within it marked the beginning of the created world. In some cases, the Nile’s annual flooding served to enhance this motif as “some of the floors in many temples would have been covered with water, and there the inclined path to the sanctuary would literally have risen up out of the waters.”\textsuperscript{123}

Although part of this world, the temple was also a special world unto itself. The outer walls surrounding the divine sphere set the borders for the differentiated, hierarchically divided world of order within.\textsuperscript{124} Indeed, in Egypt separation itself was seen as the hallmark of creation, such that the creator god was commonly said to have divided himself into millions in the act of creation.\textsuperscript{125} By clearly separating the temple complex into ideal spaces and setting those separations in stone, the temple builders and the gods continually represented and reenacted the initial act of creation and the ideal world it created.

The massive pylon appropriately granted entrance to the world of order within. The temple’s floor and the lower parts of the walls were the earth, highlighting

\textsuperscript{119} Quirke, \textit{Ancient Egyptian Religion}, 70.

\textsuperscript{120} For a summary of the creation myths see, e.g., Griffiths, “Myths: Creation Myths,” in Redford, ed., \textit{The Ancient Gods Speak}, 249–55.

\textsuperscript{121} In the great hypostyle hall of Karnak alone, there were at least 134 columns (Snape, \textit{Egyptian Temples}, 31–32; Wilkinson, \textit{Complete Temples}, 67). Forms include the palmiform, lotiform, papyriform, and campaniform columns (Wilkinson, \textit{Complete Temples}, 66–67).

\textsuperscript{122} Baines, “Palaces and Temples,” 313.


\textsuperscript{124} In Egypt, unity was an undesirable quality that refers to the undifferentiated mass (the “nonexistent”) from which creation emerged and which continued to threaten the ordered world (Hornung, \textit{Conceptions of God}, 170–85).

\textsuperscript{125} See, e.g., Hornung, \textit{Conceptions of God}, 170 and the references cited therein.
their role in vitalizing everything upon them. The ceiling was the sky, appropriately decorated with stars, constellations, or flying birds, often held aloft by the columns, which represented both plants and cosmic pillars.

The temple as a whole and the pylon in particular served as the akhet (3ḥt), the "horizon" or "radiant place." Indeed, the hieroglyph for akhet bears a striking similarity to the pylon when the sun would alight between its two towers. The pylon, and thus the temple by extension, marked "the horizon over the eastern mountains where the sun rose in the morning and over the western mountains where it disappeared at night, the land to which the blessed dead journeyed." As such, heaven, earth, and the netherworld met in the temple, where the divine brushed up against the earth in its daily tour of the cosmos.

At the heart of the temple, the shrine in the sanctuary represented heaven itself. In addition to being the divine dwelling place, which brought heaven to earth, the shrine was a portal to heaven, the heavenly deity's entry point into the terrestrial realm. As such it was appropriately shrouded in mystery, described in contemporary texts as "more inaccessible than what happens in

126. Thus, it was often painted black or bore long processions of fecundity figures (Grallert, "Building Inscriptions," 39). In addition, the stones used to construct the wall bases were occasionally made of black granite (Hoffmann, personal communication).


128. For example, Amenhotep III referred to these pillars in Karnak as reaching to "heaven like the four pillars of heaven" (Wilkinson, Complete Temples, 65).


132. The description of the sanctuary reflected this reality, as it was "simply called 'heaven,' or or with an eye to its doors 'the doors of heaven'" (Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 88). This distinction also applied to the temple as a whole as evidenced by some of the temple titles (e.g., Karnak was "heaven on earth" and Heliopolis was the "heaven of Egypt"; Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms [trans. T. J. Hallett. London: SPCK, 1978], 172).

133. Indeed, the shrine was conceived of as the inner heavens, where the deity dwelt (Koch, Geschichte der ägyptische Religion, 288). In addition, the opening of the double door of the shrine in the daily cult ritual was accompanied by words—"the double door of heaven is opened, the double door of earth is unclosed"—and signified the opening of the "cosmic 'double door,' that is, the point at the horizon where heaven and earth meet through which the sun emerges at dawn" (David Lorton, "The Theology of Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," in Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East [ed. M. B. Dick; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 139). See also Christiane Gräfin von Pfeil-Autenrieth, Der Gotteslohn für die Pharaonen: Untersuchungen zu den Gegengaben in ägyptischen Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Epoche (SRaT 6; Dettelbach: J. H. Röll, 2009).
The heavens, more veiled than the state of the other world, more revered than the inhabitants of the Primeval Ocean.”¹³⁴ In addition, no inscription within the shrine itself labeled it until the Twenty-Second Dynasty,¹³⁵ suggesting that it was too mysterious to be named.¹³⁶

The temple was more than a replica of the world; it was an ideal world in itself. In the reliefs, the relationship between the king and the gods was perfect. In an intimate exchange, the king presented the gods with the appropriate offerings and the gods blessed the king in turn.¹³⁷ Priests rarely appeared in the scenes, nor were they needed, as the king was the sole mediator between human and divine.¹³⁸ This was especially the case since, to the Egyptian mind, an image and the reality it depicted were often inextricably linked.¹³⁹ Thus, the reliefs that depicted the king making offerings to the deity and receiving blessing in return in some way made the images a reality.¹⁴⁰

On a grander scale, the temple recorded the victory of order over chaos.¹⁴¹ The outer enclosure wall with its wave-shaped walls may have marked the boundary between the ordered world within and the chaotic waters of Nun without.¹⁴² More than merely building a larger temple than his predecessor, the


¹³⁵. However, other texts referred to the sanctuary by several terms, depending on the context (Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 99–146).

¹³⁶. Badawy, History of Egyptian Architecture, 180. Similarly, although known by many names, in “The God and His Unknown Name of Power” Re’s true name and form remained secret (see conveniently ANET 12–14; COS 1.22:33–34).

¹³⁷. This ideal was not even realized in the temple as the king himself did not perform all, or even most, of the offerings.

¹³⁸. See, e.g., Quirke, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 80–81.

¹³⁹. Assmann, The Search for God, 83; Wilkinson, “Symbolism,” 340–41. Thus, a person’s name, whether written or spoken, “identified and represented the person as an individual and was a veritable part of the person’s being to the extent that to deface or destroy the name helped to destroy the existence of the person named” (ibid., 340–41).

¹⁴⁰. See further ch. 8 on the relationship between an image and its referent.

¹⁴¹. In Egyptian terms, the preservation of order (maat) over against lack (isfīl) was the chief responsibility of the king. The former expressed the form of the world intended by its creator, a form to which the contemporary world no longer corresponded. The latter represented the dissolution of order: “sickness, death, scarcity, injustice, falsehood, theft, violence, war, [and] enmity.” To the ancient Egyptian, the way forward was to look backward, to restore the “original plenitude of meaning” and thus ensure prosperity (Assmann, The Search for God, 3–5; see also Michael Hundleby, “The Way Forward is Back to the Beginning: Reflections on the Priestly Texts,” Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Judah (ed. E. Ben-Zvi and C. Levin; FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 209–24.

¹⁴². See, however, the caution of Dunand and Zivic-Coché (Gods and Men in Egypt, 88–
king's expansion of the sacred precinct likely served as an expansion of the ordered world. As the limits of the gods' domain began at the frontier of chaos, the extension of order further into this world, increased the scope of order and thus the gods' kingdom.\footnote{143} The sanctuary, resting atop the primordial hill, represented and in some ways was the heart of the ordered world.

On the one hand, this world was strictly separated from the external chaos; on the other, it preserved a degree of chaos within. However, this internal chaos was carefully controlled and overcome so that the temple modeled the victory of order over chaos. The hypostyle hall purposely modeled the primeval swamp amid the chaos waters. However, chaos held no sway within the temple. The floor ascended, rising out of the swamp until it met the closed portal of the sanctuary area, effectively sealed off from the chaos without. The sanctuary stood at the center of this sequestered region at the highest point. Atop the primeval hill, the embodiment of the victory of order over chaos, the sanctuary showed no hint of the chaos features. While the hypostyle hall was awash with elements of the chaotic swamp (e.g., multiple columns alluding to aquatic marsh plants), the sanctuary was devoid of such elements.\footnote{144} Instead the reliefs depicted idealized offering scenes where the king and gods coexisted in harmony as the king offered the gods \textit{maat} (life-sustaining order) in return for the fullness of life (\textit{ankh}) and blessing. Because of the close association between an image and its referent,\footnote{145} the temple did far more than model the victory; within the ideal world of the temple, the triumph of order was continually (re)enacted. This world functioned as intended, full and ordered, without lack. By both being carefully shut off from the chaos without and by overcoming the chaos within, the temple stood as the ultimate symbol of order. Thus, it is no wonder that when this small world functioned appropriately, the greater world around it would prosper.

\footnote{89}. Rather than representing waves, which in art were depicted differently (e.g., with wavy vertical lines), the alternating concave and convex lines may have been so constructed for a more practical purpose, i.e., to withstand earthquakes (Friedhelm Hoffmann, personal communication). On Nun as the nonexistent, see Hornung, \textit{Conceptions of God}, 172–83.


\footnote{144}. Cf. Baines, "Palaces and Temples," 313.

\footnote{145}. See further ch. 8.