GODS IN DWELLINGS

Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East

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CHAPTER 8

DIVINE PRESENCE IN EGYPTIAN TEMPLES

HAVING ESTABLISHED THAT THE TEMPLE was designed to provide a terrestrial home for the deity, we turn to the locus of terrestrial divine presence, the cult image, to discuss its nature, form, and function. In order properly to understand the cult image, I begin with the conceptual background, addressing briefly the nature of Egyptian deities and their relation to the world and its inhabitants. Then, I examine the textual and archaeological evidence for the cult images themselves, their enlivening and installation in the temples, and their daily care and feeding before assessing the nature of the cult image and its relationship to the deity and other cult images. The following analysis will concentrate on the evidence from the New Kingdom with some attention to the Late period and Greco-Roman times.¹

THE GODS AND THEIR RELATION TO HUMANITY AND THE WORLD

In many ways, Egyptian deities were like their human servants. Like humans, deities were sentient beings with a body, name, human-like families, emotions, behavior, and, especially in cultic contexts, needs. They were capable of the full gamut of human emotions and behaviors, from the most noble to the most petty, and were by no means immune to infighting.² In the cult, deities, like their royal human counterparts, had a body, a house, and a realm, properly equipped with servants to ensure that every need be met, including feeding, bathing, and clothing.

However, although similar, the gods were greater than their human counterparts in practically every capacity. In addition to the vast difference in power and spheres of influence, the gods primarily distinguished themselves in their accumulation of manifestations, names, and epithets.³ Most major deities are labeled

¹. See ch. 2 n. 1 for Egyptian chronology.
³. For an exhaustive list of divine iconography, manifestations, names, epithets, and
“rich in manifestations (ḥprw)’ or “lord of manifestations,” which is borne out by the iconography, such that “a deity shows many faces to an Egyptian and presents himself in many forms,” including physical phenomena, various cult statues of different forms, and animals. For example, Thoth appeared in human form, as the moon, an ibis, a baboon, or as a mixture of these elements. As elsewhere in the ancient Near East, Egyptians adopted the additive approach, such that a deity displayed its potency and potential in its many manifestations, each of which embodied a particular power or attribute. Thus, the more manifestations a deity had, the more potent and important it became. Nonetheless, no single manifestation or even an accumulation of all manifestations could capture a deity’s plenitude, since a deity always had the potential to adopt more and different forms. Although a deity showed many faces to Egyptians, none represented its “true form (ḥprw),”


4. Hornung, Conceptions of God, 126; John Baines, “Egyptian Deities in Context: Multiplicity, Unity, and the Problem of Change,” in Porter, ed., One God or Many?, 27. “Parallel epithets refer to the multiplicity of ‘faces’ (ḥprw) which gods have at their disposal; the most varied gods are termed ‘many face’ or are ‘lord of faces’” (Hornung, Conceptions of God, 126).


10. Ibid., 126. “Their being remains a fluid state to which we are not accustomed; it escapes very dogmatic, final definition and can always be extended or further differentiated” (p. 99).
which humans could only view when they are dead.\textsuperscript{11} In addition to expressing divine complexity and potency, each manifestation also represented the deity's visible face. However, rather than being restricted to a single face, a deity could simultaneously adopt multiple forms in multiple locales.\textsuperscript{12}

Similarly, worshipers addressed their deities with multiple names and epithets\textsuperscript{13} in order to extend the nature and sphere of influence of a deity\textsuperscript{14} and to appeal to various aspects of the deity. Names expressed the complexity and potency of the name bearer, such that complex and important beings required multiple names, since their potency and potentiality could not be expressed in a single word.\textsuperscript{15} For example, kings bore at least two names and at least five throne names, while deities, reflective of their greater status, "must have many names."\textsuperscript{16} Like each manifestation, each name and epithet highlighted a particular form, function, attribute, or potency, which when accumulated approached but did not equal divine plenitude.\textsuperscript{17} Likewise, although deities could be addressed with many names, no one, not even the other gods, could know a deity's true name.\textsuperscript{18} These gods


\textsuperscript{12} Baines, "Egyptian Deities in Context," 26; Robins, "Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," 2.


\textsuperscript{14} Hornung, \textit{Conceptions of God}, 90.

\textsuperscript{15} Koch, \textit{Geschichte der ägyptische Religion}, 37.


\textsuperscript{18} In a text labeled "The God and His Unknown Name of Power" in ANET, Isis must trick Re in order to discover his secret name (Alexandre Piankoff, \textit{The Litany of Re: Texts Translated with Commentary} [Egyptian Religious Texts and Representations 4; New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964], 56–59; see conveniently ANET 12–14; COS 1.22.33–34).
controlled the very elements of nature and society that humans could not control and that they often needed to survive. Thus, by associating these necessary yet uncontrollable elements with human-like beings who may be approached, reasoned with, and influenced, humans gained some understanding and indeed some measure of control over the otherwise dangerous and volatile world around them.

However, contact with the divine and divine consent to human demands was by no means a given. In order to explain the disarray on earth, Egyptian mythology claims that although human and divine originally dwelt together, evil in creation (attributed to human rebellion or Seth) precipitated the gods’ withdrawal from the human sphere. The newly demarcated universe contained three realms: the celestial realm (pt), the underworld (dua3t), and the earth (t3). Deities (and the dead) inhabited the first two realms, while the third was the realm of living human beings. Thus, the gods “ultimately dwelt outside of the human world and the realm of human experience.” Although the gods dwelt in realms inaccessible to living humanity, they remained part of the created world, and thus subject to its vicissitudes. They remained embroiled in the struggle to maintain world order against the various chaos forces that encroached upon it. Although powerful and perspicacious, none of the gods were omnipotent or omniscient. Indeed, each was vulnerable. As part of the cosmos, its fate determined their own. As part of a polytheistic hierarchy, preserving the cosmos was a constant and joint venture,


20. Robins, “Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt,” 2. In the Old Kingdom, the texts seem to indicate that the gods inhabited the sky, which was also the setting for the afterlife (Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 227). In the Middle and New Kingdoms the world in the sky found a complement in the netherworld, both of which were the realm of the divine (p. 228). In later periods, distinctions between gods and their presence in the three realms became increasingly blurred (p. 230).


22. Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 166–70, 186–96. Only chaos could truly be called transcendent, since it dwelled outside of the ordered cosmos and ever sought to infiltrate it (see also p. 195).

23. Baines, “Egyptian Deities in Context,” 26. Although hymns and litanies praised individual deities in such a way that it seems that they each represented an ultimate being that transcended the created world, the focus of such hymns lay more in “developing ever more elaborate formulations of praise than on expressing radically new ideas about the nature of deities” (Baines, “Presenting and Discussing Deities in New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period Egypt,” in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* [ed. B. Pongratz-Leisten; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011], 68–69).

24. Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 151–66. In addition, there was no need to justify the gods in the face of evil. The gods could not be said to be responsible for evil. Instead they were the very powers that combatted it (p. 213).
one in which humans had a role to play. In Egypt, chaos was the ever-present en-
emy of human and divine alike threatening to topple world order. In the divine
realm, for example, Re had nightly to overcome the serpent Apep (Apophis), his
chief enemy, who was one of the primary threats to order. Within the human
sphere, the king helped to preserve order by serving the gods and presenting them
with the eye of Horus and maat, both representing what is “sound and perfect.”

Although spatially separated, humanity maintained a link with the gods and the
ability to influence cosmic events. The gods left the divine ka-spirit in the
living king. With the establishment of the temple, its cult, and the divinely im-
bued priest-king as the sole intermediary between human and divine, humanity
successfully brought or persuaded the deities to return to earth. The primary
locus of their presence was the cult statue, which represented a (semi)permanent
theophany in the human sphere. Through divine presence on earth and human
cultic interaction with it, humans were able to bring divine power to bear on
their lives and more broadly to influence cosmic reality and help preserve cosmic
order.

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70; Robins, “Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt,” 1.


27. Englund, “Offerings,” 279–80; see also Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, ch. 3,
“Preserving the Universe: Kingship and Cult.”

251–94; idem, “The New Kingdom Divine Temple,” 137–44; cf. regarding other humans,
Andrey O. Bolshakov, *Man and His Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom* (ÄAT
37; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1997). Although the king was consistently associated with a
deity, the identity of the deity changed based on time and circumstance. For example, the
king was most often associated with Horus, the sun god, and in the afterlife with Osiris, yet
could also be identified with other deities, such as Montu, Khnum, and Sekhmet (Hornung,
*Conceptions of God*, 141). The closest modern analogy to the dual nature of the king might
be that of the pope, who is human yet carries the divine in his papal office; so too “it can be
shown that an astonishingly consistent distinction was drawn between the divine character
of the royal office and the human nature of the person holding it” (Morenz, *Egyptian
Religion*, 37).

29. In some way, the king existed in a perpetual liminal state. As a semidivine being, he
ruled over and served the gods on behalf of the people. However, as a mere man, even a man
with the royal ka-spirit, he had to kneel before and worship the gods (ibid., 41).

Cult Images

Evidence for the construction and composition of Egyptian cult statues is minimal.\textsuperscript{31} Few, if any, remain.\textsuperscript{32} Likewise, although occasionally grandiose, the textual descriptions often fail to note the specifics.\textsuperscript{33} Nonetheless, various clues allow for possible reconstructions.

\textsuperscript{31} Cult statue refers here to the main statue of the god situated in the inner sanctuary and, if distinct, to the statue used in festival processions.

\textsuperscript{32} For a discussion and possible examples of cult statues, see, e.g., Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 127–29; Robins, “Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt,” 4–6.

\textsuperscript{33} The Greco-Roman temple of Dendara provides the best evidence. In its crypts, there are hundreds of depictions of divine statues, many with inscriptions indicating the material composition and height of the statues (see Sylvie Cauville, “Les statues cultuelles de Dendera d’après les inscriptions pariétales,” \textit{BIFAO} 87 (1987): 73–117; Hoffmann, “Measuring Egyptian Statues,” in \textit{Under One Sky: Astronomy and Mathematics in the Ancient Near East} [ed. J. Steele and A. Imhausen; AOAT 297; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002], 109–19; for the images, see Émile Chassinat, \textit{Le Temple de Dendara}, Vol. 5 [Cairo: Institut Français...
First, the sizes of their resting places suggest that the cult statues were rather small. The remaining stone shrines tend to be no more than 19 to 23 inches tall (50–60 cm). Inside one would have found an even smaller wooden shrine, which housed the divine statue. From this, we may infer that most cult statues would have been at most little more than a foot (30 cm) tall (see fig. 8.1). Although there is some debate regarding whether or not the statue in the processional bark was the same as the primary cult statue, the dimensions of the cabin inside the bark shrine where the deity rested were likely equally small. Thus, regardless of whether there were one or two statues in a single temple, most cult statues were probably small.

Although the cult statue's form and the consistency of that form across temples and time remain somewhat unclear, it is evident that they were made of materials...
Fig. 8.2. Isis and Osiris in anthropomorphic form (Dynasty 21). Adapted from the Greenfield Papyrus in the British Museum. Drawing by Susan Hundleby.

highly valued by the Egyptians. The texts indicate that they were constructed of “gold, silver, lapis lazuli, turquoise, and other highly valued materials.”

There is also ample evidence for the visual renderings of the gods (e.g., other divine statues, stelae, wall reliefs, drawings, as well as various textual descriptions). From these we may deduce that Egyptian deities were primarily displayed in one of three forms: 1) human (figs. 8.1 and 8.2); 2) animal (fig. 8.3); or 3) a mixture of the two (figs. 8.4–8.6). The mixed form, with a human body and an animal head,

(Robins, “Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt,” 6). The wooden core made the statues more portable and more transportable.


40. Robins, “Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt,” 4; see also Pierre Grandet, Le papyrus Harris I (BM 9999) (vol. 1; Bibliotheque d’Etude 109; Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, 1994), 227, 228, 229, 259; William J. Murnane, Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt (SBLWAW 5; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 213, 233. For example, one of the earliest texts describing a divine statue refers to a statue of Osiris of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, amethyst, sesnedjem-wood, and true cedar (Kei Yamamoto, “The Materials of Lykhnophrets Portable Shrine: An Alternative Translation of Berlin 1204, lines 11–12,” Göttinger Miszellen 191 [2002]: 101–6; Teeter, Religion and Ritual, 52–53). In addition, the Restoration Stele of Tutankhamun describes Amun’s statue as constructed of “electrum, lapis lazuli, turquoise and every precious stone” (Murnane, Texts from the Amarna Period, 213; Teeter, Religion and Ritual, 53).

41. It must be noted that it is often difficult to tell whether various visual media depict a cult statue or the deity itself.

figured prominently yet by no means fully usurped the other forms. The symbol and the so-called aniconic representation are also attested.\textsuperscript{43}

These visual representations varied from god to god, while many of the “same” gods were presented differently in different contexts. In most cases, there were several ways of displaying the same god,\textsuperscript{44} sometimes in multiple ways in the same


\textsuperscript{44} “There is an astonishingly rich variety of possibilities; only to a very limited extent can one speak of a canonically fixed iconography of a god” (Hornung, \textit{Conceptions of God}, 110). As noted, the multiplicity of images played a similar role to the multiplicity
Fig. 8.4. Thoth, represented as a man with an ibis head standing before the enthroned Re-Horakhte, represented as a man with a falcon head (Third Intermediate period; ca. 950 BCE; Greenfield Papyrus sheet 52). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.
Fig. 8.5. The God Khepry with a male anthropomorphic body and a beetle head (from the tomb of Nefertari, during the reign of Ramesses II, 1290–1222 BCE). Courtesy of UNI DIA Verlag München.

place and even the same image. For example, Mahes appeared as both a lion and a man with the head of a lion on the Hildesheim stela, while a group statue at the Louvre brought together the various forms of Hathor: a cow, a lion-headed goddess, uraeus serpent, and a goddess with a sistrum on her head. Other renderings from the Late period onward went even further, combining various representa-

of divine epithets, indicating the potency and complex nature of the deity itself and of its manifestation on earth (ibid., 125–26).


tions into one composite form. “Just as hymns usually endowed a divinity with as many epithets as possible, so these depictions combined as many attributes as possible, not even stopping short at the monstrous”47 (i.e., monstrous according to modern aesthetic sensibilities). Such later images had clear antecedents in earlier periods. For example, from the New Kingdom the Devourer of the Dead appeared as an amalgam of the lion, hippopotamus, and crocodile (fig. 8.7).48 The sphinx was both a partaker of the divine and of composite form, often a winged lion with a human, ram, or falcon head. In others, the same symbol represented several gods. For example, a staggering number of deities were associated with the sun and the lion,49 while the image of the so-called tree goddess could also refer to various deities, including, Isis, Nephtys, Nut, Hathor, and Maat.50 As noted, rather than representing the true form of the deity, each depiction served merely as an attempt to highlight an aspect of the deities’ complex nature.51 None captured the true essence or even the true form of the deity, one which was often inaccessible to humanity.52

Of these approximate forms, the mixed form is the most intriguing and distinct and, as such, deserves further comment.53 The principle of the common

49. Hornung, Conceptions of God, 126.
51. See generally Hornung, Conceptions of God, 109–35; Tobin, Theological Principles, 35–36; David P. Silverman, “Divinity and Deities in Ancient Egypt,” in Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice [ed. B. E. Shafer; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991], 16–17; cf. Ann Macy Roth (“Buried Pyramids and Layered Thoughts: The Organisation of Multiple Approaches in Egyptian Religion,” in Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists [ed. C. J. Eyre; OLA 82; Leuven: Peeters, 1998], 991–1003; idem, “The Representation of the Divine in Ancient Egypt,” in Beckman and Lewis, eds., Text, Artifact, and Image, 24–37), who posits that mixed forms represents a nesting of forms in which older forms were preserved alongside newer ones even in the same image. On Hathor in particular, see Hornung, Conceptions of God, 113. According to Hornung, the mixed form is a hieroglyph of sorts, a way of writing “the nature and function of the deity in question” (p. 124). Or, it is an “ideogram,” a pictorial sign that conveys but does not exhaust meaning (Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation [New York: Columbia University, 1949], 12). Although the attributes presented in the various forms could allude to the deity in question, they did not encapsulate it (cf. Hornung, Conceptions of God, 117).
53. The mixed form (see, e.g., figs. 8.4–8.6) is often taken as the most characteristic depiction, yet it was by no means the sole one (Hornung, Conceptions of God, 109–10, 123).
mixed form seems to have associated a single deity with the attributes and potencies of generally an animal and a human, thereby differentiating the deity from the mundane realm. Since each form represented a manifestation, the mixed form represented a mixing of manifestations. This does not imply that the deity really appeared in such a hybrid form (outside of the statue).\(^\text{54}\) Rather, the hybrid form combined two or more manifestations in one, stressing at least two aspects of the deity, while simultaneously distancing it from humans and from the deity's true form.\(^\text{55}\)

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\(^{54}\) For example, rather than expressing that the anthropomorphic deity actually had a rope head, the Amduat presents it that way to express its function, i.e., to bind the damned in the underworld (Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 118–21). See fig. 8.6.

\(^{55}\) Many of these images were so well crafted that they even appear “natural.” “If today one stands before the figure of such a god in human form with animal head, it requires some time before one becomes aware that such a figure represents something unnatural” (Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 21). The long tripartite wig worn by most gods facilitated the
The deity's nonhuman head was thus a divine marker of sorts, distinguishing one deity from the next and highlighting the aspects of the deity's nature embodied in the animal. Additional attributes of divinity often appeared on the deity's head, adding to the divine descriptors, often with a specific type of head and various symbols on top of the head.

The nature of the visual representation as an approximation of the deity did not necessarily give the artist freedom of expression, since divine representation was marked by a strong conservatism. Although there was some variety in expression, each form, including the materials used, emerged through the approved channels and corresponded to the deity's "exact" form. It was thus imperative that the "statue was recognizable and appropriate to the deity who was supposed to manifest in it." Each deity in turn had its own recognizable physical form(s).

Although these representations included a combination of human and animal attributes, in the New Kingdom, they consistently stopped short of the monstrous forms that emerged in the Late period, thereby suggesting that the New Kingdom

often seamless transition between human and animal form by disguising it (Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 115).

56. In the New Kingdom, this divine attribute occasionally took the iconographically bold form of a symbol. For example, Osiris appeared with a symbolic Dd-column, and Re was given a solar disk as a head (Hornung, "Ancient Egyptian Religious Iconography," 1714).

57. As a general rule, universal attributes of divinity appeared in the hands, while the attributes specific to a deity appeared on the head. Instead of unique attributes, divinities often carried in their hands the symbols of life and power, which they would bestow on the king. From the Amarna period, various goddesses also had wings, likely highlighting their protective roles (Hornung, "Ancient Egyptian Religious Iconography," 1714–15). However, some deities did indeed hold their characteristic attributes in their hands; Ptah carried a distinctive staff and Osiris held the crook and flail (see, e.g., fig. 8.2).


59. This deviates from modern artistic representation, where diversity of expression in approximating reality is laudable, while traditional conservatism is often considered less valuable.

60. Texts assert that the bones of deities were silver, their flesh gold, and their hair lapis lazuli (Lichtheim, *AEL* 2:198; Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 134; Robins, "Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," 6).

61. Cf. Robins, "Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," 2. Rather than representing the "true" form, the exact form refers to statue's exact correspondence to the model employed, such that it met the divine specifications, whether it is anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, or mixed.


63. "Animal, human or mixed; male, female; anthropomorphic, mumiform, ithyphallic," each "with typical items of insignia" (ibid.).

aesthetic was not entirely dissimilar from our own. For the Egyptians, the deity, like its abode, was often represented in an orderly and beautiful way—in other words, in a way not too distinct from accepted human or animal form. In addition to the concern for aesthetics, such forms and the human-like beings that inhabited them rendered the potent deities more understandable and approachable, giving humanity greater agency.

The exceptions are especially illustrative, as figures of a more hybrid nature were primarily reserved for secondary deities and the potent forces they embodied. Many of these figures need not be approachable, in fact quite the opposite. As divine foes or in tamed form as protective figures, their multidimensionality elicited fear and/or stressed their ability to ward off danger. For example, in its composite form, the “monster,” the Devourer of the Dead, was especially suitable to protect the entrance into the afterlife (fig. 8.7), while the sphinx, despite its mixed form,

65. With the waning power of the monarchy and the influx of foreign influence, depictions in the Third Intermediate period and beyond sacrificed such aestheticism (ibid., 118). They turned to a multiform approach, sacrificing the beauty of the deity for an amalgam of attributes that better approximated the deity’s essence.

66. E.g., such deities rarely had their own temples or received cultic care.
remained orderly and beautiful as befit the divine space that it protected (fig. 2.4). Nonetheless, its mixed form was suitably other and potent enough to protect that space from unwanted intruders. The sphinx’s form, often with a human head and mixed animal body, differentiated it from the major deities and suggests that, unlike the Devourer of the Dead, the sphinx remained somewhat human-like and approachable, suitable for its potential role as an intermediary figure. In addition, while major deities did not deviate too far from human or animal forms, the fact that the obviously potent mixed and monstrous did their bidding indicates that the primary gods were far more potent than their exterior forms would suggest.

**PRIMARY RITUAL TEXTS**

We have minimally established that a deity was not coterminous with its various forms, including its cult images. We now turn to the ritual texts to more precisely determine the relationship between the deity and its image(s) and the nature of the divine installation and maintenance in its terrestrial temple. The Opening of the Mouth ritual seems to have been created to answer the question, “How does an inert statue house (some part of) the divine essence?” The daily cult ritual takes the answer one step further, addressing how the divine presence, once installed, may be maintained. An analysis of each ritual will follow according to the categories of structure, structural interpretation, use, and ideology. After the fourfold analysis of each ritual, we will discuss specific questions these rituals help to answer, such as the divine statue’s perceived origin, the relation of the deity to its statue(s), the necessity of divine nourishment, and the permanence of divine presence in the statue.

**1. The Opening of the Mouth Ritual**

The Opening of the Mouth ritual (wpt-r3 or wn-r3) was performed on all newly formed divine statues in order to prepare them to be fully functioning loci...
of divine presence (fig. 8.8). The ritual, however, was by no means exclusive to
divine cult statues; it was performed on mortuary statues, divine barks, coffins,
mummies, and, at least in the Late period, entire temples as well as other promi-
nent ritual objects. Although performed on divine statues, most extant examples
come from the funerary sphere. Lest we despair at the lack of direct evidence, it
is likely that this ritual, or something quite like it, was performed on divine cult
statues; for it seems that "shared problems found shared solutions." Namely, in
both spheres, inanimate objects had to be (re)animated, giving them the ability to
communicate cultically, such as by consuming offerings.

Bemerkungen zum Mundöffnungsritual,” Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen
of ‘Opening the Mouth’ and Its Interpretation,” Numen 12 (1965): 201–16; Finnestad, “The
Meaning and Purpose of Opening the Mouth in Mortuary Contexts,” Numen 25 (1978):
118–34; Petra Barthelms, Der Übergang ins Jenseits in den thebanischen Beamtengräbern
der Ramessidenzeit (SAGA 2; Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1992), 93–114; Ann
Macy Roth, “The pst-kf and the ‘Opening of the Mouth’ Ceremony: A Ritual of Birth and
Rebirth,” JEA 78 (1992), 113–47; idem, “Fingers, Stars, and the ‘Opening of the Mouth’:
Elbert, Die Vision von der Statue im Stein (Schriften der Philosophisch-historischen Klasse
der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften 5; Heidelberg: Winter, 1998); Lorton,
“Theology of Cult Statues,” 147–79; Jan Assmann, Tod und Jenseits im alten Ägypten
(Munich: Beck, 2001), 408–31; idem, Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt (trans. D.
Lorton; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 310–29; Joachim Friedrich Quack,
“Ein Prätetext und seine Realisierungen: Facetten des ägyptischen Mundöffnungsrituals,” in
Text und Ritual: Kulturwissenschaftliche Essays und Analysen von Sesostris bis Dada (ed. B.
Dücker and H. Roeder; Hermeia 8; Heidelberg: Synchron, 2005), 165–85; idem, "Fragmente
des Mundöffnungsrituals aus Tebtynis,” in The Carlsberg Papyri 7: Hieratic Texts from the
Collection (ed. K. Ryholt; Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006, 69–150); idem,
"Bilder vom Mundöffnungsritual – Mundöffnung an Bildern” in Bild und Ritual: Visuelle
Kulturen in historischer Perspektive (ed. C. Ambos, P. Rösch and S. Weinfurter; Darmstadt:
Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), 18–28.

70. Quack, “Ein Prätetext und seine Realisierungen,” 166.

71. As the primary exception, there is papyri evidence of the Opening of the Mouth for
a divine cult image from Tebtynis (Quack, “Fragmente des Mundöffnungsrituals aus
Tebtynis”). Although the Opening of the Mouth ritual itself is not attested until the New
Kingdom, the term “Opening of the Mouth” appears with no special explanation in the
tomb of an official in the Fourth Dynasty, and first refers to a temple statue with the words,
"fashioning and opening the mouth in the workshop,” from the sun temple of Nyuserre in


73. Ibid., 181; see also 132–33.

74. Ibid., 133; cf. William Kelly Simpson, “Egyptian Sculpture and Two-Dimensional
Representation as Propaganda,” JEA 68 (1982): 267. Or, more expansively, the shared
Fig. 8.8. Scene depicting the Opening of the Mouth of a mummy from The Book of the Dead of Hunefer (Dynasty 19; EA 9901). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

The preserved ritual texts and accompanying images may be divided into scenes, each of which normally include two components, typical of all Egyptian ritual texts, an action and a recitation, both of which were considered essential for ritual efficacy. Of the seventy-five Opening of the Mouth scenes identified by Otto in his composite edition, the first forty-eight appear essentially the same in each extant version, while the remaining scenes are more variable. Some versions have altered, abbreviated, or eliminated some of the remaining scenes to fit purpose could be to make the object cultically operative (Finnestad, "Meaning and Purpose of Opening the Mouth," 121).

75. Quack, "Ein Prätertext und seine Realisierungen," 166–67. The Tomb of Rekhmire provides an especially thorough example of both text and image (for texts and images, see conveniently "Contents of the Ritual for 'Opening the Mouth': The selection of 51 episodes in the tomb-chapel of Rekhmira, in the sequence in which they occur." Online: http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/religion/wpr2.html).

76. Ibid., 168, 170; except when present in abbreviated form in tombs (Barthelmess, Übergang ins Jenseits, 93–114; Quack, "Ein Prätertext und seine Realisierungen," 168).
the context in which they appear. For example, in some instances scenes involving dressing may have been abbreviated or omitted because they were inappropriate for mummies, coffins, and barks. The common presence of an offering table with an offering list in tombs with nearly identical offerings also occasionally rendered the Opening of the Mouth offering scenes redundant. Likewise, scenes involving craftsmen are unnecessary for mummies since they were not crafted.

Given this variability and the difference between mortuary and nonmortuary spheres, we may expect the Opening of the Mouth for divine statues to deviate from this general pattern. However, since no full texts remain from the Opening of the Mouth of divine cult statues, it is impossible to identify definitively any such deviations. Thus, we will follow the composite ritual from the mortuary realm as outlined by Otto. Rather than interpreting each action and each utterance, analysis will focus on the elements that seem most important and most appropriate for examining divine presence.

**Structure**

The ritual begins with the purification, awakening, and dressing of the sem-priest (sm), followed by the artisans appearing before the statue. In the following stage, the sem-priest changes clothes, donning a panther skin, followed by the presentation of the foreleg and the heart of a slaughtered bull. Next, the priest touches the mouth of the statue with various instruments that seem to be artisans' tools as well.

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78. However, when the Opening of the Mouth is visually depicted, offering scenes often remain unabridged (ibid., 173).
80. Indeed, it is not improbable that different temples employed slightly different rituals. This is especially the case if we take into account the diachronic perspective, in which the ritual likely grew and adapted over time (see conveniently Roth, “Opening of the Mouth,” in OEAE 2:605–9).
81. As noted in the introduction, in order to understand the larger ritual and its many individual actions and utterances, it must be situated in its proper context, which is the task of the following analysis.
82. The meaning of the title “sem-priest” remains obscure (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 149).
83. A “stage,” which may include various scenes, refers to a conceptual unit of the ritual identified by structural markers, which may be inferred from, but is not explicitly enumerated in the ritual words and images.
as his little finger. Although the "loving son" then enters and opens the mouth (and eyes) of the statue with an instrument, a finger of electrum, and his little finger and presents the statue with various items that have life-endowing, mouth-opening effects, such as a knife, grapes, an ostrich feather, and water. After the "loving son" leaves, the priest brings the leg and heart of another slaughtered bull before the statue and opens its mouth again with an adze. He then burns incense, presents cloth strips and clothing, anoints the statue, offers green and black eye paint, presents scepters, censes the statue in various ways, performs an act of homage with jars, a libation and censing, and prepares and presents an elaborate food offering, interspersed with censing and libation. Finally, the statue leaves the workshop and is installed in its shrine in the temple.

These ritual actions are accompanied by a series of utterances, which by comparison to other ritual texts, including the daily cult ritual, are brief and rather cryptic. Rather than attempt to interpret all such expressions, we will mention some of the most pertinent. The section involving the artisans is highlighted by the priest's statements and rhetorical questions regarding the statue. As such, the statements are particularly important in uncovering the native interpretations of

84. The little finger was typically used to indicate the application of ointment (Hoffmann, personal communication).

85. It is unclear what exactly opening the mouth and eyes involve. Minimally, it seems to include touching the various elements to the statue's mouth and eyes respectively as well as the recitation of the various utterances.

86. As this ritual derives from the funerary context, it is natural that the "loving son" would appear as the one responsible for easing his (soon-to-be) deceased father into the afterworld. During the Opening of the Mouth of the father's statue, the father would likely have been still alive, as individuals secured their tombs and furnishings, including their statues, during their lifetimes whenever possible (Andrey O. Bolshakov, "The Moment of the Establishment of the Tomb-Cult in Ancient Egypt," AoF 18 [1991]: 204–18; Lorton, "Theology of Cult Statues," 169; Teeter, Religion and Ritual, 123). Of course, for the Opening of the Mouth of the mummy, the father would have been deceased. Since the father–son roles do not seem appropriate to the opening of the mouth for a divine statue, presumably they were either excluded or adapted to fit the divine context.

87. If any fanfare for the installation of the statue into the temple existed, it is not present in the preserved ritual text. However, this does not exclude the possibility of some ceremony. Since the preserved text is from the mortuary sphere, the installation of the statue in the tomb likely would not have been anywhere near as grand an occasion as the installation of the divine statue in its temple.


89. Other utterances—like "How heneg is your mouth! I weigh your mouth over against your bones!"—recur and seem important. However, as their meanings remain obscure, they will not be addressed here (see Otto, Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual, 2:94; Helck, "Bemerkungen zum Mundöffnungsritual," 34–35; Lorton, "Theology of Cult Statues," 172–74).
the ritual." In this section, the priest remarks on the crafting of the statue, exclaiming, "Made perfect for me is my father [the cult statue]! Who has made him perfect for me?" In the ensuing scene, the questioning continues, but in a different tone: "Who has smitten my father? Who has seized his head?" Soon thereafter, the priest remarks, "Lo, my father has been smitten!" The artisans then reply, "Lo, may those who might smite your father be exempt!" In the section involving the bull, the great falcon speaks in the statue's ear, "I have brought you your enemy, for him to be offered beneath you. Atum has slaughtered him for you. Do not approach that god! Receive the foreleg, the eye of Horus; the heart is brought to you with it. Do not approach that god!" As he presents the foreleg, the sem-priest declares four times, "I have opened your mouth for you with the foreleg, eye of Horus." As he uses the various implements, he utters, "Horus has opened your mouth for you, he opens your eyes for you (with) the ntrty-blade, with the Great-of-Power blade, with which the mouth of every god is opened." In addition, the presentations of the ostrich feather, grapes, water, and various food offerings are all declared to be "the eye of Horus."

**Structural Interpretation**

Structurally, this ritual bridges the gap between the crafting of the statue in the workshop and its installation in the temple as a fully functioning locus of divine presence. The ritual establishes a clear connection between several of the elements and the statue, suggesting that in some way the use of these elements brings about the necessary transition. Both the bull's foreleg and heart are indexically connected

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90. Although unfamiliar to modern ears, these meanings will become clear when contextualized in the following analysis.
92. Or, alternatively, again "Who has smitten my father?," evidencing the textual difficulties inherent in this passage (ibid., 155).
93. The verb translated as "exempt" has a basic meaning to "protect" and appears frequently "in legal contexts with the meaning of 'exemption' from taxes or obligations to perform duties that assume the character of taxes. In the present context, this nuance is clearly applied to the possibility of prosecution or punishment for those who would do harm to the statue" (ibid.). This verb is adapted from casuistic law: "As for anyone who might do such-and-such ...," with the apodosis specifying the punishment (Lorton, "The Treatment of Criminals in Ancient Egypt through the New Kingdom," JESHO 20 [1977]: 53–54).
94. Episode 23 from the 18th Dynasty tomb-chapel of Rekhmire (see Norman de Garis Davies, The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē' at Thebes [New York: Plantin, 1943]). The following translations as well are taken from the Rekhmire edition.
95. The sem-priest makes similar statements when applying the other implements.
96. In interpreting the ritual, we must realize that we are dealing with textual and pictorial representations that do not necessarily reflect actual practice.
with the statue as they are presented to it and touched to its mouth. The various tools are likewise indexically bound to the statue, particularly its mouth.

The ritual also establishes hierarchical relationships among the participants. The privileged role of the sem-priests over both the ritualist (hry-hb) and the artisans emerges clearly, while the common people bear no mention at all. The artisans, who had the essential and most intimate role in the crafting stage, have a minimal role after their craftsmanship is complete. The priest inspects their handiwork, yet their only active role is asking for exemption for those who smote the god, presumably themselves. In addition, they are only present for the first part of the ritual. The ritual thus seems to tie up any loose ends relating to the artisans so that they may be removed from the picture entirely. In other words, it functionally limits their role to the crafting and inspection of the deity and limits it from the rest of the ritual process. Although more central than the artisans, the ritualist also seems to play a secondary role. He does not appear to perform any ritual action relating to the statue and his major role seems to be to instruct and assist the sem-priest.

The sem-priest is the main actor and is indexically connected to the statue. He alone seems to come into direct contact with it, twice touching its mouth with his little finger. He is likewise the only character who changes his attire, an action that, because of the fixed setting, helps to mark the transition from one section to the next. In addition, the sem-priest conducts all the important ritual acts and utters many of the ritual recitations.

It seems then that the ritual transitions the statue from one realm to the next, from the workshop to the temple and from a potential to an actual receptacle of the

97. An index is a sign that is existentially related to its signifier. Rather than being a matter of convention—e.g., with a symbol—the connection is a matter of fact (Nancy B. Jay, Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992], 7; see further Charles Sanders Peirce, e.g., Justus Buchler, The Philosophical Writings of Peirce [New York: Dover, 1955]). In this instance, the explicit presentation of the bull’s foreleg and heart to the statue and contact between them indexes their relationship.

98. Other figures emerge in the course of the ritual (e.g., the female greater and lesser falcons), who play a brief yet specific role. Their hierarchical status is difficult to determine.

99. For an examination of these “loose ends,” see the ideology section.

100. For example, his statements seem to be directed toward the priest: “I brand for you your eye, that you may be a ba by means of it!” (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 158) and “Sem-priest, extend your arm...” (p. 161). Even when the ritualist appears to be addressing the statue, the instructions specify that he is facing the sem-priest (p. 162).

101. The “loving son” also makes such intimate contact. However, because he seems more suited to the mortuary role, his role will be omitted from analysis.

102. The presence of many of the separate stages presented in different scenes in the wall reliefs serves as another way to subdivide the ritual (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 148).
divine. At the same time, the ritual marks a transition between primary caretakers, moving from the artisans, who play the essential role in crafting the statue, to the priests, who will now play the essential role of caring for the deity in its temple.¹⁰³

As a prelude to the statue’s installation, the ritual occurs outside of the primary sanctuary, that is, in the workshop. Nonetheless, the ritual in no way eschews careful protocol. As an encounter with the divine, the ritual elicits awe, engenders intimacy, and requires clearly delineated actions and preparations.¹⁰⁴

Use

Functionally, the ritual serves as an intermediate though no less central stage, standing between the finished statue and its taking up residence and rule in the temple. The title of the ritual identifies its purpose as the Opening of the Mouth of the statue.¹⁰⁵ Individual interpretive statements also appear throughout the ritual, especially in the utterances accompanying the actions.¹⁰⁶ For example, the presentation of the bull’s foreleg and heart as well as the cultic use of the various instruments are explicitly said to open the statue’s mouth, while each offering as well as the bull’s foreleg is identified as the eye of Horus. In order to understand these interpretive statements, we now turn to ideology.

Ideology

I begin with some general points of orientation, which will inform the following discussion of the individual elements and their place in the larger whole. Rather than commenting on every detail, analysis will focus on those deemed most pertinent and interesting.

In the Opening of the Mouth ritual, as elsewhere, the Egyptians adopted a comprehensive approach to ritual. Rather than adopting a single solution that best

¹⁰³. As noted above, the role of the “loving son” will be largely ignored because it does not seem to fit the divine sphere.
¹⁰⁴. The various actions and exclamations are precisely enumerated and given to specific actors. To play a role, ritual purity was essential, as the purification of the sem-priest precedes any of the other ritual actions.
¹⁰⁵. Instead of playing a significant role, the actual installation of the statue in the temple seems to be done without fanfare, a mere aftereffect of the “Opening of the Mouth” ritual.
¹⁰⁶. The importance of interpretive statements has been noted by Roy E. Gane and applied to the biblical text (Ritual Dynamic Structure [Gorgias Dissertations 14; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2004]; idem, Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement and Theodicy [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005]). Incorporating the insights of systems theory, especially that of Brian Wilson (Systems: Concepts, Methodologies, and Applications [Chichester: Wiley, 1984]), Gane contends that ritual, like other nonritual systems, finds meaning in the goals attributed to it by the authority who commands the ritual (Ritual Dynamic Structure, 18-23, 50-60; Cult and Character, 7, 13).
fits their agenda, the Egyptians employed "a multiplicity of approaches," amassing and juxtaposing various ritual words and actions designed to achieve the same result, the Opening of the Mouth. Although these approaches do not always logically cohere, at least according to the dictates of Western logic, they were grafted into the ritual with care. As we will see, the approaches are complementary and add to the ritual's comprehensive efficacy, which is especially important in rituals where the achievement of the goal often cannot be tangibly verified.

In addition to adopting multiple approaches, many of the approaches were employed repeatedly (e.g., the central presentation of the bull's foreleg and heart). Rather than being redundant, these too were purposeful, adding new meaning through nuanced differences and their presence in different settings. Strictly speaking, repetitive statements or actions in a new setting are not repetitive at all. More simply, performing a single action multiple times was considered to be more effective than a single performance.

There is also some evidence that the ritual itself was repeated, that a single Opening of the Mouth was insufficient. For example, in the mortuary sphere, it seems that additional Opening of the Mouth rituals were performed on statues at the annual mortuary festival, the Feast of the Valley. This need not suggest that the enlivened statue had somehow died. Rather, on special occasions the statue required a revitalization or perhaps an increased vitalization to prepare it to partici-

108. Roth ("Buried Pyramids and Layered Thoughts," 991–1003; idem, "Representation of the Divine," 24–37) posits the concept of nesting to explain the likely gradual accumulation of alternative approaches. She contends that, instead of viewing each explanation as equally valid, multiple explanations "represent a layered hierarchy, in which the oldest explanation or manifestation is retained, embedded in a sequence of later interpretations" ("Representation of the Divine," 28). "Supplementary metaphors, either borrowed from related rituals or invented afresh, infused new meaning into older forms, forms that were themselves the result of an endless sequence of such infusions and reinterpretations. Old metaphors were rarely discarded; instead, they were embedded in successive new versions, intensifying the ritual's effectiveness, deepening and enriching its meaning, and preserving the authority conferred by its age" (idem, "Fingers, Stars," 79). "The entire amalgam thus combined the power and advantages of these and all the intervening nested stages" (idem, "Representation of the Divine," 28).
109. Roth, "pss-kt," 147; idem, "Fingers, Stars," 79; Quack, "Ein Prätex und seine Realisierungen," 169; pace Otto, Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsrutil. In some cases, multiple means of achieving the same end were part of the ritual from the beginning.
110. In ritual terms, repetition is also a central method used to ritualize an event, i.e., identify it as especially important. According to Catherine Bell, ritualization is a "way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in relation to other, more quotidian, activities" (Bell, Ritual Theory, 74).
111. Finnestad, "Meaning and Purpose of Opening the Mouth," 125.
pate cultically in the important festivities. It is likewise possible that in the divine sphere additional Opening of the Mouth rituals were performed on special occasions not to resurrect the god in the statue, but rather to enhance the divine statue’s cultic vitality, above and beyond the vitalizing effects of the daily cult ritual.

Furthermore, many of the multiple complementary and repeated approaches to Opening the Mouth function simultaneously on multiple levels. First, some ritual activities produce instrumental effects (e.g., burning incense makes the room smell nice). Second, throughout the ritual, the various recitations appeal to mythic precedents, equating the actors, objects, or activities with their mythic counterparts. For example, the ostrich feather, grapes, water, and various food offerings are identified as “the eye of Horus.” Rather than following a single myth through the course of the ritual, utterances draw from a variety of myths and thereby connect, and indeed seem to equate, a ritual element with an analogous element in the mythic sphere in order to increase its ritual efficacy. For example, while a grape remains a grape, through mythic associations it also becomes “the eye of Horus,”

112. Cf. ibid., esp. 125–26; see also Aylward M. Blackman, “The House of the Morning,” JEA 5 (1918): 160. This accords with Egyptian cyclical thinking in which, e.g., the sun had to be daily reborn or the cult statue had to sleep and eat daily to maintain its vitality. An additional Opening of the Mouth also ritualized or marked the importance of the festival, since it warranted such an important activity.

113. Ritual activity in general and ritual signs in particular are characterized by a condensation of meaning, multivocality, and ambiguity (Kertzer, Ritual, Politics, and Power, 11). Ritual can condense a rich diversity of meanings into a single sign (see esp. Turner, Forest of Symbols [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967]), e.g., a bull’s foreleg may be interpreted as a vitalization of inert matter, a meal, or the biological equivalent of the craftsmen’s tools (see further below). Multivocality suggests that the same sign “may be understood by different people in different ways” (Kertzer, Ritual, Politics, and Power, 11, drawing on the works of Turner, Forest of Symbols, 50 and Nancy D. Munn, “Symbolism in Ritual Context: Aspects of Symbolic Action,” in Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology [ed. J. Honigman; Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973], 580), in different ways in different contexts, and especially in our case, in different ways in the same context by the same person (e.g., on literal and symbolic levels). Ritual ambiguity indicates that an individual sign has no precise meaning when contextless (cf. Frits Staal, “The Meaninglessness of Ritual,” Numen 26 [1979]: 2–22; idem, Rules Without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences [New York: Peter Lang, 1989], 127–29, 131, 134, 330; Gane, Cult and Character, 4–6). Rather, meaning is assigned to it only in context (e.g., severing a bull’s foreleg alternatively may be interpreted as a necessary and effective means of enlivening inert matter or as a sadistic episode of animal cruelty).

associated with "every alleviation of lack or need."\textsuperscript{115} Third, Egyptian ritual makes various analogous associations such that a ritual element or activity is symbolically identified and in some sense equated with other elements, activities, and potencies.\textsuperscript{116} For example, the Opening of the Mouth seems to be associated with birth, while one of its central elements—the bull's foreleg—is identified with strength.\textsuperscript{117} One of the primary ways of making such associations is through wordplay. Rather than being playful, "wordplay was regarded as a highly serious and controlled use of language."\textsuperscript{118} Punning plays an especially significant role as a meaningful way of making connections between words and the objects they refer to and in some ways embody.\textsuperscript{119} Similarly, the Egyptian texts seem to use the multiple meanings of a word's semantic domain in one space in order to add layers of meaning.\textsuperscript{120}

\textbf{Ideology of Individual Elements}

Direct rites of purification, which seem to be an essential component of all Egyptian divine rituals, appear only at the beginning and end of the Opening of the Mouth.\textsuperscript{121} By bookending the ritual with purifications, which are elsewhere associated with rituals involving deities, the writers stress the importance of the ritual as a means of contacting the divine and of the statue as the locus of this contact, while highlighting the importance of purity throughout and, by extension, the standards of perfection necessary for the ritual to be successful.\textsuperscript{122} Rather than serving as a simple repetition, the anointing associated with the final purification adds a new


\textsuperscript{116} Teeter ("Temple Cults," in \textit{The Egyptian World} [ed. T. A. H. Wilkinson; London: Routledge, 2007], 312) characteristically refers to the actions and recitations as symbolically awakening the statue's senses. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that the relationship between the symbol and its referent is not simply one of association. Rather, through the medium of ritual the symbol in some sense becomes what it symbolizes.

\textsuperscript{117} See further below.

\textsuperscript{118} Assmann, \textit{The Search for God}, 87.


\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 134.

\textsuperscript{121} Bjerke, "Egyptian Ritual of 'Opening the Mouth," 209–11.

\textsuperscript{122} In addition, purifications clearly demarcate the beginning and the end of the ritual.
element.123 Alongside the statue's adornment and investment with a ruler's insignia, anointing signifies the deity's installation into office.124

The use of incense to purify the air warrants further comment. Incense removes any olfactory impurity, surrounding the deity, its space and its priests with the divine aroma. Alongside radiance, aroma is a primary sign of divinity.125 For example, when the god Amun approaches the sleeping Queen Ahmosa in order to beget Queen Hatshepsut by her, his divine aroma gives him away even though he takes the form of her husband, Thutmose I.126 “Like that of (the incense land) Punt,” the divine aroma seems to be associated with the incense burned in the temple.127 By burning incense in the sanctuary, the room smells like the divine sphere and is thus a suitable place for divine manifestation. Similarly, by shrouding himself in incense, the priest becomes god-like and thus fit to enter the divine presence. Egyptian wordplay demonstrates this reality, as “burning ‘incense’ (sntr) for the god could ‘deify’ (sntri) the king.”128

In the artisan scene,129 the various statements regarding the perfection of the statue and the smiting necessary to perfect it gain clarity when the statue is understood analogically as a body.130 In order to be suitable for its divine resident, the body had to be perfectly crafted, yet the very actions required to craft it would be a serious assault on a human body.131 The craftsmen, indeed their craftsmanship it-

123. Bjerke, “Egyptian Ritual of ‘Opening the Mouth,'” 211.
125. Hornung, Conceptions of God, 133.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Bell, “The New Kingdom Divine Temple,” 174; cf. Nielsen, Incense in Ancient Israel, 9. In the Egyptian pyramid texts, incense also ensures that, upon death, the king takes his place among his divine brethren since his “scent is as their scent, [his] sweat is as the sweat of the Two Enneads” (Utt. 412). Similarly, the king says, “my sweat is the sweat of Horus, my odor is the odor of Horus” (Utt. 508).
129. The preceding vision, preserved from a mortuary context, in which the form of the statue is revealed, may be unnecessary, since in the case of the divine image, the artisans may simply reproduce the previous statue. However, theoretically if the statue is damaged or if the deity desires a new form, consulting the deity ensures that the statue conforms to the deity’s wishes, serving as the deity’s “exact shape” (for this phrase of Horemheb, see Murnane, Texts from the Amarna Period, 233; cf. Mesopotamia and Hatti).
130. Or, perhaps, even before it has been crafted, the statue already is the divine body, which must be perfectly crafted to make it suitable. See, e.g., the reference to the statue as the divine body in the Memphite theology (II. 59–60; see Assmann, The Search for God, 45–46; Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 187).
131. Even in the mortuary realm, preservation of the body was essential.
self, thus play an ambivalent role. They are both applauded for their craftsmanship of the divine statue and must be exempted from the potential damage it causes.\textsuperscript{132} The artisans’ plea for exemption and the very possibility of harm are expressed indirectly, as the perceived violent assault is cast in the hypothetical future. “Lo, may those who might smite [the cult statue] be exempt!”\textsuperscript{133} The artisans thereby implicitly deny that they have participated in the assault and that any retribution due should be withheld since such violence is necessary in creating the statue.\textsuperscript{134}

The donning of the panther skin, which follows, does more than simply indicate a change of scene; it also serves as a highly productive pun. The word ba translates as both “panther” and “manifest power.”\textsuperscript{135} By donning the panther skin, the priest himself becomes manifestly powerful,\textsuperscript{136} likely manifesting the power—that is, physical strength—of the panther whose skin he wears, and is thus equipped to perform the ritual effectively.\textsuperscript{137}

In the next scene, the bull’s foreleg and heart occupy primary position,\textsuperscript{138} together endowing the statue with physical strength and consciousness respectively.\textsuperscript{139} Like the panther skin, the foreleg also serves as a meaningful pun, such that the foreleg (ḫpš) may be associated with physical strength (ḫpš).\textsuperscript{140} Beyond

\textsuperscript{132} This approval occurs both within the ritual itself (“Made perfect for me is my father!”) and is amply attested in other sources; there is substantial evidence that the Egyptians both acknowledged and celebrated the physical aspect of the statue and its manufacturing process. In the textual realm, “kings and officials proudly recorded their role in the manufacture of cult statues, sometimes including the material of which they were made” (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 157).

\textsuperscript{133} The verb is as clear in the Egyptian as it is in English (ibid., 156).

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 156–57.

\textsuperscript{135} Regarding ba as “manifest power,” see Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 134.

\textsuperscript{136} As declared by the accompanying ritualist who claims that the sem-priest will be “manifestly powerful” or “manifest power” (ibid., 159).

\textsuperscript{137} Goyon, Rituels funéraires, 120 n. 4; Helck, Untersuchungen zur Thinitenzeit (ÄA 45; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1987), 51; Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 159–61.

\textsuperscript{138} From both the pictorial representations and the accompanying words, it is clear that the presentation of the foreleg and the heart of the bull are the primary elements of the ritual. We may also be able to distinguish between these two elements, as the text makes it clear that the foreleg itself serves to “open the mouth” (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 164). Thus, it would seem to play a more prominent role than even the heart. However, this need not be the case, as the reference to the foreleg may imply the presence of the other elements, most notably the heart but also perhaps the goat and goose (which are also slaughtered and presented to the deity).

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 165.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 159; cf. Peter Munro, “Die Nacht vor der Thronbesteigung—zum ältesten Teil des Mundöffnungsrituals,” in Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf (vol. 2; ed. F. Junge; Göttingen: Hubert, 1984), 90–
the obvious punning, the foreleg likely carries additional freight. The freshly severed foreleg of a bull exhibits spontaneous muscle contractions and tremors for up to twenty minutes, which may continue to be induced artificially for up to two hours.141 Attaching this twitching mass of live flesh spurring the bull’s life blood to the statue indexically connects the two elements and suggests a transfer of the potent life energies and potency of the bull. In addition, the hieroglyph for “foreleg” resembles the adze, the instrument used to carve the statue and literally open its mouth and the instrument ritually employed in the following scenes.142 Thus, the association with the adze reinforces the textual reference to the foreleg opening the mouth, suggesting that it is the biological equivalent to the craftsmen’s tools. On the mythic plane, the accompanying recitation also explicitly identifies the foreleg as the eye of Horus, suggesting that it serves to make the statue whole and without lack.

The heart carries a more straightforward yet no less important meaning. The Egyptian heart was perceived as the body’s emotional and cognitive center, the self-consciousness.143 As such, it endowed the statue with consciousness, which together with physical strength makes up the essential attributes of a human life.144 The heart’s red appearance and the likelihood that it continued to spurt blood also seem to suggest a connection with life, taken from the bull and imparted to the statue.145

Before moving on, it bears mentioning that here, as elsewhere in Egyptian ritual, the slaughter of the sacrificial animal is also associated with the destruction


142. Assmann, Death and Salvation, 315.

143. Claude Traunecker, Les Dieux de l’Égypte (Paris: University of France Press, 1992), 40; Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 140. “Ilb is the world used for ‘heart’ in the daily cult ritual, while the Opening of the Mouth ritual employs haty. Both terms can be used for the heart as the seat of emotions, while of the two, it is haty that tends to be employed to express the specific connotation of the heart as a physical organ, which is essentially appropriate to the sacrificial context here” (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 165 n. 64). On the nuances of meaning of the words for “heart” see Piankoff, Le “Coeur” dans les textes égyptiens depuis l’Ancien jusqu’à la fin du Nouvel Empire (Paris: Geuthner, 1930), 10–13; Bernard Long, “Le Ilb et le h3ty dans les textes médicaux de l’Égypte ancienne,” in Hommages à François Daumas (vol. 2; ed. A. Guillaumont; Montpellier: University of Montpellier, 1986), 484–85.


145. This impression is reinforced by the fact that the heart and leg are hastily delivered to the statue (Assmann, Death and Salvation, 325), perhaps to visually and conceptually maximize the transferral of life.
of the deity's enemies. They simultaneously function as the biological counterparts to the artisans' tools, which serve to open the statue's mouth by endowing it with the vital strength and consciousness still visibly pulsing through the foreleg and heart.

The next episode involving the application of the artisan's tools to the statue's mouth, like the presentation of foreleg and heart, explicitly serves to open the statue's mouth, yet approaches the problem from a different angle. In this context, the priestly activities and recitations seem to "transvalue the manufacturing process into something of ritual effectiveness in quickening the statue by endowing it with its faculties, especially the ability to open its mouth." In other words, the ritual seems to employ the very same or similar tools used by the artisans for the purpose of enlivening the divine statue, thereby connecting the crafting of the statue with its enlivening and the artisans' tools with both important elements.

The ritual accomplishes this transvaluation through the creative use of language, both in the names ascribed to the tools and the use of puns. Through wordplay, the tools are made to transmit various potencies that contribute to enlivening the divine statue. The instrument, an adze called a ntrty, recalls the root for god (ntr), and as such alludes to the statue's infusion with divinity. In fact, the scene with the adze was considered so central that it was used as shorthand for the entire ritual. The next implement, called Great-of-Power, co-opts and applies to the statue ḫkš, the "all-pervading coercive power" characteristic of deities and responsible for creating and maintaining the world. Another tool, the pss-kf, together with the goose (smn) and goat (šr) presented in the offering scene, seems


148. Otto (Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual, 2.22) notes that the names given to the artisan's tools are mostly not attested outside of the ritual and thus seem to be either special names applied to the ritual or ancient names no longer in use.

149. Lorton, "Theology of Cult Statues," 149.

150. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual*, 2.83. As noted, its visual association with the hieroglyph for the bull's foreleg serves as a conceptual link between the two episodes.

151. Assmann, "Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Egypt," in Johnston, ed., *Religions of the Ancient World*, 350. Such coercive power in Egypt and elsewhere is often translated as "magic." Here, we avoid such a term because of its different and often negative modern connotations and the problematic dichotomy commonly drawn between ancient religion and magic.

152. In its more immediate context, the goat is connected with a pun on the word šr, "approach" (Lorton, "Theology of Cult Statues," 170) or "ascend."
to form a productive pun that elucidates its purpose. The accompanying utterance states, “I make firm (smn) for you your jaws (śnty), they being split (px3).”\textsuperscript{153} With this gesture, the transvaluation of the manufacturing process seems to be complete, confirmed by the utterance that appears to ensure that the statue’s mouth will be able to open and close (split).\textsuperscript{154}

In addition, some of the elements seem to allude to childbirth, suggesting that the statue is not only made but also born.\textsuperscript{155} For example, the verb for making a divine cult statue is msi ‘to give birth,’\textsuperscript{156} the psṣ-kf seems to mimic childbirth, as it serves to cut the umbilical cord of a newborn baby, while the use of the little fingers and perhaps also the finger of electrum seem to mimic the clearing of a newborn’s mouth.\textsuperscript{157} More simply, since before the ritual began the statue was not alive with the divine presence and the faculties necessary to communicate cultically, opening its mouth marks the birth of this particular symbiosis of statue and deity.\textsuperscript{158}

The grapes and the ostrich feather are also linguistically evocative. The presentation of the grapes reinforces several of the ritual’s main purposes, while in some ways forming a microcosm of it. “Since the function of the statue’s mouth is to consume cult offerings, the presentation of the grapes can be seen as encapsulating two main purposes of the ritual: it endows the statue with its ability to perform (iri) this function, while the grapes” (l3rrt) approximate the purpose of “the offerings (irit [irit], ritual ‘act’ …, also mythologized as irit ‘Eye’ of Horus).”\textsuperscript{159} The utterance accompanying the ostrich feather (śwt) explains its purpose: “Take for yourself the Eye of Horus! Your face will not be empty/deprived (shu [śwt]) because of it!”\textsuperscript{160}

Although seemingly repetitive, the second presentation of the foreleg and heart occurs in a new setting with new elements and is thus not redundant.\textsuperscript{161} The endowment with physical strength and consciousness likely continues to be pres-

\textsuperscript{153} Translation after Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 170.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{155} As we will see, other texts suggest that in addition to being humanly contructed and born, a cult statue was also created by the deity who inhabited it.
\textsuperscript{156} Wb II 138 12; Roth, “psṣ-kf,” 146; Rainer Hannig, Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch: Die Sprache der Pharaonen (2800–950 v. Chr.) (2nd ed.; Mainz: von Zabern, 2003), 382.
\textsuperscript{157} See Roth, “psṣ-kf”; idem, “Fingers, Stars,”
\textsuperscript{158} See further below.
\textsuperscript{159} Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 171.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Cf. Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 174–75, though it is possible that the ritual may not have involved the slaughter of a second bull (Otto, Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual, 2.103; Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 175).
ent in this new context, reinforced by the repetition of the mouth-opening process after the use of the artisans' tools. In addition, various elements differ from the previous rite and serve to enhance the mouth opening. First, instead of the great falcon, the lesser falcon speaks in the ear of the sacrificed animals, which together with the great falcon in the first slaughtering scene, establishes a mythological link to Isis and Nephtys, the sisters of Osiris, who mourned their slain brother in this particular bird form. In the Opening of the Mouth ritual context, their utterances associate the slaughtered animal(s) with the enemy, stereotypically Seth, who murdered Osiris and snatched Horus' eye, such that its slaughter brings an end to divine opposition and restores divine fullness through the presentation of the foreleg as the eye of Horus. The term used to designate the second bull (ssr) is especially evocative, as it seems to pun ss “to open,” which figures prominently in the falcon's question, “Is your mouth open (sesh [ss]) now?” By delaying the pun to this point, the ritual implies that only now can an affirmative answer be given.

With the completion of the Opening of the Mouth process, it is now possible that the presentation of the foreleg and heart involves a first meal, a possibility enhanced by its position before the elements of the daily cult ritual and the feeding inherent in it. Since the statue has now been enlivened, it may now properly draw strength from these essential elements in a new way as a special first meal, accompanied by the elements of the daily ritual that will soon make up its daily care and feeding regimen. Rather than dwelling on them here, the analysis of these elements will be addressed in the analysis of the daily ritual. Suffice it to say that these elements invigorate the now-living statue as material sustenance—that

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162. However, for the divine cult image, they would likely not function as mourners since no one has died (cf. Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 174).

163. In addition to the two falcons, the bulls themselves seem to be distinguished in that one is associated with Upper Egypt and the other with Lower Egypt (ibid.).

164. Ibid.

165. Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 174–75; pace Assmann, who states emphatically that it has “nothing to do with the ordinary food offering” (Death and Salvation, 326). Although it serves to transfer the bull's vital energies to the statue, there is no reason that it cannot simultaneously serve as a first meal, a position strengthened by the presentation of a foreleg in the daily offering meal, where it serves both as an element of the daily meal and as the strength of the eye of Horus (LACMA Ostrakon; Kathlyn M. Cooney and J. Brett McClain, “The Daily Offering Meal in the Ritual of Amenhotep I: An Instance of the Local Adaption of Cult Liturgy,” JANER 5 [2006]: 54).

166. On the similarity of the concluding elements of the Opening of the Mouth and the daily cult ritual, see Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 149. In some cases, an additional opening of the mouth rite with an adze follows, adding to the efficacy of the mouth opening by repeating the activity with the instruments after the second presentation of bull's foreleg and heart and completing the doublet.
is, care and food—with heightened potencies derived from mythic associations and wordplay and thus serve as a fitting end to the enlivening process.

Enlivening as a Joint Effort

The Opening of the Mouth brings the statue to life and charges it with the appropriate divine powers. While the ritual serves to open the mouth of the statue, it gives no indication of when or how the divine presence enters the statue, whether it is there from the beginning and/or appears only in increments. Some texts, according to Junker, refer to the divine “indwelling” or “installation” (Einwohnung), in which the divine ba descends from the celestial sphere to indwell its terrestrial cult image.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, although it seems clear that (some part of) the divine essence installs itself in the cult image, it remains unclear how and when the deity does so, especially in the context of the Opening of the Mouth. Such an omission need not concern us overmuch, for ritual texts tend to stress the human role, the human preparation for and ritual activity necessary to induce divine indwelling.¹⁶⁸ Since divine indwelling falls outside of the human purview, it need not be thoroughly described. Human servants must prepare, protect, and empower the deity’s home and its body for divine presence, in essence getting the house in order so that its divine resident will indeed take up residence and bring divine blessing to the community responsible for its care. As we will see, the deity itself must decide to move into and stay in its terrestrial home.¹⁶⁹ In this joint venture, it would seem

¹⁶⁷. The term “indwelling” is especially appropriate to the Greco-Roman period. However, the concept appears at least as early as the 18th Dynasty in the mortuary sphere, where the ba of the deceased descends from heaven to indwell images and the mummy (Assmann, The Search for God, 431). Similar conceptions also appear earlier in the divine sphere (see, e.g., ibid., 42–47). E.g., the Memphite theology (to be dated anywhere between the reign of Ramessess II to that of Shabaka of Dynasty 25 [Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 187; regarding the problem of dating, see further Friedrich Junge, “Zur Fehldatierung des sog. Denkmals memphitischer Theologie oder der Beitrag der ägyptische Theologie zur Geistesgeschichte der Spätzeit,” Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo 29 (1973): 195–204; Hans Goedicke, “727 vor Christus,” WZKM 69 (1977): 1–19; James P. Allen, Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts (Yale Egyptological Studies 2; New Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar, 1988), 43]) refers to the gods as “entering” their bodies (Assmann, The Search for God, 46).

¹⁶⁸. The recitations more often directly address the deity, yet rather than describing the deity’s activity, they often serve to explain and empower human activity or to entreat the deity to partake of the elements being proffered.

¹⁶⁹. Cf. Cooney and McClain, “The Daily Offering Meal,” 70: “Liturgical practice wafts for divinity to manifest itself by creating the conditions for the god to appear. The ritual meal, the sacred space, the magical incantations, and the offerings that symbolically become what they need to be all create the necessary conditions, but in the end, the human element must simply wait for the divine element to become manifest.”
that priests enliven the image and make it a suitable divine vessel, all the while appealing to deities and divine energies, while the deity fills the living body with its divine essence.\textsuperscript{170}

**Origin of the Divine Statue**

Indwelling the statue seems to be primarily a divine endeavor, while enlivening it appears to be a joint effort. What about the statue itself? Who is responsible for its creation? In the ritual text, although their role is minimized and sanitized, the artisans nonetheless are clearly responsible for the construction of the divine statue. Various inscriptions likewise proudly stress the human role in crafting the divine image.\textsuperscript{171} However, hymns and mythological texts tend to assert that it is divinely created, not humanly crafted.\textsuperscript{172} In fact, in some cases, the statue is described as self-created—that is, created by the deity who will indwell it. For example, in the Leiden hymn, Amun is described as he who “built his images, who himself created himself.”\textsuperscript{173} Even within the Opening of the Mouth ritual itself, as we have seen, the statue is born in addition to being made. How are we to reconcile these claims? In the Egyptian world, each was an equally valid means of overcoming the inherent uneasiness with identifying a deity with its statue, while together they served as a more valid means of achieving the desired end than any one means could alone. Although they might not logically cohere, at least according to modern standards, the Egyptians juxtaposed alternate claims to add to the cumulative effect.\textsuperscript{174} Ritual efficacy requires divine-human cooperation, yet the various texts often opt to highlight the aspect of that process that is most appropriate to their context. Wishing to highlight their piety, kings tended to stress their role in crafting the divine

\textsuperscript{170} See further below under “Relationship of the Deity to Its Statue(s).”

\textsuperscript{171} For example, Horemheb declares that he “created [the gods’] statues, each in their exact shape” (Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period*, 233).

\textsuperscript{172} Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 185. For example, in the Memphite Theology, Ptah “made their (the deity’s) bodies according to their wishes” (l. 59; Assmann, *The Search for God*, 46). This is also the case in some historical texts. For example, an inscription of Ramesses II describes how the god as cult statue was already waiting in the mountain for the king to discover (Cairo CGC 34504; Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical: Ramesses II, Inscriptions* [vol 2. Oxford: Blackwell, 1979], 361 l. 1–362 l. 12; idem., *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated & Annotated: Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions* [vol. 2; Oxford: Blackwell, 1996], 193–95).

\textsuperscript{173} Translation after Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 185.

\textsuperscript{174} Here, they posit different claims, all which, to the Egyptian mind, could be true, yet none of which possessed a monopoly on truth. Rather than try to reconcile conflicting claims, writers often pragmatically chose the expression that best fit their current need and rhetorical purposes.
image according to the divine wishes and of the finest materials. Wishing to exalt the deity, hymns instead highlight the divine element.

2. DAILY CULT RITUAL

Once the statue has been fully endowed with the divine and placed safely in the temple, how do the people safeguard this presence? The daily cult ritual provides the answer to this question and further discloses the nature of the divine presence as well as the proper human response to it.

The daily cult ritual involves two primary elements: the care and the feeding of the deities in their various temples. These elements are often attested separately and mirror the final elements of the Opening of the Mouth ritual and the king's daily care. The daily care of deities is attested on the wall scenes in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, the temple of Horus at Edfu, and on several papyri (Papyrus Berlin 3055 from the 22nd Dynasty describing the daily care of Amun and 3014 and 3052 describing the care of Mut). Wall

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175. The elements related to divine care have been misleadingly referred to as the daily cult ritual (see, e.g., Alexandre Moret, *Le Rituell du culte divin journalier en Egypte, d’apres les papyrus de Berlin et les textes du temple de Seti Ier, à Abydos* [Paris: Leroux, 1902]), without mention of the elements involving daily divine feeding. The elements related to divine care have also been called the cult image ritual (*Kultbildritual*), which is likewise imprecise, as only part of the ritual directly involves the cult image (Harold Hays, “The Ritual Scenes in the Chapel of Amun,” in *The Epigraphic Survey, Medinet Habu IX: The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part I: The Sanctuary* [OIP 136; Chicago: University of Chicago, 2009], 3 n. 17). Hays refers to the elements related to divine care more generally as the “temple sanctuary ritual” (ibid., 3). One may loosely refer to them as the divine care ritual, since they involve elements of intimate care that do not involve feeding. In addition, since the two papyrus exemplars feature Amenhotep I as either the donor or beneficiary, the daily feeding ritual has been referred to as the ritual of Amenhotep I, which has wrongly conjured up connotations of a ritual for the royal ancestors (ibid., 8). It also has been also referred to as the offering ritual (*Opferritual*), which is far more appropriate. I have opted to refer to it as the daily feeding ritual, so that it may form the pair care and feeding, classically posited for the daily cult of Mesopotamian gods (A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* [2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977], 183–96). In addition, several texts refer to the offerings as ‘meals’ for the god (Utt. 273–274; Uvo Hölscher, *The Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, Part I: The Excavation of Medinet Habu*, Vol. 3 [OIP 53; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941], pl. 138 col. 45; Ben J. J. Haring, *Divine Households: Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes* [Egpytologische Uitgaven 12; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1997], 47; Teeter, “Temple Cults,” 315). However, I recognize that offering ritual is perhaps a more appropriate title, since not every element involves feeding the deity.


scenes in the hypostyle hall of the temple of Amun at Karnak, Abydos, and the
temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu as well as papyri from Cairo (CG 58030),
Turin (CGT 54041), the British Museum (Papyrus British Museum 10689), and
Tebtynis provide our primary evidence for divine feeding.178 Although evidence
for the daily care appears in separate sources from the daily feeding ritual, Nelson
has demonstrated that the daily feeding ritual in the morning followed the daily
care ritual such that the two together formed the daily cult ritual.179 With relatively
small variations, the same ritual was shared by temples throughout the land.180
The meal element of the daily ritual occurred thrice daily, corresponding to human
meals.181 While there remains no scholarly consensus on the extent of the
afternoon and evening services, all agree that the morning was the most substanc-
tial and the one represented primarily in the extant evidence.182 Like the Opening
of the Mouth ritual, the larger ritual was conveniently subdivided into various
stages, each often with its own name (e.g., “lighting the fire,” “taking the censer,”
and “opening the face”).183

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178. Nikolaus Tacke, “Das Opferritual des ägyptischen Neuen Reiches,” in Rituale in der
Vorgeschichte, Antike und Gegenwart; Studien zur vorderasiatischen, prähistorischen und
klassischen Archäologie, Ägyptologie, alten Geschichte, Theologie und Religionswissenschaft;
interdisziplinäre Tagung vom 1.–2. Februar 2002 an der Freien Universität Berlin;
Internationale Archäologie; Arbeitsgemeinschaft; Symposium, Tagung, Kongress; 4; (ed. C.
Metzner-Nebelsick; Rahden: Leidorf, 2003), 27–29; Hays, “Ritual Scenes in the Chapel of
Amun,” 7–8. Temple walls are also covered with inventory lists enumerating the requirements
for daily service (Harold H. Nelson and Uvo Hölscher, Work in Western Thebes, 1931–1933
[OIC 18; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934], 42–63; Haring, Divine Households,
39–51, 399–410; Teeter, “Temple Cults,” 315). In addition, several economic texts detail the
source of the materials and the record of their transfer from one temple to another (Teeter,
Religion and Ritual, 47). For the papyri from Tebtynis, see Jürgen Oising and Gloria Rosati,

179. Harold H. Nelson, “Certain Reliefs at Karnak and Medinet Habu and the Ritual of
Amenophis I,” JNES 8 (1949): 202; Barta, “Kult,” 844; Hays, “Ritual Scenes in the Chapel of
Amun,” 11–12.

180. Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 132. However, there is some variability, especially
in the elements related to divine care (Hays, “Ritual Scenes in the Chapel of Amun” 3),
as the care could be adapted to suit the differing needs and characteristics of the specific
deities (Holger Hussy, Die Epiphanie und Erneuerung der Macht Gottes: Szenen des täglichen
Kultbildrituals in den ägyptischen Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Epoche [Studien zu den
Rituszahlen altägyptischer Tempel 5; Dettelbach: Röll, 2007], 159).


182. Ibid., 316. See, e.g., Utt. 273:4: “Their big ones are for his morning meal; their middle-
sized ones are for his evening meal; their little ones are for his night meal” (translation after
Teeter, “Temple Cults,” 324 n. 1).

183. Regarding the latter, see esp. Angelika Lohwasser, Die Formel “Öffnen des Gesichts”
Structure

In theory, only the king could interact directly with the gods in the cult (e.g., as seen in temple reliefs). However, in practice, the king could not be always and everywhere present to perform rituals. In turn, he often, if not always, had priestly stand-ins who repeatedly proclaimed that they came in the name of the king. As in the Opening of the Mouth ritual, each priestly activity is accompanied by a recitation. However, the utterances are fuller and more comprehensible in the daily cult ritual.  

After the royal representative is ritually purified with water, he lights a fire and burns incense on a censer over the flame. He then advances to the shrine, breaks the cord and clay seal that bind the door bolt, and removes the bolt that holds the double door of the shrine shut. The ritual continues with opening the doors of the shrine and seeing the god. Acts of worship follow, including anointing the statue with honey and censing it with incense, during which time the priest assures the deity he has not come to harm it. The priest also declares, “I bring you your heart in your body, set in its place” and that the perfume serves to bind the god’s “bones, [to] join for him his limbs.” Next, the priest enters the “house” and the “shrine,” presumably the larger stone shrine and the smaller wooden double-doored shrine within it, to embrace the statue. Thereupon the divine presence is finally identified: “oh living ba who smites his enemies, your ba is with you and your sekhem is at your side.” The officiant then closes the doors of the shrine, only to reopen them with repeated cultic acts and exclamations. After a series of repeated actions, the section ends with a presentation of the goddess Maat to the resident deity in the form of a statue.

In preparation for the daily removal of the deity from its shrine, the priest scatters pure white sand on the floor of the sanctuary. He then recites a liturgy

(BzÄ 11; Vienna: Afro-Pub, 1991).

184. Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 149. Only a few of the utterances will be mentioned explicitly. In the text, however, they occupy by far the most space, as each scene consists of a brief heading and a detailed recitation.

185. This bolt is called the “finger” (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 136).

186. Referred to as the “opening (i.e., revelation) of the face” and “seeing the god” respectively (ibid., 139).

187. Ibid., 140.

188. Given that these areas are too small to enter, it seems that the officiant is merely extending his arms inside.

189. The terms ba (b3) and sekhem (shm) roughly translate as “manifestation” and “power” respectively (ibid., 141).

190. At the beginning of this section, ba and sekhem reappear: “Your manifestation (ba) is powerful (sekhem)....” (ibid., 142).
entitled “laying hands upon the deity” before removing it from the shrine. Following additional purifications with water and incense, the priest removes the deity’s outer garment and jewelry and wipes away the previous day’s unguents. Once suitably cleansed, the priest presents the deity with strips of red, white, and green cloth and green and black eye make-up. The priest adorns the deity with bracelets, a collar, and anklets and presents it with scepters and a headdress suitable to its office. The statue was then wrapped in its “great garment.”

After being dressed for the occasion, the deity is presented with a sumptuous meal, which has been prepared in the room with the offering table preceding the sanctuary during the course of the divine care. Thus the feeding portion of the care and feeding of the deity begins, consisting of offerings of substantial quantities of high-quality food and drink accompanied by censing. After the deity is sated, the food is taken away and the deity is prepared for sleep. Following suitable purifications, the deity returns to its shrine and the doors are again closed and sealed. As an exit ritual, the priest performs the “Bringing of the Foot” rite, in which the priest backs out of the sanctuary, sweeping away his footprints and all traces of his presence. Finally, after returning the deity to its shrine, the priest performs the reversion of offerings, by taking the divine leftovers first to lesser deities and enlivened statues within the sacred precinct, then to the necropolis, and finally dividing them among the priests and temple staff.

**Structural Interpretation**

The daily cult ritual indexes a connection between the deity and various elements in the ritual, including clothing, food, and purifications, suggesting that each is essential for ritual efficacy and the satisfaction of the deity. The role of the priests in presenting these elements throughout the course of the ritual likewise highlights their special status. The priests are indexically connected to the king, as they explicitly perform the rituals in his name. Although not overtly denying

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192. Ibid.
194. For a fuller account of the ritual sequence, see Nelson, “Certain Reliefs,” 229–32. The beginning of the offering sequence is lost (ibid., 229; Hays, “Ritual Scenes in the Chapel of Amun,” 9).
197. Ritual texts mention various priestly actors, such as wab-priests, lector priests, and “God’s Fathers” (Teeter, *Religion and Ritual*, 47), though the chief wab-priest is the primary actor, especially in the more intimate divine care.
access to others, their prominence suggests a special relationship between the king with his priestly surrogates on the one hand and the various Egyptian deities on the other, a relationship highlighted by privileged access and behavior and indexed by direct contact. Since the performance of the cult is requisite for divine blessing and since all deities in their various cultic manifestations must be served, the king delegates his function as sole divine intermediary to the various local priests who carry out the cult in the name of the king.

The detailed ritual intimates that the deity must be approached with care, according to a strict formula. The priest must first undergo purification and continually profess his purity during the ritual. He also must assure the deity that he comes in the name of the king and to do no harm. A striking intimacy appears alongside the necessary caution. For example, in addition to various scenes showing the king and the gods in intimate commerce, the priest may enter the deity's innermost chamber and embrace, bathe, and clothe its statue.

Unlike the Opening of the Mouth ritual, this ritual occurs solely within the sacred confines of the temple. As a result, there is no transfer of roles of the participants or a transfer of the nature or location of the cult statue. As we will see, the ritual instead seems to be a preservation of the deity in its current state, involving its awakening from its nightly slumber.

There also seem to be structural elements that both link the daily cult ritual to and distinguish it from the Opening of the Mouth ritual. Although the rituals begin differently, suggesting that they have different causae, they end on similar notes, suggesting similar goals. The actors and activities likewise suggest some ritual progression from the Opening of the Mouth to the daily cult ritual. For example, after completing and sanitizing their craftsmanship, the artisans disappear

198. This special connection is enhanced by the fact that the king bears the divine ka-spirit and the priests come in the name and as servants of the king (see Bell, “Cult of the Royal Ka”). Since the king possesses a divine element and the priests come in his name, rather than presenting ritual activity as human contact with the divine, all speech and activity occurs in the divine realm as the king and priests take on various divine personas as they perform cultic service (Assmann, The Search for God, 49).


200. The text lists the exact words to be recited, undoubtedly accompanied by precise actions.

201. Regarding purification in the daily offering ceremony, see esp. Brigitte Altenmüller-Kesting, Reinigungsriten im ägyptischen Kult: Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Hamburg (Hamburg: Lüdke bei der Uni, 1968), 175-211.


203. Although such a parallel is suggestive, it is not conclusive, as similar actions can have significantly different meanings in different settings.
from the stage, never to appear in the course of the daily cult.\textsuperscript{204} Having completed the crafting stage, the statue is instead addressed with continual priestly care.

\textit{Use}

Once the divine image has been properly enlivened, the deity may take up residence in the temple.\textsuperscript{205} The daily cult ritual serves to maintain and renew the divine presence through the daily care and feeding, which consists of awakening, feeding, bathing, anointing, clothing, embracing, and enlivening various elements (\textit{ba}, \textit{sekhem}, and \textit{ka}).

As in the Opening of the Mouth ritual, the texts abound with individual interpretative statements. For example, Papyrus Berlin 3055 equates every offering with \textit{maat}: “that which you (the god) eat is \textit{maat}, your beverage is \textit{maat}, your bread is \textit{maat}, your beer is \textit{maat}, the incense that you inhale is \textit{maat}.”\textsuperscript{206} Throughout the course of the ritual, many of the offerings are likewise identified as the eye of Horus, including such diverse elements as the offering meal of Nun, various jars and pots of water, natron, bread, cake, the foreleg, wine, and bee-honey.\textsuperscript{207} In addition, various liquids are associated with opening the deity’s mouth (e.g., m\textit{tt}-vessels of water, red pots of water, and cups of wine),\textsuperscript{208} establishing a connection with the Opening of the Mouth ritual.

\textit{Ideology}

The daily cult service has much in common with the care of a human monarch and is thus rightly referred to as anthropomorphic.\textsuperscript{209} The servant priests seem to awaken the deity from its slumber, to bathe, clothe, and perfume it, and to feed and praise it, all with appropriate pomp and self-abasement. However, far more is involved than simple care.\textsuperscript{210} Like the Opening of the Mouth ritual, the daily cult

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\textsuperscript{204} They may only reappear when the statue is in need of repair or a new cult image is necessary.

\textsuperscript{205} Interpretive statements for the constituent elements of the ritual may be derived from the individual incantations. However, for the sake of space and the scope of the present topic, we will focus on the purpose and function of the larger ritual as a whole.

\textsuperscript{206} Moret \textit{Le Rituel du culte divin}, 142; Teeter, “Temple Cults,” 310.

\textsuperscript{207} The list is derived from an ostracon in the LACMA collection (see Cooney and McClain, “The Daily Offering Meal.” For a discussion of the many offerings usually associated with the eye of Horus in various rituals, see Rudnitzky, \textit{Auge des Horus}, 25–28.

\textsuperscript{208} See previous note.

\textsuperscript{209} Cf. Assmann, \textit{The Search for God}, 48.

\textsuperscript{210} One of the primary differences is the nature of the participants. Whereas in the royal realm, human servants serve their king, in the daily cult ritual the priest adopts various divine personas, such that the human role is minimized and deity interacts with
ritual employs a multiplicity of means to achieve a single end, the daily renewal and satisfaction of the resident deity.

In addition to functioning on a literal level (e.g., ritual activities literally care for and feed the deity in a manner akin to its royal counterpart), mythic precedent and wordplay establish complementary connections with the divine sphere and various other potencies throughout the ritual. Purposeful repetition again features, both within the ritual itself and as it is reenacted daily. Such repetition is especially consonant with the cyclical worldview, prominent in the journey of the sun across the sky and through the netherworld only to reemerge and repeat the cycle. More than simply being fed and cared for, the deity, like the sun, requires daily rejuvenation so that it may maintain both its divine potency and order in the world. As we will see, the various words and deeds of the daily cult ritual bring about this divine revitalization in multiple ways on multiple levels.

**Ideology of Individual Elements**

Following the requisite priestly purifications, the lighting of the fire serves a dual function, literally enabling the priests to see, while simultaneously driving off divine enemies, that is, the hostile powers of darkness. The opening of the shrine is likewise evocative. Drawing back the door bolts is equated with removing the finger of Seth from the eye of Horus. On the literal level drawing back the door bolt serves as a prelude to opening the doors of the shrine so that the deity may see out, while on the mythic plane removing Seth’s finger serves as a prelude to the restoration of Horus’ sight. “Opening of the face” and “seeing the god”—that is, opening the shrine doors—enable the priest to see the deity face-to-face, while simultaneously awakening the deity. In addition, this action causes heaven to brush up against earth and serves as a divine rebirth.

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deity. Thus, in some way, Horus interacts with Horus, and in doing so, the two exchange mutual blessings. The priest may also adopt other divine personae (e.g., Thoth and Anubis), indicating the complexity of the interaction (Assmann, *The Search for God*, 49).

211. In the case of the feeding portion, thrice daily.


213. See, e.g., Hussy’s aptly titled monograph on the daily cult ritual, *Die Epiphanie und Erneuerung der Macht Gottes*, which stresses the daily renewal of the divine potency. For example, Hussy notes that divine renewal is the primary benefit of the daily cult ritual (63).


At least in the form of its cult statue, the deity, like a human, is cyclically rejuvenated by its nightly slumber. Thus, one may be tempted to conclude that the deity leaves the statue at night only to rejoin it in the morning, thereby “awakening” or reanimating it. In Greco-Roman times, some texts assert continual presence (e.g., stating that Horus “sleeps in Edfu daily”), while other texts suggest the daily reunification of the divine ba and cult image (e.g., Re’s “living ba comes from heaven and rests upon his cult statue every day”). However, the title of the ritual sequence itself—“awakening the god”—coupled with the fact that there are no rituals for attracting the divine ba to the statue suggest a more permanent presence. Nonetheless, while continually connected with the image, the deity also remains present in the sky, from which it daily renews its ba in its cult statue in the same way that priestly ritual action daily renews the vitality of the statue.

Patterned on the cyclical journey of the sun, opening the shrine’s double doors also unites heaven and earth and signals divine rebirth. First, the act is referred to as opening the “double doors of heaven,” equated on the cosmic plane with opening the cosmic double door, “that is, the point at the horizon where heaven and earth meet and through which the sun emerges at dawn.” Thus, by opening the double doors of the shrine, the priest causes heaven (the interior of the shrine) and earth (the temple) to meet. Second, as the sun emerges daily from the underworld into the sky and is in this sense reborn, so too does the deity arise from its nightly slumber to new life.

The following ritual activities are engineered to bring the deity new life and bring it to the full. After the statue awakens to the light, the presiding priest arouses the divine self-consciousness, especially with the declaration, “I bring you your heart in your body, set in its place, as Isis brought the heart of her son Horus to

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217. This theory may offer some justification for the need for daily renewal, as the daily symbiosis of deity and image would require supporting rites to ensure the vitality of such a union.
221. Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 139. The priest also appropriately greets Geb, the earth god, from whom the sun daily emerges.
222. As noted in ch. 2, when inside the shrine, the deity on earth always remains in heaven.
223. Cf. Teeter, “Temple Cults,” 315–16. The double doors may also be associated with the vulva of Nut, the sky god, whose body separates heaven from earth. Bursting forth from the underworld, (governed by) Geb, through the birth canal of the sky goddess, the sun is daily reborn in its journey through heaven (ibid.).
him.” 224 As the seat of emotion and thought, 225 the heart is necessary for the restoration of one’s faculties, whether from sleep or in rebirth. 226 The following application of perfumed honey to the statue serves as an adhesive of sorts that assures the deity of the physical integrity of its statue, as it “binds for him (i.e., Amun) his bones, it joins for him his limbs.” 227

With the embrace of the statue and the placement of the headdress with a uraeus serpent on its head, the deity seems to be empowered to act. 228 With this action, “the divine essence is fully identified: ‘oh living ba who smites his enemies, your ba is with you and your sekhem is at your side.’” 229 The ba is “essentially an [immaterial] element of mobility that enabled passage from one realm to the other,” which may manifest itself in various perceivable and often visible forms, including natural elements like water and animate beings like a ram, and thus becomes “the deity’s visible face.” 230 The closest modern translation seems to be “manifest power,” while sekhem seems to roughly correspond to “power.” 231 With its faculties fully active, the deity becomes fully manifest and thus its statue becomes an image of power. 232

228. Ibid., 141.
229. Ibid., A precise differentiation between the two words is difficult. Ba seems to roughly connote ‘manifestation’ and sekhem implies ‘power.’ However, as we have seen in the Opening of the Mouth ritual, the former also connotes power (ibid., 134, 141).
231. Ibid., 33. As deities could animate multiple objects and entities, so too could they have more than one ba, at least in the Late period (see, e.g., the ten bas of Amun [ibid., 88]).
232. Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 134; regarding sekhem, see also Traunecker, Gods of Egypt, 34–35. Although literally “power,” sekhem may also refer more expansively to the object in which power is manifested, e.g., the cult image (cf. Assmann, The Search for God, 42).
233. See also Traunecker, Gods of Egypt, 34, who notes that “from the New Kingdom on, the cult statue inhabited by the divine ba was a sekhem, an image of power.” In referring to himself as a ba and as the goddess Sekhmet as he embraces the statue, the priest may be signaling the deity’s full and powerful manifestation through creative wordplay. It is also
Like the donning of the panther skin in the Opening of the Mouth, the closing and opening of the shrine signals a new ritual section. In the following section, many of the cultic actions and recitations are repeated, yet the important concept of the *ka* (*k3*), loosely translated as “vital force,” is stressed for the first time in tandem with offerings (*kau* [*k3w*]). Rather than being an abstract universal force that pervades nature, the *ka* seems to be the vital force of particular forms. In the present context, the *ka* is the vital force enlivening the statue, which like that of a human, is sustained through food (*kau*). With the deity fully alert and intact with its various faculties and *ba*, *sekhem*, and *ka* present and active, the section concludes with the presentation of a statue of the goddess Maat, the personification of order. The accompanying recitations recap what has been accomplished to this point and stress that all is right and ordered with the deity and in the world. The presentation of Maat emphasizes that the king has done his part in upholding *maat*, exemplified in his care of the deity. It also foreshadows the offerings to come that are themselves *maat* and serve to strengthen the divine presence, especially in the terrestrial realm, and thus cosmic order.

In the following section, the more intimate care and feeding begins. Initial contact with the deity stresses the sensitive nature of such contact. Rather than dare to touch the deity himself, the priest is careful to assert that his body parts that make contact with the deity are also divine; his arms are Horus, his hands Thoth, and his fingers Anubis. Similarly, rather than focusing on the removal of the deity’s clothes and ointments, the accompanying recitations focus on the possible that the embrace of the priestly *ba* mimics that of the divine *ba* and the statue mentioned in texts of the Ptolemaic period (regarding the latter, see Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 141–42, 196–97).

234. Ibid., 142–43. E.g., the first utterance of the section stresses offerings, while another makes repeated reference to the *ka* in relation to the deity Maat. Regarding *ka*, see further Ursula Schweitzer, *Das Wesen des Ka im Diesseits und Jenseits der alten Ägypter* (Glückstadt: Augustin, 1965); Bolshakov, *Man and His Double*.

235. See further below. In noting its association with a particular form, Teeter has gone so far as to equate the *ka* with a physical form, in the context of the cult, the statue itself (*Religion and Ritual*, 44; “Temple Cults,” 311).

236. In fact, there is abundant evidence indicating that food offerings were presented to the *kas* of dead humans, and there is even some evidence from the New Kingdom onwards that such offerings were presented to the divine *kas* (Lorton, “Theology of Cult Statues,” 179–81). There is also some evidence that worship in general was directed to the divine *ka* (ibid.; for examples, see Lichtheim, *AEL* 2:91–109).


future, on the benefits of new clothes and ointments. As the utterances attest, the clothes and ointment are more than simple comforts; they are also associated with various necessary potencies, such that by removing them the deity becomes vulnerable. Instead of stressing this vulnerability, the recitations stress the resultant potency that makes the indignity of human contact and vulnerability acceptable, in order to convince the deity that the end justifies the means. In fulfillment of these forward-looking utterances, the subsequent purifications and clothing function together to renew the divine statue to its full potency.

Once properly prepared, the deity may then partake of the various offerings presented to it. Analogous to but far more than human nourishment, the food offerings are charged with divine potencies through the medium of ritual, both to protect and empower the divine image. The dominant mythic archetype in the feeding portion of the ritual, the eye of Horus, represents divine perfection or the alleviation of all lack. In order for the deity to attain such divine perfection, it must “partake of offerings from the human realm, of food and drink,” which through the medium of ritual also imparts to the deity necessary divine powers.

239. Ibid., 37–38.

240. Hussy (Epiphanie und Erneuerung, 37) contends that removing the various elements signifies the removal of part of the god’s divinity. Circling the unclothed deity thus serves to protect the deity from all unwanted influences. In Egypt, circumambulation was “perhaps the most common ritual technique” used to “enclose and defend sacred space” (Robert K. Ritner “Magic,” in Redford, ed., The Ancient Gods Speak, 197; see further idem, The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice [SAOC 54; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993], 57–67).

241. The nms-cloth used to wipe away the ointments is the same one used to wipe away any remaining impurities in the Opening of the Mouth ritual (Otto, Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual, 1.117, 2.110; Hussy, Epiphanie und Erneuerung, 37; cf. Quack, “To clothe or to wipe? On the semantics of the verb nms,” in Lexical Semantics in Ancient Egyptian [ed. E. Grosman, S. Polis, and J. Winand; Linguæ Aegyptiæ Studia Monographica 9; Hamburg: Linguæ Aegyptiæ, 2012], 379–86). Thus, the ritual seems to stress that the removal of divine potencies also accomplishes the removal of impurity. The claim is reinforced by the result. Once the remnants of the previous day’s ritual have been removed, the deity is sparkling clean. Like a newly polished floor, the brilliance of the statue’s surface signifies the absence of all imperfections.

242. Cf. Hussy, Epiphanie und Erneuerung, 41, who contends the preparations for purification, the purification, and the clothing function to renew the divinity of the cult image.

243. Cf. Cooney and McClain, “The Daily Offering Meal,” 57, who assert that “the offering of food or drink, in and of itself, was not the element that allowed the god to reawaken. Rather the transformative elements are found in the charged powers symbolized in the food or drink—magical powers created through the act of ritualizing.” Regarding the mythic precedents in this portion of the ritual, see ibid.

For example, as in the Opening of the Mouth ritual, the utterance equates the presentation of a foreleg (ḥps) with the strength (ḥps) that is in the eye of Horus. In the first part of the LACMA Ostrakon (II. 1-15), offerings are repeatedly associated with Horus's wound and the violence that caused it, serving a defensive role, "granting him ownership over the wound and the violence that caused it." For example, "when the god is offered symbols of blood, of cutting, or of tears, the ritualists provide him with the means to gain control over his wound, and to overcome it." Rather than protecting against weakness, offerings in the latter part of the ostrakon (from l. 16) are associated with strength and rejuvenation (e.g., the presentation of the foreleg empowers the deity with divine strength). The last word in the ostrakon, "to make content" (šftp), refers back to the title of the daily meal ritual—dbh-ḥtp or "required offerings"—such that the "name of the ritual itself, as with every other ritual offering, anticipates the desired outcome—the contentment (ḥtp) of the god." The ritual concludes where it began, with the deity safely shut inside its shrine in heaven on earth. To ensure the divine safety, the priest sweeps away his footprints and all traces of the human presence in the sanctuary, thereby repelling all evil, presumably by eliminating any trail to follow.

In sum, the daily cult service serves to revitalize the deity in the statue through a multiplicity of means such that it possesses the full complement of divine potencies. The ritual words and actions transform a common care and feeding ritual into the investiture of the divine statue with various divine powers that rejuvenate it and allow it to serve as the fully functioning deity on earth. In fact, the daily cult service throughout the land of Egypt serves to revitalize all cult statues so that all of the deities may be fully functional and fully satisfied. In return for such royal largesse mediated by priestly stand-ins, the gods choose to remain in the terres-

245. "Amen, take to yourself the strength in the eye of Horus" (LACMA Ostrakon l. 16; Cooney and McClain, "The Daily Offering Meal," 57, 67.

246. Ibid., 67. E.g., "in line 7, two red pots of water are associated with 'what is in the eye of Horus, it being red,' alluding to the blood of the wound through word play between the redness of the pots and the redness of the eye (dsrt)" (ibid., 66; for the redness associated with blood, see Rudnitzky, Auge des Horus, 29; see also Griffiths, The Conflict of Horus and Seth, 38).


248. Ibid., 68; see also Goyon, Le rituel du šftp šḥmt au changement de cycle annuel: d'après les architraves du temple d'Edfou et textes parallèles, du Nouvel Empire à l'époque ptolémaïque et romaine (Le Caire: Inst. Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2011). Line 4 also connects the offering meal (dbh-ḥtp) of Nun with the eye of Horus and his contentment (ḥtp) at having received it. In addition, the divine renewal is associated with the abundance brought about by the rising Nile's floodwater of the Nun (ibid., 66; for the ḥtp meal in the Pyramid Texts and its association with the eye of Horus, see Rudnitzky, Auge des Horus, 41–42).

trial sphere and with their presence bless the king, his land, and his people, thus maintaining cosmic order.

**HOW DO THE OPENING OF THE MOUTH AND THE DAILY CULT RITUAL RELATE?**

The rituals have different settings and the majority of the actions seem to serve different though complementary purposes. The Opening of the Mouth ritual is a necessary prelude to the daily cult ritual. It serves an essential transitory function, spanning the gap between the workshop and the temple. In essence, the ritual makes the statue more than merely a statue; it brings it to life and fills it with various divine potencies so that it is fit for the divine. Once the statue has been appropriately endowed with divinity and installed in the temple, the daily cult ritual serves to maintain that presence through constant cultic renewal. Thus, instead of bringing the statue to life, it serves to arouse and reinvigorate it. Although they initially serve different purposes, the rituals end on similar notes, the care and feeding of the deity, with remarkably similar activities and accompanying recitations. The Opening of the Mouth ends with a supernaturally charged care and feeding ritual that endows the newly enlivened statue with the potencies it needs to function as the divine locus, while the daily cult ritual, in accord with the cyclical course of the sun, serves to continually reinvigorate the cult image so that the deity remains present, content, and fit to serve as god on earth. Thus, the rituals begin differently with the quickening of the divine statue and the reinvigoration of the already enlivened divine statue respectively, yet both end similarly with the care and feeding of the appropriately quickened divine statue. Once dressed in proper regalia and charged with the powers associated with that regalia, the deity is ready to fulfill its role as the living god in the midst of human community, and the statue’s daily supernaturally charged meal prepares it for the task.250

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE DEITY TO ITS STATUE(S)**

How is (some part of) the divine essence present in a statue and how are a deity’s various statues related? On a simple level, the statue gives the deity a physical body and thus “a fixed location within the human world where the divine cult and ritual activities for the deity could be focused.”251 Rather than being merely a copy of

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250. Like anointing, donning the clothing appropriate to an office signals that the person is taking up the role appropriate to that office.

251. Robins, “Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt,” 12. Regarding the identification of the statue as the divine body, see esp. the Memphite theology, which states, “The gods entered their bodies ... in which they took form” (I. 60; Assmann, The Search for God, 46). Such a clear differentiation, not attested elsewhere in the ancient Near East, seems to be a result of the
the celestial divine body, the cult statue is the deity's terrestrial body. In addition to referring to statues as gods' "bodies," the Memphite theology also asserts that the gods "become" (ḥpr) their bodies; namely, by entering their cult statues, the gods in some way "become" those statues. Thus, rather than being an inanimate vessel in which the immaterial potencies of a deity manifest themselves, the statue symbiotically joins with the divine essence such that the body and all it contains is the deity. Although the relationship between a deity's immaterial elements and the statue remains difficult to define, we may nonetheless approximate it. The deity's ba, its mobile power, joins with and indwells its cultically enlivened body (statue), endowing it with the divine ka (vital force) and making it a place of power (sekhem). The divine servants direct subsequent cultic attention, especially worship and food offerings (kau), to the divine ka, which must be sustained and daily renewed.

Having established that the cult statue serves as the terrestrial divine body, we now turn to the question of how much of the divine essence inhabits the statue. In other words, does the deity leave heaven (or the underworld) to indwell the statue? If instead it remains in heaven, how much of its essence does it transfer to the statue? What about its multiple statues? Here as elsewhere in the ancient Near East, deities with heavenly manifestations do not leave heaven to take up residence on earth. In fact, divine withdrawal from nature would signal chaos. For example, in the Prophecies of Neferti when Re withdraws himself from the sun, "though the hour of his rising will still exist, one will no longer know when it is noon." In Egypt, as in the rest of the ancient Near East, there is also no evidence that deities are imagined to possess a fixed amount of power, such that each manifestation receives a diluted portion of divinity. As immaterial substances, it would seem that the divine ba and ka may be divided or multiplied infinitely without losing any potency, such that the deity in heaven and in the cult image may each possess the

relationship of the divine to the mortuary sphere and the Egyptian preoccupation with that sphere. The image of the deceased is not simply equated with the deceased. Rather it serves as a body into which the person's immaterial elements, which survive the death of the physical body, may be transferred. Likewise, rather than simply being equated with the god, the cult image, in addition to divine animals, the king, and celestial phenomena (see below), serves as a body for the deity who is described as "rich in manifestations."

252. "The statue is not the image of the deity's body, but the body itself" (Assmann, The Search for God, 46, italics his).

253. Lorton, "Theology of Cult Statues," 187 and n. 88; see also Allen, Genesis in Egypt, 44.

254. This does not mean that the deity is immaterial (pace Hornung, Conceptions of God, 135). Rather a single deity consists of multiple parts, many of which are immaterial and require a material form, i.e., a body, to be made manifest, of which the cult statue is but one aspect.

full complement of divine potencies. In fact, in accord with the idea that multiple manifestations make a deity greater, deities have multiple kas and in later periods multiple bas, each of which possesses full divine potency. For example, Re in the 19th Dynasty is assigned fourteen kas, which in later, especially Greco-Roman, times are given names, each of which corresponds to elements of the daily offering ritual. Thus, it would seem that since the ka refers to the embodied form of the divine life force and the divine ka in the statue is sustained by offerings (kau), the fourteen kas refer to fourteen separate cult images, which together form a representative sample of all of the cult images of Re throughout the land. Nonetheless, while fully imbued with the deity, it is also clear that the statue is not the fullness of the deity, since the deity’s fullness lies in the accumulation of its multiple manifestations, names, and potencies. This principal finds pictorial representation in the case of the fourteen kas of Re, as the kas, like the deities of the nomes, appear in procession scenes bringing gifts to the god himself. In turn, each cult statue has its own divine life force (ka) and is thus fully the deity, yet each represents only an aspect of the larger deity. In addition, a deity’s multiple bas are associated with the deity’s various faculties, such that the more bas a deity possesses, the greater the deity. Thus, for example, Amun’s ten bas express his potency, as each animates a sector of the universe (e.g., the sun, moon, water, fire, cattle, aquatic creatures, plant growth, and humanity [i.e., the king]). Similarly, another text makes an initial distinction between the cult image and the hidden god, which it then clarifies by comparing these divine aspects respectively to an artificial pond and a living stream that cannot be dammed. In sum, “the god who is present, dwelling in the cult statue, reigns everywhere in his hiddenness and can at any time burst forth from this ‘channeled’ form in which he dwells like a river that overflows its dam.”

258. Ibid., 201. In light of the presence of sun courts in the New Kingdom, where the cult was performed directly before the sun, one may wonder if Re had any cult images at all. However, the use of sun courts as a particular medium of terrestrial interaction with the deity in no way speaks against the other more common medium, the presence of cult images in shrines (ibid., 205).
259. E.g., in Greco-Roman Dendara (ibid., 202).
261. Instruction for Merikare, which appears in the 18th Dynasty, but likely originated in the Middle Kingdom (Assmann, The Search for God, 46–47); for the relevant text, see Lichtheim, AEL 1:97–109; Stephen Quirke, Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings (London: Golden House, 2004), 112–20; see also Assmann, The Search for God, 46–47.
262. Ibid., 47. This differentiation, by no means present nor preserved everywhere in the
Rather than being limited to statues, deities may adopt multiple other bodies, including celestial elements like the sun, certain animals, the king, and even various wall reliefs in the various temples. As noted, the sun is neither equated nor coterminous with Re. Instead, it is merely one of his many bodies that he may renounce at any time. Likewise, certain animals are associated with the deity in such a way that they serve as possible divine hosts. In particular, the Apis bull in Memphis is understood to be a “living cult image,” an embodiment of Ptah. Like the Apis bull and cult image, the human body of the king is a vessel for the divine ka, the divine life force that passes from one legitimate king to the next. Finally, various wall reliefs also seem to be imbued with some form of the divine essence, serving as popular access points to the otherwise distant deity. For example, Hathor of Dendara is described as “she (who) alights on her forms that are carved on the wall.”

Each statue, like the king and each related natural element, animal, or relief, thus serves as a bodily manifestation of the deity, which together form the divine fullness. Rather than being limited to a fixed number of forms, each deity is always

ancient Near East (this distinction may not even be continually and consistently applied in ancient Egypt), likely draws strength from parallels in the funerary realm, where an individual is present in, yet clearly not coterminous with, his mortuary statue (cf. Assmann, The Search for God, 45).


264. This does not mean that every animal of the species is a divine body, but that each possesses the potential to be a divine body (Hornung, Conceptions of God, 137).


266. Bell, “Cult of the Royal Ka.”

267. See, e.g., Guglielmi, “Funktion von Tempeleingang,” 55–68; Brand, “Veils, Votives and Marginalia.” Brand notes that not all divine images on wall reliefs receive special cultic attention (p. 59). Those that are especially venerated seem to have been embellished to mark their special veneration and/or enshrined or veiled (evidenced by drill holes used to support veils; pp. 59, 61–64). Beyond this distinction, it is unclear what sort of ritual enlivening they underwent, if any; an (abbreviated) Opening of the Mouth(-like) ceremony is certainly possible. Likewise, it is also unclear whether such forms were understood to be imbued with deity or simply channels to deity. Indeed, it is unlikely that the worshipers made such a distinction. Whether the images were understood as the god or merely as conduits to the god, they would have been treated in the same manner since they were the (only) access points the common people had to the deities. However, the people would likely have differentiated between these images on the walls and the statue in the sanctuary, which they probably would have viewed as somehow more divine.

268. Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 318 nn. 60, 61; Assmann, The Search for God, 42.
capable of more manifestations.\textsuperscript{269} In fact, it would seem that a deity may inhabit more than one image in the same temple (e.g., the bark statue and the primary image used for the daily cult). According to the additive approach, such divine multiplicity highlights the divine prestige, demonstrating the divine capacity to show many faces. Multiple statues likewise also serve practical purposes, as the various statues may perform different functions simultaneously. For example, while the bark statue is out on procession, the primary cult image can remain in its shrine so that the daily cult can continue uninterrupted and the temple and its environs will not be left unprotected.\textsuperscript{270}

Nonetheless, although each manifestation is part of the larger deity, each may also be treated as distinct in certain contexts. For example, although they together represent the fullness of Amun, when given names, his various bas are treated as independent entities.\textsuperscript{271} This apparent paradox may be clarified by aspective theory.\textsuperscript{272} In order to present the whole, especially when it is complex, ancient Egyptians frequently amassed and juxtaposed various individual elements, most often without systematically attempting to fit those elements into a consistently articulated, all-encompassing organic unity. In fact, they focused on the individual aspects or elements to such an extent and with such an attention to capturing them in all their fullness that they were often conceived of as (semi-)independent.\textsuperscript{273} In other words, an Egyptian deity may be understood as the accumulation of its vari-

\textsuperscript{269} Including combinations with other deities (see the classic study of Hans Bonnet, “On Understanding Syncretism,” \textit{Or} 68 [1999]: 181–98).

\textsuperscript{270} In addition, various kings and other notables may have donated divine images to the temple in order to demonstrate their piety or enhance their position. Although unlikely to replace the primary statue, many such donations likely were considered somewhat divine and as such may not be discarded, leaving a single temple with many (enlivened) divine bodies.

\textsuperscript{271} See also the four bas of Re in the New Kingdom (Traunecker, \textit{Gods of Egypt}, 33, 88). Regarding the independence of the bas, see ibid., 33.

\textsuperscript{272} Brunner-Traut, \textit{Frühformen des Erkennens}. In positing the theory, Brunner-Traut builds on the work of her mentor, Heinrich Schäfer, \textit{Von ägyptischer Kunst: Eine Grundlage} (4th ed.; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963). In the present analysis, only an aspect of her aspective theory is promoted, namely, her assertion that the ancient Egyptians focused especially on individual aspects. Other elements of her presentation are more questionable. For example, her evolutionary model of development and the association of ancient Near Eastern people with children, the mentally ill, and the untrained are problematic, as is her general exclusion of the Egyptian understanding of the parts as part of the whole (regarding the latter, see the critique of Assman [\textit{Tod und Jenseits}, 34–36]). See briefly Hundleby, “Divine Fluidity? The Priestly Texts in Their Ancient Near Eastern Contexts,” in \textit{Reading Leviticus in Its Contexts} (ed. Francis Landy and Leigh M. Travaskis; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, in press).

\textsuperscript{273} This is not to say that there is no room for systematic thinking, only that there is a tendency to isolate individual elements even when presenting the larger whole.
ous aspects, each of which was treated in such detail and often in such isolation from the other elements that it could be understood (semi-)independently. A locally manifested deity, like a clone, could develop its own context-specific identity and experience and thus be different although it possessed the same DNA. More practically, the local populace likely viewed the local manifestation of the deity as the deity, which although related remained distinct from all other local manifestations.

**EGYPTIAN RITUAL AND THE ADDITIVE APPROACH**

As we have seen, ancient Egyptians adopted an additive approach. Although not every image was necessarily imbued with some of its referent's essence,²⁷⁴ ritual texts establish that the statue was clearly a component part of the deity, without which it could not be made manifest in the temple. Thus, the Opening of the Mouth and daily cult rituals support Baharni's contention that an image was connected to and was in some way a living copy of its referent. Furthermore, as asserted by Baharni, in order to approach and maintain divine plenitude, a deity's physical form had to be combined and charged with various other divine attributes and potencies including the divine name, attire, and immaterial ba and ka. In short, ancient Egyptians combined multiple divine aspects through the medium of ritual, many of which simultaneously functioned on multiple levels so as continually to render the statue-deity symbiosis more fully divine and thus a more fitting locus of the deity on earth.

**NECESSITY OF DIVINE NOURISHMENT?**

Did the deity need its daily care, especially the food, to survive? Ancient Egyptians clearly understood the daily offerings as a meal of sorts that the deity was thought to consume. It is equally clear that to provide such a meal was an obligation and the failure to do so could have dire consequences.²⁷⁵ However, it is not clear within the ritual itself whether such a meal was necessary for divine survival. On one level, since anthropomorphization of the deity is inevitable, people undoubtedly assumed that the human-like deity required food in the same way that they themselves did. The question of whether it would have starved if they neglected it probably never entered their minds; for to neglect the deity would have been unconscionable since its contentment was understood to be essential for human prosperity.

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²⁷⁴. For example, as noted, only certain reliefs seem to be charged with divinity.
²⁷⁵. See, e.g., the Restoration Stela of Tutankhamun (see, e.g., Baines, “Presenting and Discussing Deities,” 46–55 and references below).
Nonetheless, the texts give enough hints to suggest that cult offerings were considered necessary for the survival of the statue, but not the deity itself. As noted, offerings sustained the divine *ka*, without which the deity as statue would be left in a weakened state, as would a human without food.\textsuperscript{276} The Restoration Stela of Tutankhamun laments Akhenaten's neglect of the traditional temples, such that the gods "turned their backs" on the land, precipitating disaster.\textsuperscript{277} With the reestablishment of the temples and the cult, the gods joyfully returned to "protect Egypt."\textsuperscript{278} Thus, rather than themselves dying of starvation, the gods absented themselves from their statues since they were malnourished. With the loss of their cultic bodies, the deities and their divine *ba* had other manifestations to fall back on and even without them could continue to exist as various immaterial elements (e.g., the *ba*). In turn, at least according to this depiction, feeding the deity seems to have been a service that was required to maintain a terrestrial cultic presence and to avoid calamity, rather than a requirement to keep the god alive.

**The Duration of Divine Presence**

What would happen if a deity was improperly served? Could it leave the statue it indwelt? Just as a human could leave his body upon death or a deity could leave an animal form it temporarily inhabited, even its natural form (e.g., Re as the sun)\textsuperscript{279} or any other of its multiple bodies, so too could a deity leave its cult image.\textsuperscript{280} Thus, kings had to make the temples and temple service as enticing as possible to keep the resident deity happily resident and the blessings flowing.\textsuperscript{281} As indicated above, the Restoration Stele of Tutankhamun suggests that with neglect the gods could at any time absent themselves from their cult statues. Because of

\textsuperscript{276} Here, it must be stressed that the offerings were not simply divine food; they also imparted various essential divine potencies to the deity through the medium of ritual.


\textsuperscript{278} Lorton, "Theology of Cult Statues," 167 n. 66. "The gods and goddesses who are in this land, their hearts are joyful.... Life and dominion proceed from them to the nose of the victorious king" (Urk. IV, 2030; translation after Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period*, 214).

\textsuperscript{279} See the above-mentioned (at nn. 255 and 263) Prophecies of Neferti.

\textsuperscript{280} A deity could also dissolve a temporary connection or the indwelling of another deity (e.g., Amun of Amon-Re theoretically could separate from the amalgamated form) (see esp. Bonnet, "Syncretism").

\textsuperscript{281} Robins, "Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," 2–3; Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 229; on the danger of divine cruelty and the united human-divine pursuit of *maat*, see ibid., 197–216.
Akhenaten's neglect, "the gods were ignoring this land ... if one prayed to a god, to ask something from him, he did not come at all; and if one beseeched any goddess in the same way, she did not come at all." The Bentresh Stele, which recounts the international loan of a statue of the god Khonsu that was capable of "expelling disease demons," provides yet another example. When the foreign king failed to return the statue to Egypt, in a dream the deity, presumably in the form of its ba, withdrew from the statue and flew "as a falcon of gold" toward Egypt. Thus, with the neglect of their homes and their care, the gods could withdraw themselves, precipitating disaster. On a more fundamental level, if the king did not play his role by presenting the deity with maat (i.e., order), creation itself could unravel. To avert such disaster, it behooved the king to serve the gods appropriately.

282. Murnane, Texts from the Amarna Period, 213.
283. Teeter, Religion and Ritual, 45–46.
284. Including the dissolution of the state, defeat at the hands of enemies, and illness and premature death of Egypt's people (te Velde, "Theology, Priests and Worship," 1731).