

Ancient Egyptian religion, temples and festivals in Dynasty 18

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SYLLABUS LINKS

Ancient Egyptian Society in the New Kingdom
until the death of Amenhotep III

- Religion
- Temples
- Festivals



KEY QUESTIONS

- To what extent were the ordinary people involved in the religion and cult of New Kingdom Egypt?
- What is the evidence for the role of religion in daily life during the 18th Dynasty and how and why does it change during this period?

Official Temple Cult



<http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/experience>

- State religion, theoretically conducted by the king
- Daily temple ritual conducted by priests on behalf of the king
- Restricted access inside the temple



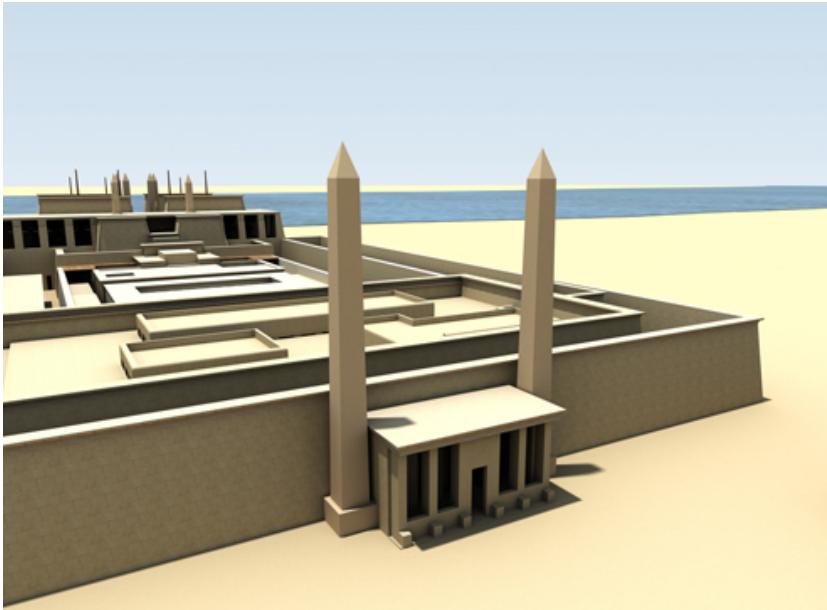
What involvement did ordinary people have in Dynasty 18 religion and cult?

Great Temple of Amun at Karnak



Digital Karnak

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

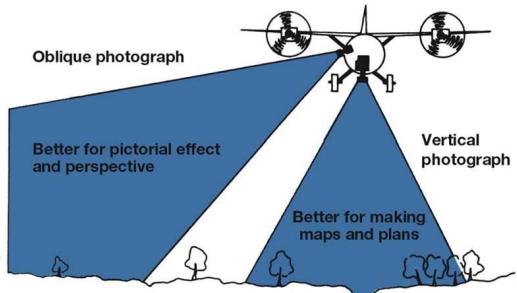


<http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/experience>

Great Temple of Amun at Karnak



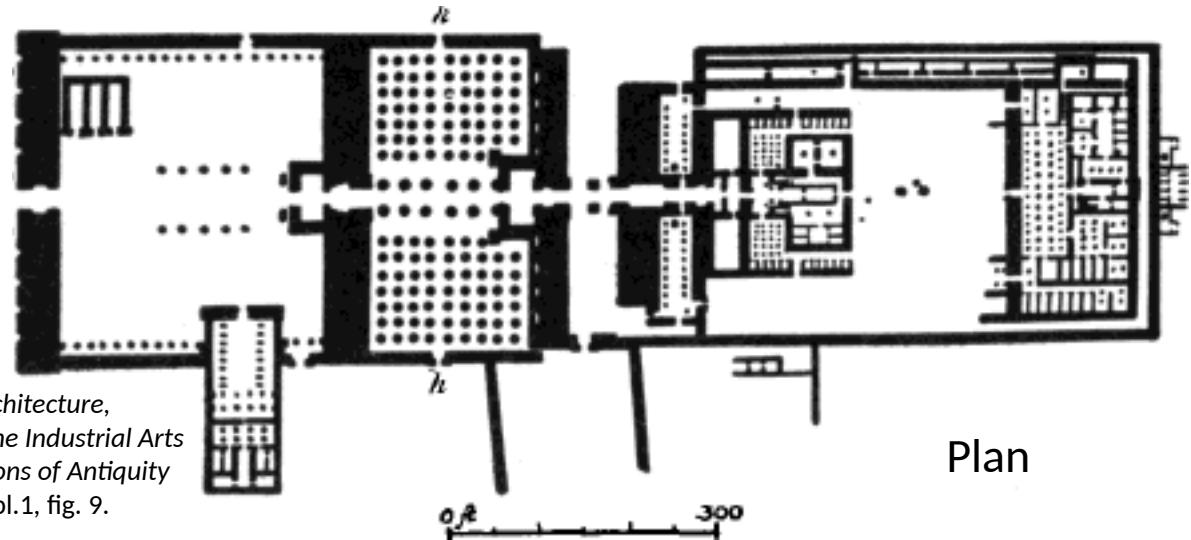
Oblique aerial view



Renfrew & Bahn (2012:79)



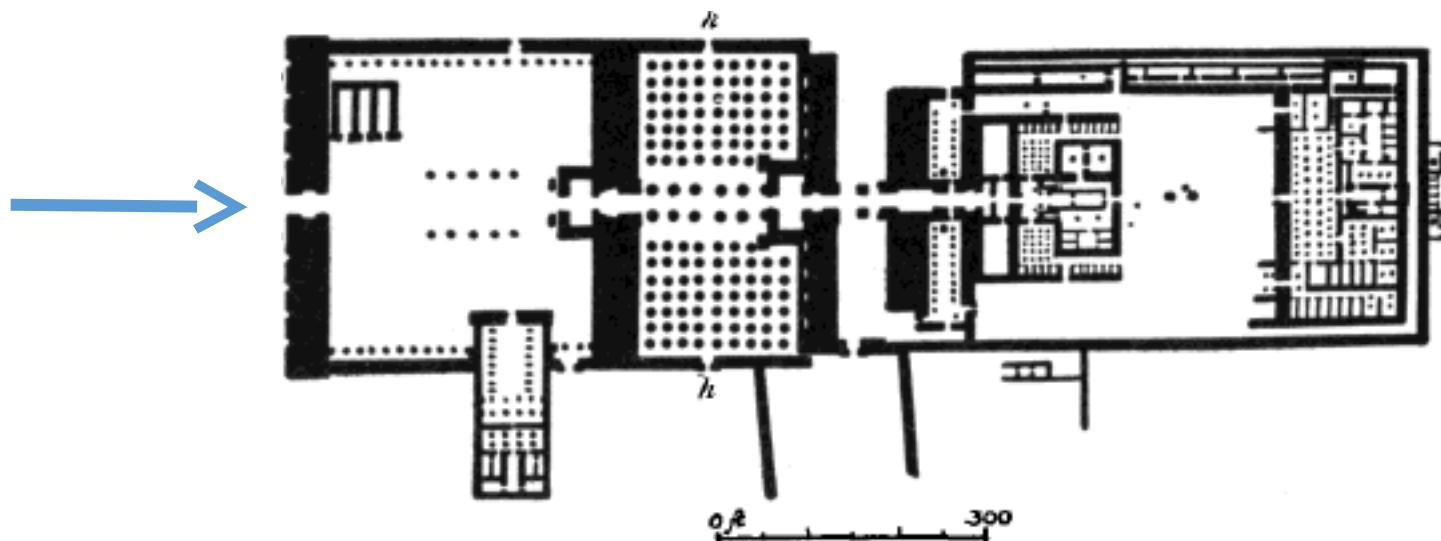
Vertical aerial view



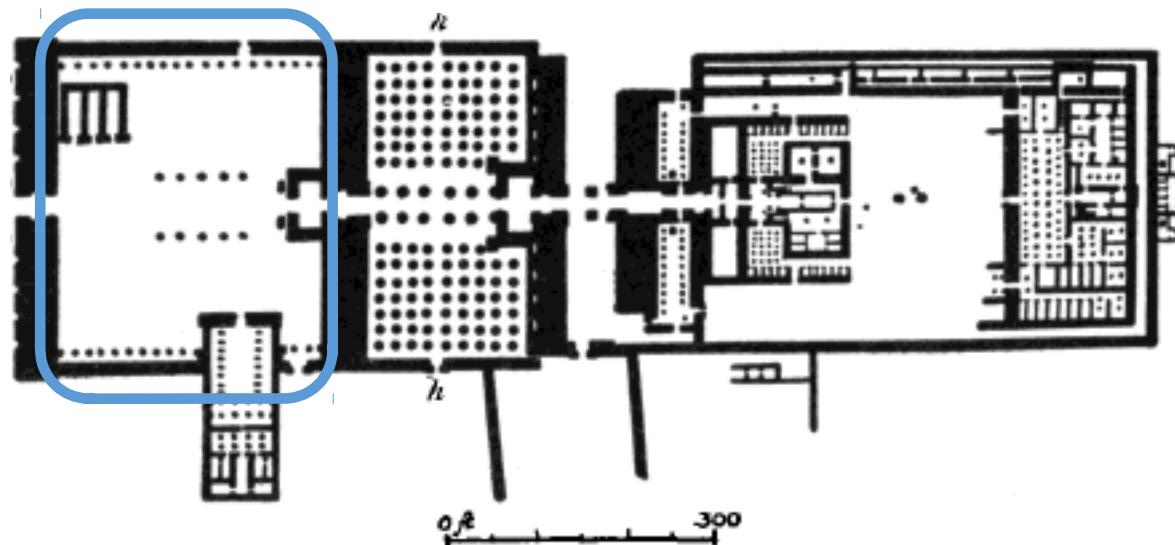
Plan

S. R. Koehler, *Architecture, Sculpture, and the Industrial Arts Among the Nations of Antiquity* (Boston, 1879), pl.1, fig. 9.

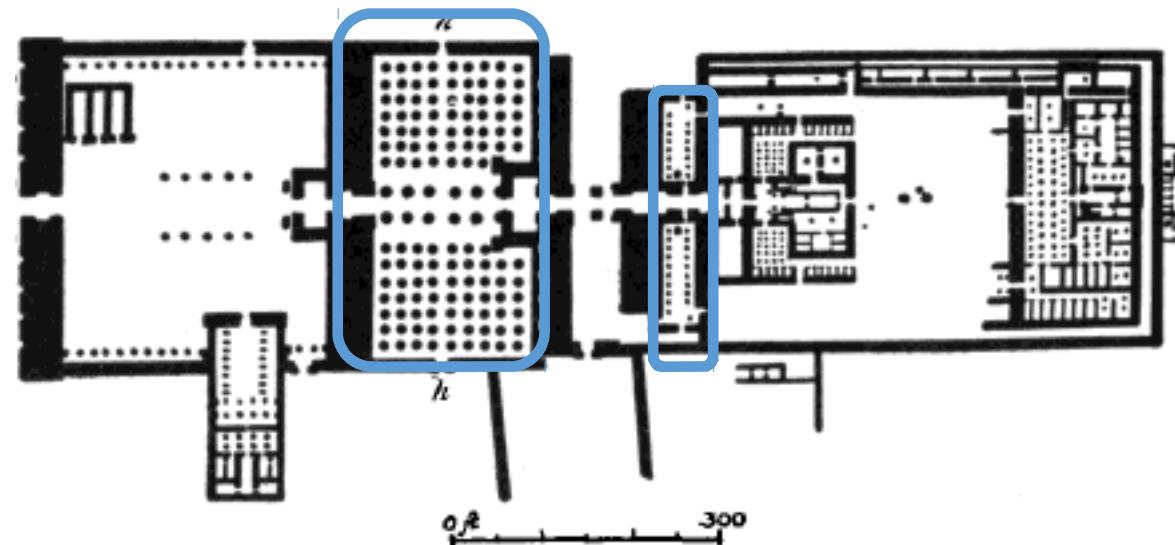
Temple entrance



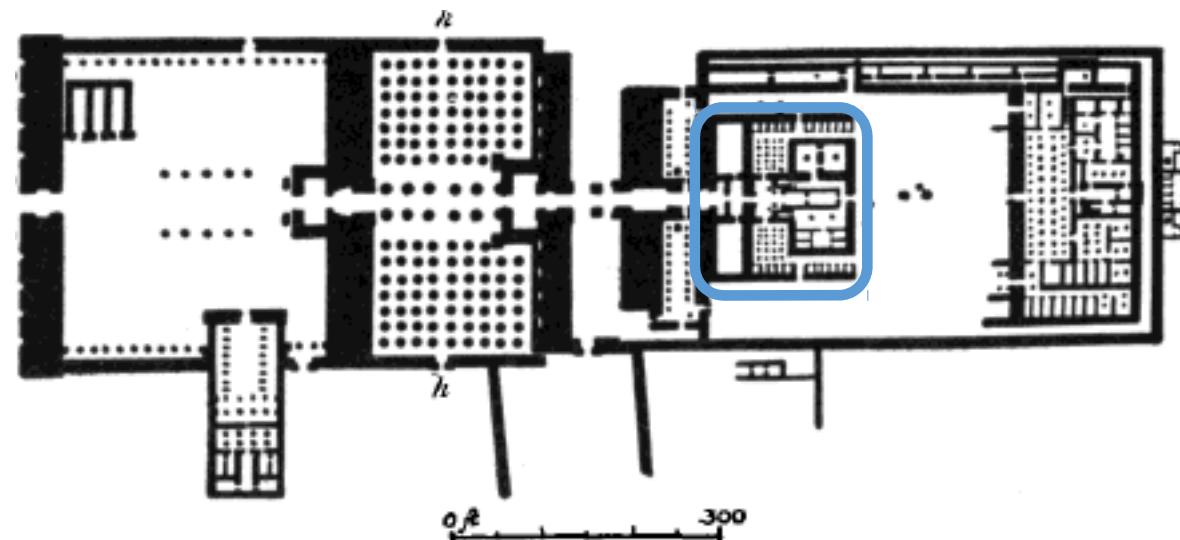
Courtyard



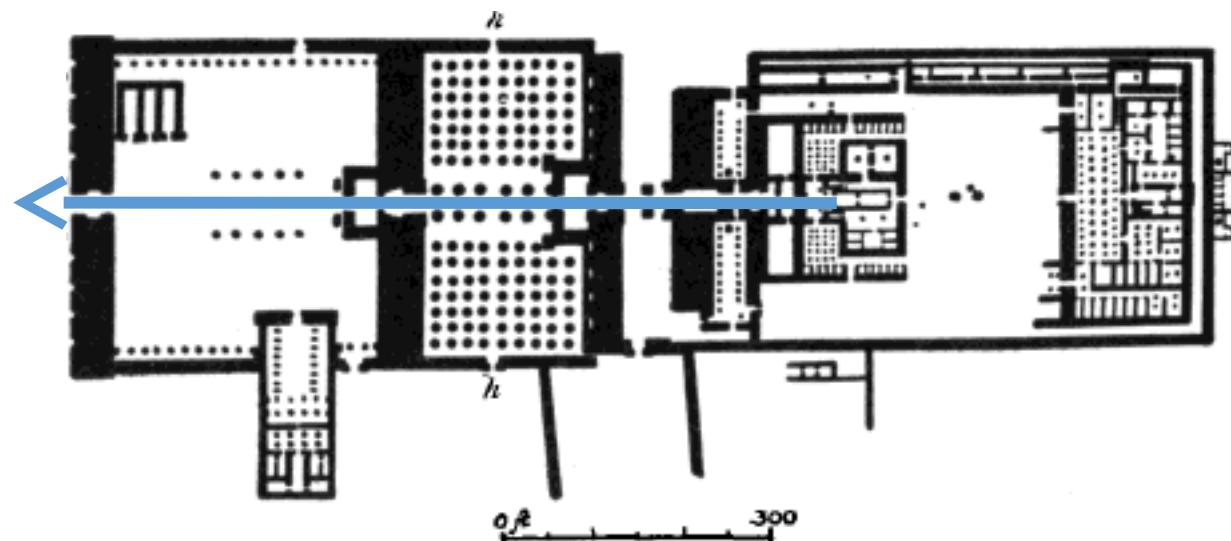
Hypostyle hall and Colonnaded hall



Sanctua ry



Processional Way



Egyptian religion during Dynasty 18



Growing evidence of a direct relationship between gods and ordinary people.

EVIDENCE:

- Festival processions
- Oracles
- Votive offerings

Opet festival



From the temple of Horus at Edfu (Greco-Roman Period)



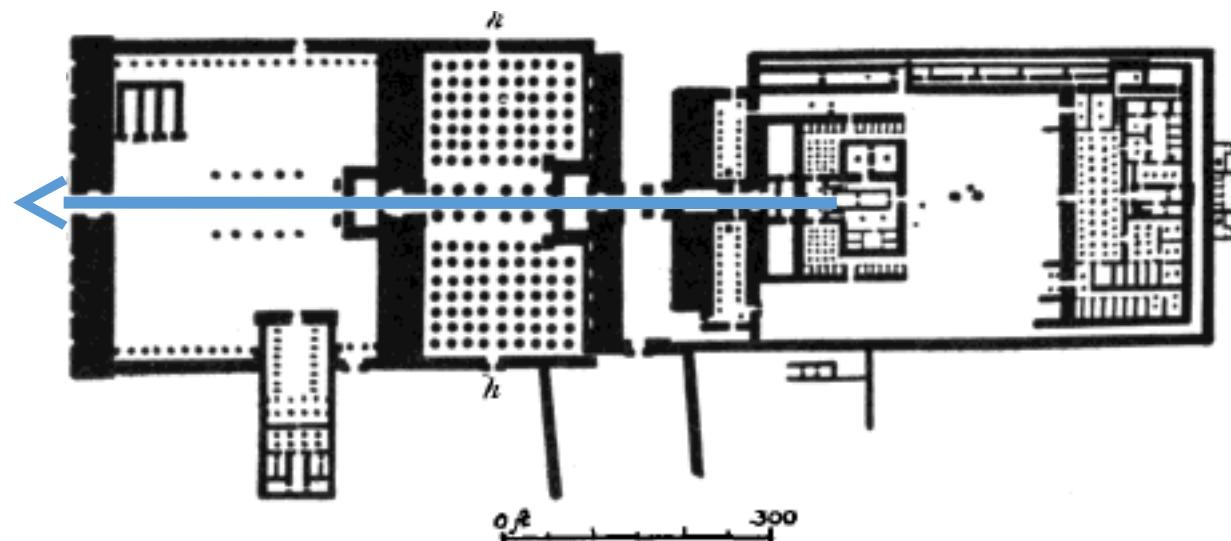
From Hatshepsut's chapel in Karnak (Dynasty 18)

Opet festival

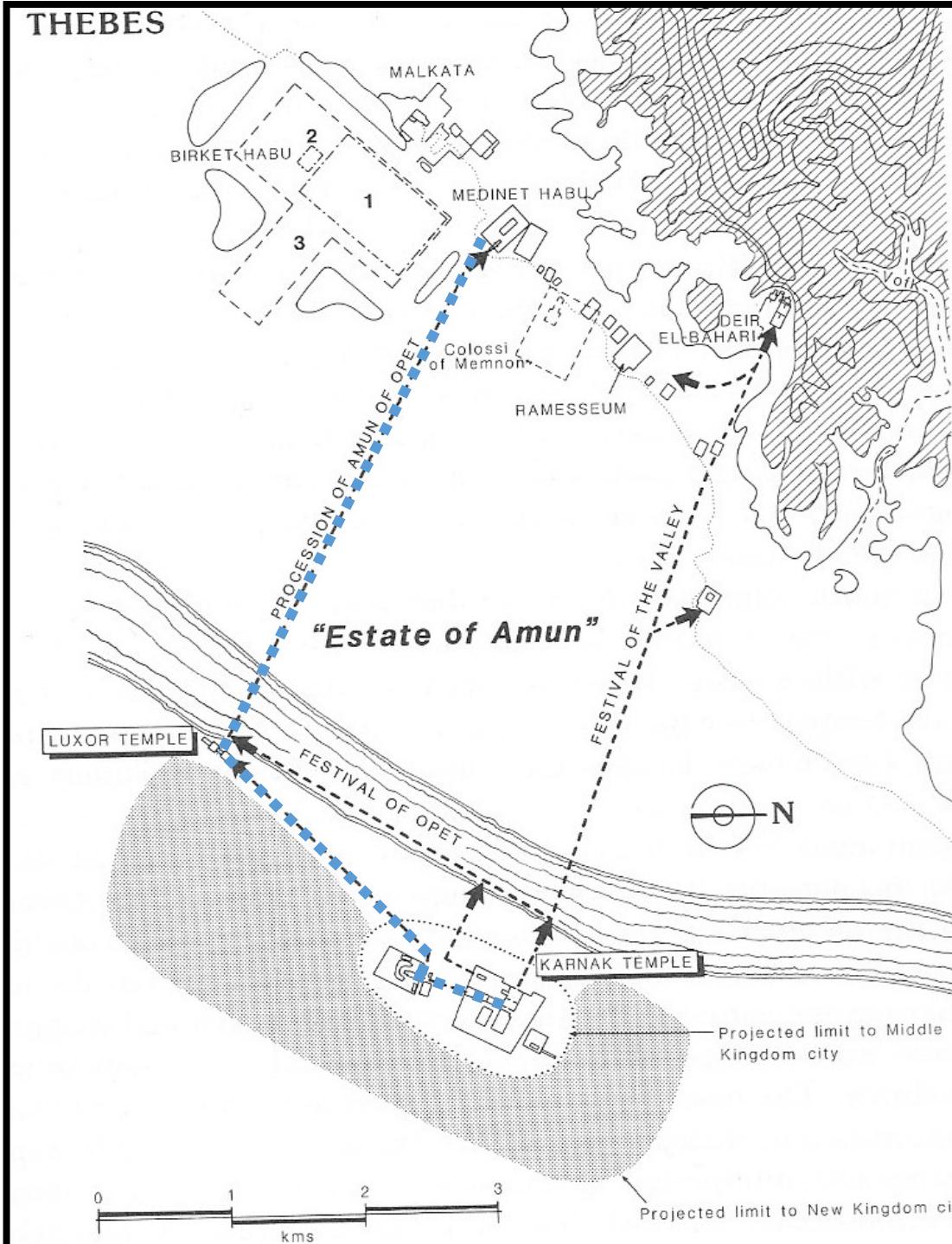
- Kingship rite, connecting the king with his divine father, Amun.
 - The power and legitimacy of kingship are ritually bequeathed by Amun to his son, the living Horus.
 - Belongs to official royal ideology and involved the personal appearance of the king.
 - First appears in Dynasty 18.
-
- Centrality of the **procession** involved the people.



Processional Way



Opet Festival Procession route



- Public vs. private aspect of the temple cult
- Public celebration during the festival procession
- Begins in Dynasty 18

Oracles

- Individuals could consult the god during festival processions

EVIDENCE

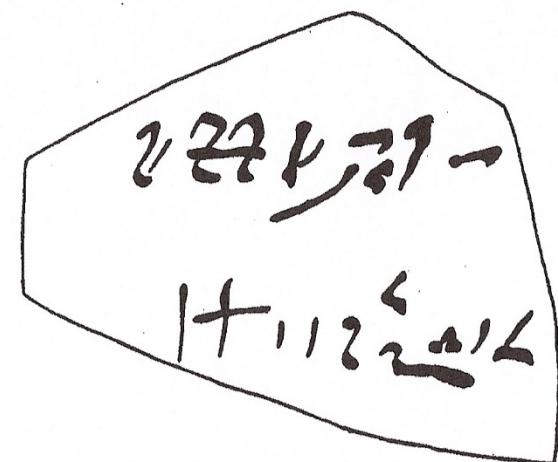
Ostraca with oracle questions

"Was it he who stole the mat?"

"Will Seti be appointed as priest?"



(1) Ostr. Caire J. 59464.



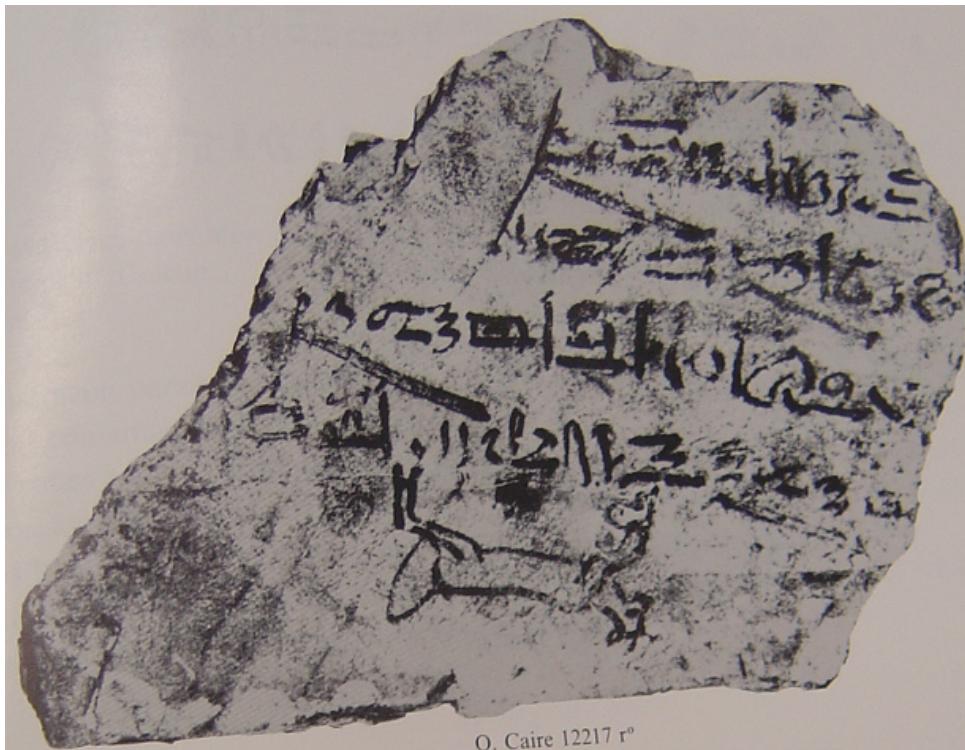
(2) Ostr. IFAO no 501.

Votive Offerings

- Individuals could have a direct relationship with the god

EVIDENCE

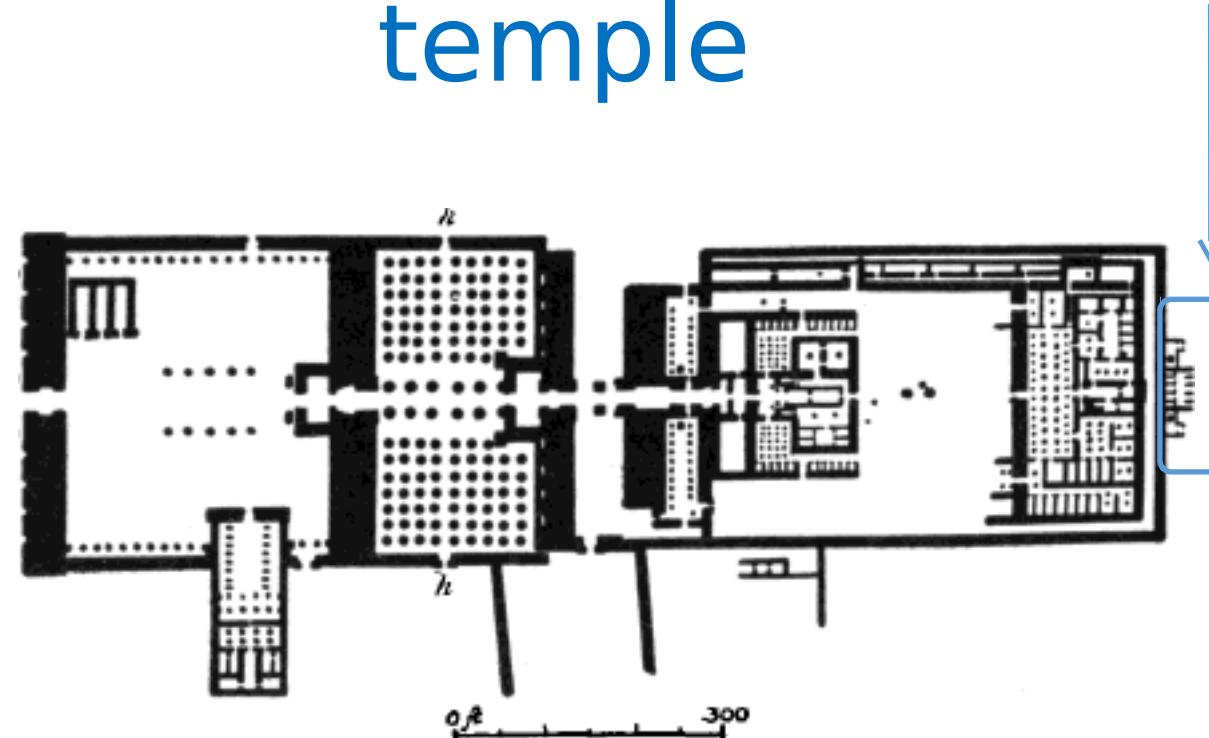
Theban ostraca dedicated to Amun

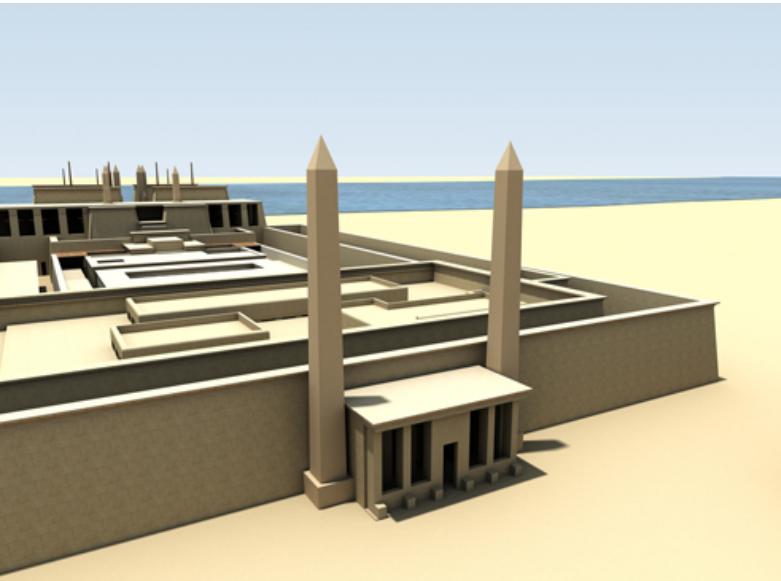


Cairo ostracon 12217:

*“Because your strength is greater than
that of any god, I have placed you in my
heart. With you as my protector I will
not fear”.*

Shrine of the “hearing ear” at Karnak temple





UCLA Reconstruction of the
“Shrine of the hearing ear” of
Thutmose III,
Temple of Amun at Karnak

<http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/experience>



“Shrine of the hearing ear” of
Thutmose III,
Temple of Amun at Karnak



Amulet of a votive ear

Dynasty 18, Deir el-Bahari

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, no.06.2466.

<<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/amulet-of-a-votive-ear-136179>>

Amarna Period

- King is the only connection to the god

EVIDENCE

Hymn to Aten

"You are in my heart, there is no other who knows you, only your son, Akhenaten, whom you have taught your ways and your might."

- King is the focal point of personal devotion

EVIDENCE

King replaces gods in

- Household shrines
- Tomb depictions
- Festival processions



Household shrine from Amarna.
Ägyptisches Museum Berlin, stele no. 14145