

“ON EARTH WHEN IT IS IN HEAVEN”: SACRED TIME AND ITS PROTECTION IN EGYPTIAN TEMPLES

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The splendorous ruins of hundreds of Egyptian temples, along with dozens of surviving texts that describe the function and rituals of those temples, afford a unique and exciting opportunity to understand ancient temples and what they teach about modern temple systems. There is so much to learn from ancient Egyptian temples, but this chapter will specifically examine the concept that temples can transcend time, and in doing so, they transform participants and their cosmos.

At the same time, when speaking of Egyptian temples, there are several things to keep in mind. First, these temples are institutions that existed for over three thousand years. They certainly evolved over that period of time. Further, there were variations in how temples operated and were conceived of over geographical space in a large country. Additionally, there were different types of temples that had unique purposes and, thus, different conceptions. Any short, concise discussion of Egyptian temples must gloss over a multitude of nuances, evolutions, and variations.¹ With these caveats in mind, this particular study will try to address a few things that seem to be almost universally true of Egyptian temples based on current knowledge. When delving into specifics, this study will focus on the Greco-Roman era. Current knowledge concerning temples peaks in this era, but it represents the last phase of their long history and undoubtedly experienced influence from many outside sources. Still, this period illustrates concepts that spanned more than Egypt's final era, and a certain amount of extrapolation is warranted.

Sacred Time

When thinking of temples, one often thinks of sacred space, even sacred actions,² but not usually sacred time. Sacred time is not necessarily a special time set aside for being at the temple or for performing a specific temple ritual; rather, it is a statement that by entering a temple, one leaves profane time behind and enters a place that exists in a different time or outside of time.³ In fact, part of the purpose of the temple in Egypt was to allow humankind to return to a specific point of time or, perhaps more accurately, a specific point outside of time.⁴ Temples were the place, and rituals the actions, that allowed the mundane time in which humans exist and act to intersect with a pure state and time that existed before time began to be measured in the profane world.⁵ The Egyptian temple (and its rituals) “creates a juxtaposition of two times: the point in time in which it is performed and the perpetual existence of sacred time, or the atemporal point before time began.”⁶ Temples and their rituals reactualize a desired punctuation of time in the history, or prehistory, of the cosmos.⁷ Within the temple, one is transported to the beginning of the world,⁸ and thus temples enable humankind to periodically recover the ideal period, or *illud tempus*.⁹

Eliade sums up how sacred actions (ritual) performed in a sacred space (temple) create sacred time:

Every consecrated space coincides with the center of the world, just as the time of any ritual coincides with the mythical time of the “beginning.” Through repetition of the cosmogonic act, concrete time, in which the construction takes place, is projected into mythical time, *in illo tempore* when the foundation of the world occurred. . . . Any ritual whatever, as we shall see later, unfolds not only in a consecrated space (i.e., one different in essence from profane space) but also in a “sacred time,” “once upon a time” (*in illo tempore, ab origine*), that is, when the ritual was performed for the first time by a god, an ancestor, or a hero.¹⁰

The State of Things in Sacred Time

The desire to return to sacred time permeates Egyptian temples. It is integrally tied to a foundational concept in the ancient Egyptian concept of the cosmos. Thus, to fathom the purpose of Egyptian

temples, one must first understand one of the most important aspects of Egyptian religious thought in general: the need to return to a state of order, known in Egyptian as *ma'at*.¹¹ *Ma'at* is the correct order, or state, of things.¹² It is the correct cosmic, physical, moral, and social state in which things should exist.¹³ When creation first came about, the cosmos was in a pristine state: it was in *ma'at*.¹⁴ The gods lived with mortals, one of the gods was their king, and all was as it should be.¹⁵ This state is often referred to as *sp tpi* (pronounced *sep tepi*). *Sp tpi* is literally the “top” or “head time,” but it is best translated as the “first time.” *Sp tpi* is an almost exact semantic equivalent of *illud tempus* and describes the time before the gods separated themselves from the earth.¹⁶ As ideal as it was, that state of order and coexistence of mortals and deity did not exist forever. At some point, a chaotic element (*isfet*) was introduced.¹⁷

The Loss of *Ma'at*

Within ancient Egyptian tradition, there are at least two different ways *isfet* was introduced. One way was by humankind rebelling against the gods. In one Coffin Text spell, the creator himself speaks of this: “I made every man like his fellow. I did not ordain that they do isfet. It was their desires that injured what I had said.”¹⁸ This rebellion created a wedge between gods and mortals, forcing the separation of the two.¹⁹ Much of this information is from a narrative that seems to be a later retelling of a mythical event only referred to, rather than narrated, in earlier periods.²⁰ In the Myth of the Heavenly Cow, the creator (Re in this case) was the ruler on earth, but he learned that “mankind plotted against him.”²¹ In response, Re initially sought to eradicate humans, but as the slaughter began, he experienced a change of heart and allowed many to survive. Still, damage had been done, and Re felt that he and the other gods could no longer dwell with mortals. Thus, a separation was introduced,²² which humankind sought to overcome.²³

As important as this myth is to understanding sacred time, it is not the only one that conveys the idea of a rebellion *in illo tempore*. In some of Egypt’s earliest religious texts, references are made to what would eventually be recorded as the story of the contentions of Horus and Seth. According to this narrative, the original disturbance to *ma'at* was brought about by Seth, who slew his brother,

Osiris, and sought to gain the throne for himself. Though Seth is a complicated figure exhibiting both positive and negative characteristics, it is clear that in some ways it was he who first disturbed *ma'at* and introduced *isfet*.²⁴ The time before Seth's rebellion, the perfect, pristine *illud tempus* or *sp tpi*, was a time before strife.²⁵ Because of the disruption of *ma'at* he would bring about, Seth's birth was referred to as the beginning of strife.²⁶ The strife he introduced stripped the people of their divine yet present king and created such a rift in *ma'at* that mortals and the gods could no longer cohabit the same space.

These two crises form the backbone of *illud tempus* rebellion in ancient Egypt. The parallel disturbances rising from Seth's strife had both taken place in *sp tpi* or *hrw*²⁷ *tpi*, or mythical time. By the time any "historical events" occurred within time as we know and measure it, these disturbances had already happened and had been overcome, bringing the world to its new ideal state. Yet that state lacked the presence of the divine and was bereft of direct human communion with deities.²⁸ It was as if history was a play, but by the time the curtain was raised (or time as we know it began to be measured), the scene was already set, and humankind was already on its own.²⁹

There is yet another pretime manifestation of chaos that impinged upon ideal reality. Apophis, usually represented as a giant snake, was chaos incarnate. In one cosmogony, Apophis was created from divine saliva and began at the very beginning to conceive of rebellion.³⁰ Hornung infers from the defeat of aspects of Apophis at the primeval hill that Apophis "is already there at the creation of the world and must be defeated for the first time by the creator god and driven out of the ordered world of existence."³¹ Thus, Apophis takes his place as a force of chaos in *illo tempore*. Apophis, rebellious humans, and Seth form a triumvirate of rebels who disturb order in *illo tempore*.

The Return of *Ma'at*

There is no doubt that the Egyptians felt a great need to regain the ideal state that existed in *illud tempus*, or sacred time. A number of texts make this clear. For example, Thutmosis III was described as one who "transforms Egypt into the condition of the past, as when

Re was king.”³² Similarly, Tutankhamun was described as having made it so that “the land is as it was in its first time.”³³ Horemheb had “set this land in order and ordained it as it was in the time of Re.”³⁴ The Twenty-first Dynasty high priest Menkheperre expelled enemies so that things might be as they were in the time of Re.³⁵ A host of other texts make it clear that one of the major functions of kings and their priestly representatives was to ritually re-create the conditions of *sp tpi*.³⁶ While the restoration of *ma’at* was important, perhaps the most crucial aspect of their rituals was the restoration of communion, or cohabitation, with deity.

The ability to regain this sacred time was contingent upon two related actions. *Isfet* had to be destroyed so that *ma’at* could be put in its place. Thus, the creation of the ideal state depended upon the destruction of the nonideal. This idea is reflected in a number of Egyptian texts. For example, one Pyramid Text states that “the sky is content, the earth is in joy, because they have heard that the King put Ma’at in the place of Isfet.”³⁷ In another Pyramid Text, the renewal of life is possible because the king has “put Ma’at in the place of Isfet.”³⁸ Of Amenemhet I, Khnumhotep writes, “His majesty came to drive out Isfet, appearing as Atum himself, setting in order that which he found decaying . . . since he loves Ma’at so much.”³⁹ In the context of describing the king bringing about a renewal and restoration, in one of the few surviving literary texts from ancient Egypt, the prophecies of Neferti state that “Ma’at will return to its seat, Isfet is driven out.”⁴⁰

This motif spans millennia. For example, a thousand years after the Pyramid Texts and hundreds of years after the Middle Kingdom texts cited above were written, Tutankhamun is described as having “driven Isfet out of both lands, and Ma’at is fixed in its place; he has made it so that falsehood is abhorred and the land is as it was in its first time.”⁴¹ Hundreds of years later, in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, we learn that “The land was inundated in his [Taharqa’s] time as it was in the time of the lord of all. Each man sleeps until the shining of day and none say ‘that I had!’ Ma’at is spread throughout the land, Isfet is transfixed to the ground.”⁴²

While many more texts speak of *ma’at* becoming more prevalent than *isfet*, this presentation is enough to make it clear that there was both the desire to return to *sp tpi* and the need to re-create its

conditions by forcing *isfet* out and bringing *ma'at* back.⁴³ Because these were conditions that only existed in a time outside of that of the profane world, they could only be reached in a place that could intersect the divine and mundane realms (sacred space, or the temple) and via actions that could span more than one realm (ritual). Thus, the rituals of the temple were crucial in the attempt to reach and inhabit, however temporarily, sacred time. Those who participated in the rituals of the temple could be lifted from their mundane experience of time to the sacred time of *sp tpi*. Thus, the temple was truly a transcendent realm.

The Egyptian Temple and Creation

The idea that the temple in Egypt was a place of (re)creation is enough of a well-known subject that it needs only a brief recap. It was inherent in many Egyptian concepts to think of a cyclical movement in time. Rather than conceiving of the universe as moving toward entropy, the Egyptians tracked the cyclical movements of the sun, moon, and stars, which naturally gave emphasis to the idea that as things changed or were lost, so could they also return to a prior state.⁴⁴ In accordance with this, the Egyptian temple was viewed as a reenacted primordial mound, the place where creation began.⁴⁵ Many architectural elements represent this idea.⁴⁶ The wall around the temple was often created in an undulating shape, suggesting the waters of Nun, the primordial water from which creation flowed and out of which the first dry land appeared.⁴⁷ The floors of temples were often basalt, evoking the black land of Egypt, while the columns were drawn and designed to represent the plants that grew out of the earth and reached toward the sky, and the ceilings were frequently painted with stars to represent the heavens. Thus, the architectural construction of the temple represented creation itself.⁴⁸ A specific interpretation of this point is also found in the notion that the hypostyle hall of a temple (the hall where many columns were erected) was designed to evoke the thicket where life was formed and where Horus found refuge from Seth.⁴⁹ The giant pylons of some temples were sometimes thought of as a birth canal, and passing through them was symbolic of (re)birth.⁵⁰

Rituals associated with temples also conveyed a connection to creation.⁵¹ The famous Shabaka stone contains the text of a ritual

creation drama, believed to have been acted out in a temple. Many rituals performed in temples were symbolic of creation or of a portion of the creation story associated with one of the creator gods and the saga of Osiris, Seth, and Horus.⁵² One example of this symbolism is the festival of Osiris, wherein the murder of Osiris, but also the story of Isis saving him and begetting Horus by him, were reenacted.⁵³ The involvement in re-creation rituals was especially the case for the king or his proxies, as the king became ritually associated with the various creator gods and enacted rituals that were evocative of each creator god's act.⁵⁴ For example, the king ascended stairs to rise as Re rises in the morning during his re-creative journey.⁵⁵ Rituals involving the God's Wife, or God's Hand, evoke the self-creative act of Atum.⁵⁶ During the Opet festival, Amun of Karnak went to visit his creator-self in Luxor in order to be re-created or renewed.⁵⁷ These are just a few examples. For the purpose of this study, it is enough to understand that the temple, from its architecture to its daily and festival rituals, was a place of (re)creation; it was a place where *sp tpi* and its attendant creation of the cosmos would repeatedly reoccur via ritual. These rituals made it possible for the temple to be a recurring now instead of an unreachable point of the past.⁵⁸

The Egyptian Temple and the Destruction of Chaos

The difficulty Egyptians faced regarding creation within a temple context is that the pristine state brought about by creation had been disturbed, and thus returning to *sp tpi*—the desired original time—also meant that disturbance would come again. Thus, *isfet* had to be continually destroyed both in order to return to *sp tpi* and to maintain that desired state once arrived at.⁵⁹ As a result, the destruction of *isfet* was a regular part of temple worship. Within the temple context, creation and destruction were integrally tied together.

This coexistence of creation and destruction can be seen in the fact that several of the temple features that served as elements of creation also served apotropaic functions. For example, while pylons could serve as a symbolic birth canal, they also served as gates or barriers that prevented the intrusion of any unwanted elements. The undulating walls that provided the creative forces of the

primordial water also held at bay that water and its chaotic side. Something like the avenue of ram sphinxes, which could represent the creator god, also served as sentinels preventing chaotic elements from entering the temple. But apotropaic functions, or the capability of barring chaos from entering sacred space, was not enough. Chaos had to be more than contained; it had to be destroyed.

While the creative aspects of a temple may be intuitive to a modern reader, the destructive elements, though perhaps less obvious, are just as abundant. Battle scenes were portrayed on many temples, thus magically creating a force that conquers chaos in perpetuity.⁶⁰ Similarly, at the temple of Edfu, the walls depict the successful hunting of a hippo, a depiction that corresponded to a ritual ending in the dissection and consumption of a hippo cake, symbolizing the complete conquering of Seth and his chaotic forces.⁶¹ The walls of many temples contained depictions of the king offering *ma'at* and suppressing or destroying chaos.⁶²

Many rituals had to do with the destruction of *isfet*.⁶³ Prime among these rituals was a varying set of execration rituals. Execration rituals are designed to destroy all chaotic elements, and they were regularly performed in temples. While they are known from at least as early as the Old Kingdom in a funerary setting, they came to be part of temple rituals. John Gee has demonstrated the correspondence between Ptolemaic execration rituals found on the walls of the hypostyle hall of Karnak and the papyrus versions of these spells, as well as their correlation to spells performed at the temple in Abydos and the Temple of Montu in northern Karnak.⁶⁴ There were similar rites performed at the Temple of Edfu during the Greco-Roman period. For example, one part of the Temple of Edfu represents the thicket where Horus was conceived.⁶⁵ Another part of the temple symbolizes the place where Apophis was defeated.⁶⁶ Undoubtedly, there were other temples that performed similar rituals.

Temple execration rituals were both systematic (such as a daily ritual) and periodic (such as special rituals for special festivals or occasions). The textual attestations of the execration rites performed at Abydos and Karnak share some detail about the daily rituals performed there. In these cases, the full execration rite was composed of several smaller rituals. The full rite included things

like writing the name of an enemy in green ink on new papyrus and then cutting and burning it. Physical objects that represented both mortal, political, and supernatural foes were manipulated. These objects included pottery, papyrus, hairballs, and figurines of stone, wood, wax, or clay. The objects were ritually nullified by binding them, cutting them, spitting on them, stomping on them, burning them, spearing them, burying them, urinating on them, melting them, or decapitating them. Within a single ritual that was part of a larger ritual, an object was bound with the sinew of a red cow, spit on four times, trampled on with the left foot, struck with a spear, slaughtered with a knife, put on a fire, and spit on many times while in that fire. The ritual destruction of *isfet* was systematic and comprehensive.

The Combination of Creation and Destruction

In temple settings, the ideas of upholding creation and destroying chaos are thoroughly intertwined. From early on, (re)creative aspects of rituals were combined with destructive rituals. In the Pyramid Texts, spells of purification were often either preceded or succeeded by spells of warding off enemies.⁶⁷ In the Khoiak festival, the rebirth of Osiris was celebrated simultaneously with the celebration of his triumph over enemies.⁶⁸ In the text of the “Festival of the Two Kites,” the purification and protection rites of the temple are in a ritual that included driving Seth to the executioner. This and further rituals are found on Papyrus Bremner-Rhind I.⁶⁹ The collection of spells on this papyrus is illustrative. In part, it includes 1) the “Songs of Isis and Nephthys,” which, due to its allusions to Isis and Nephthys saving Osiris after his murder by Seth, has strong (re)creative aspects; 2) the “Ritual of Bringing Sokar,” which also has strong creative purposes; 3) “The Book of Overthrowing Apophis,” a spell largely dedicated to destroying elements of *isfet*; and 4) “The Names of Apophis, Who Shall Not Be,” a spell designed to not only overthrow but completely control and then eradicate Apophis in his role of standing for all *isfet*. The juxtaposition of these spells is significant.

In the “Songs of Isis and Nephthys” (or “Festival of the Two Kites”), the majority of the rite is concerned with reviving Osiris and begetting Horus, presenting a strong (re)creative motif. Yet

in column 2 lines 9–18, Osiris is asked to consort with Isis and Nephthys after the manner of a male with females (creative), immediately followed by the command to take one Tebha to his execution block (destruction of chaos), who is later declared to be dead.⁷⁰ The text then describes how Seth disturbed the cosmic order, followed by a plea to drive out Seth so that Osiris can consort with Isis and Nephthys after the manner of a man. In column 3 line 25 through column 4 line 7, Osiris the virile bull is to come to the two widows (creative), and this is possible because other gods will ward off Seth, and Re will administer the punishment of the rebellious (destructive).⁷¹ This part of the story is followed by a smattering of lines that alternate between creative imagery (such as a god who fashions himself) and destructive imagery (such as the slaughtering of rebels, including Seth).⁷²

Later in the ritual, Isis invites Osiris to be procreative with her, singing, “Ho thou youth, come in peace! Ho thou brother of mine . . . come thou to thine house without fear,” which is immediately followed by the cryptic line “The Great Rite of Protection, Unseen, Unheard.”⁷³ While one can argue that this is a description of the rite that has just taken place, or instead is a command to perform a separate but connected rite of protection in association with what has just taken place, it is clear that the destructive rites are interdependent with creative ritual.

Similarly, in “The Book of Overthrowing Apophis,” there is a long section about smashing, spearing, stabbing, spitting, and burning Apophis. The concluding lines are “Apophis is brought to the flame, Neki is brought to the fire, and he shall be utterly non-existent. . . . Be annihilated O Apophis, four times. Recited over an image of Apophis made with a waxen body and drawn on a new sheet of papyrus to be put in the fire before Re every day.” The very next line is “The Book of Knowing the Creations of Re and of Felling Apophis,” which starts with a long description of how Re came into being and then morphs into a description of destroying his enemies, especially Apophis.⁷⁴ Thus, it is apparent that the juxtaposition of creation and destruction occurs both at the level of separate (but related) spells and within the spells themselves.

Similar motifs appear in other temples. For example, in the ritual that is part of the Temple of Edfu, the sacred waters that

aid with creation are also associated with the Lord of Fear and a great protector.⁷⁵ Later, this same text juxtaposes a strong-armed protector with a command to create and a description of Re creating, beginning at the primordial mound.⁷⁶ There are even fused versions of creator gods (Ptah) and protector gods (Tanen) in this temple ritual drama.⁷⁷ This fusion also happens with Horus and a group of protectors.⁷⁸

Ritual Union

A cursory glance at the texts noted above reveals that in all of these temple rituals, an important element of Egyptian religious practice is at play. It is typical of ancient Egyptian efforts to bring about a desired state or condition to coidentify the participant with mythical characters or conditions. This proclivity for trying to merge one's character with that of deity is the result of the Egyptian belief that they were beings who had an existence in the mortal, the divine, and the afterlife realms, all of which were perpetually superjacent with each other.⁷⁹ The Egyptians "lived in their metaphor, considering themselves ontologically to have a presence simultaneously in what we would consider to be a number of different planes; such a multivalent self-view is commonly reflected in Egyptian texts."⁸⁰ This metaphor was most commonly reflected in rituals, where one could be sacralized to take advantage of the characteristics of the divine. Thus, if one were bitten by a snake or stung by a scorpion, one would ritually identify oneself with Horus, who had survived just such encounters.⁸¹ When giving birth, a laboring mother would be ritually identified with Isis, who survived the birthing process and brought forth a healthy child.⁸²

This tendency to coidentify with the divine is especially important when dealing with *sp tpî*. Texts dealing with that sacred time should be viewed not as describing events of the distant past but rather as discussing actions that had occurred, were presently taking place, and would happen yet again in the future. Thus, the events of *sp tpî* are historiolae that were carried out by real characters in a time that transcends mortal time and had a real impact on mundane existence, which divine time could in turn be impacted by that same quotidian life.⁸³ It was important for the Egyptians to have interactions that took place both in and out of mortal time

and space.⁸⁴ Ritual is the event that allowed the mortal Egyptian to intentionally and forcibly impact *sp tpi*. Moreover, the temple, with its existence in more than one realm, made ritual all the more efficacious in its ability to impact multiple realms and multiple phases of time.

As a result of all this, many of the rituals of the temple transported the ritual participants from the mundane to the supramundane, allowing their actions to have multivalent effects. Becoming Ptah in the ritual drama recorded on the Shabaka Stone not only allowed one to ensure that the original creation was still efficacious but also helped bring about the creative conditions of *ma'at* in the present. The priestesses who participated in the festival of the kites became Isis and Nephthys, and during the ritual they were acting in *sp tpi*, but they were doing so in a way that impacted both *sp tpi* and the quotidian here-and-now. When in a ritual that killed a hippopotamus, and by extension Seth, the ritual role players became Horus. As they did so, they were acting in both the realm of time and nontime. When destroying Apophis in an execration ritual, those participating in the ritual became Re and brought about actions that ensured the safe nightly journey of the sun. This ritual helped ensure that the events in *sp tpi* happened as they should and simultaneously protected the temple and the participants' lives in the immediate present. Becoming the figures who were present in *sp tpi* allowed individuals to act in sacred time. Acting in sacred time meant that they were acting, and having an effect, in all time (and nontime) periods. The rituals of the temple create what others have called "an extra-temporal and extra spatial metaphysical sphere of existence."⁸⁵ The ability to create, correct, and protect in all phases of time made the temple experience particularly important, powerful, and relevant.

Reunification in Sacred Time

Perhaps relevance and power to affect multiple spheres are most important as one considers the purpose of the temple. The ultimate ritual ending point of all these temples⁸⁶ was for the king or his priestly proxies⁸⁷ to be reunited, at least temporarily,⁸⁸ with the deity of the temple.⁸⁹ When this occurred, they had overcome all that had disrupted the pristine state of *sp tpi*, at least temporarily,

and thus had re-created *sp tpi*. For that nonmoment, the forces of chaos had been destroyed, the creative forces had been reactivated, and the sacred “when” of creation had been reactualized. There was an essential difference. Time had not been reset to exactly what it had been before strife had entered the world and the gods had fled the presence of humankind. It was after that point of pretime that Horus had been begotten. The point of returning to that paradisaical period was not to eradicate Horus in the process of eradicating *isfet*. Instead, the sacred time striven for by the Egyptians and realized in the sacred space and action of the temple was a modified *illud tempus*. It was the restoration of the timeless *sp tpi* but with the introduction of new characters and the elevation of others to a state where they could now coexist and commune with the divine. Thus, the space and rituals of the temple created a reunion with the gods and brought about a time and state similar to that which had existed before disruption, yet which was better than the original state in some ways.

Notes

1. Dieter Kurth, *The Temple of Edfu: A Guide by an Ancient Egyptian Priest*, trans. Anthony Alcock (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2004), 11–12.
2. See, for example, John M. Lundquist, “What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 89; John M. Lundquist, *The Temple: Meeting Place of Heaven and Earth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 27.
3. See Lundquist, *The Temple*, 24; Mircea Eliade, “The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth,” *Diogenes* 23 (1958): 9.
4. Some sources have even referred to a “situation time.” See Daniel A. Werning, “The Representation of Space, Time and Event Sequence in an Ancient Egyptian Netherworld Comic,” in *Time and Space at Issue in Ancient Egypt, Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographia 19*, ed. Gaëlle Chantraine and Jean Winand (Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2018), 227.
5. Ragnhild Bjerre Finnestad, *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator: On the Cosmological and Iconological Values of the Temple of Edfu* (Wiesbaden, DE: Otto Harrassowitz, 1985), 22.
6. Kerry Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2011), 93.

7. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order*, 93; Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959), 68–69, 85, 105.
8. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order*, 93; Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 82.
9. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order*, 93; Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 104.
10. Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 197–98.
11. Of necessity, the term must be oversimplified. To understand more about *ma'at*, see Emily Teeter, “Ma’at,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Donald B. Redford (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 319; Erik Hornung, *Idea Into Image: Essays on Ancient Egyptian Thought*, trans. Elizabeth Bredeck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 131–46; Jan Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im alten Ägypten* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1969).
12. See James P. Allen, *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts* (New Haven, CT: Graduate School of Yale University, 1988), 26.
13. It is worth noting that in April 2019, at the annual meeting for the American Research Center in Egypt, a panel on *ma'at* was held. The three speakers—Julian Troche, Jonathan Winnerman, and Niv Allon—called into question some traditionally held views of *ma'at*. While they raised some valid points about the oversimplification and use of the concepts of chaos and order in Egyptology, they seem to have done so by oversimplifying themselves. Undoubtedly, they will help refine and better understand these concepts. Because this panel was so recent, it is difficult to tell what the reaction of the academy will be, other than the comments made at the time, which were largely along the lines of the view expressed in this footnote. The views expressed in this article will be likely unaffected by the forthcoming discussions.
14. CT 80 is replete with references to *ma'at* at the state of creation. See Allen, *Genesis in Egypt*, 21–23, 57; Rosalie David, *Temple Ritual at Abydos* (London: The Egypt Exploration Society, 2016), 9.
15. PT 1208 speaks of the time “when heaven was separated from earth, indeed, when the gods went to heaven” (*m wpt pt ir t3 m prt r=f ntr.w ir pt*). PT 1778 speaks of one who “keeps assuming the office of Atum of separating heaven from earth and the primeval waters” (*itt hrt itm n dsr pt ir t3 nnw*). These quotes indicate that there was a time beforehand, when the heavens were not a separate dwelling place of the gods.
16. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order*, 93–95. Much of the discussion on *ma'at* found in this study is based on, at times quoting or paraphrasing, this earlier discussion on this topic.
17. Lucie Lamy, *New Light on Ancient Knowledge: Egyptian Mysteries*, trans. Deborah Lawlor (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1981), 19.

18. CT VII 464a–b.
19. See Antonio Loprieno, “Der demotische Mythos vom Sonnenauge,” in *Texte aus der Umwelt zum Alten Testament. III, 5: Mythen und Epen*, ed. Otto Kaiser (Gütersloh, DE: Mohn 1995), 1038.
20. On this issue, see John Baines, “Myth and Literature,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 363; Antonio Loprieno, “Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient Texts and Modern Theories,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 49–50; John Baines, “Egyptian Myth and Discourse: Myth, Gods, and the Early Written and Iconographic Record,” *JNES* 50, no. 2 (1991): 81–105.
21. Myth of the Heavenly Cow as in Erik Hornung, *Der Ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh. Eine Ätiologie des Unvollkommenen*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Göttingen, DE: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 1.
22. See P. Leningrad 1116A/133–37; supplemented by P. Carlsberg VI/5, 8–9. See also Stephen Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York: Dover Publications, 1992), 31, 35.
23. Assmann, *Ma’at*, 221–22.
24. See Herman te-Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967); Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 52.
25. PT 1040 speaks of the time “before strife existed, before fear came about through the Horus Eye” (*n(i) hpr.t hnnw n(i) hpr.t snḏ pw hpr hr irt hrw*).
26. See te-Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 27–28; and Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, 158 and note 56. See also Linda J. Tessier, “Boundary Crossing: The Chaos-Cosmos Dynamic in Cosmogonic Myth” (PhD diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1987), 245.
27. The word *hrw* means “day.” In narrative, the “first time” becomes a “first day,” probably to accommodate the advent of its presentation as a narrative. Thanks to Dr. Antonio Loprieno for insight into this term.
28. See Loprieno, “Mythos vom Sonnenauge,” 1038.
29. My gratitude to Antonio Loprieno, who first introduced this metaphor.
30. Mpay Kemboly, *Violence and Protection in Early Egyptian Funerary Texts* (master’s thesis, Oxford University, 2000), 17–18.
31. Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 159.
32. Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums Abteilung* (Leipzig, DE: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1903/1933), section IV, fascicle 1246.
33. Sethe, *Urkunden*, §IV/2026.
34. Sethe, *Urkunden*, §IV/2119.
35. Heinrich Karl Brugsch, *Reise nach der grossen Oase El Khargeh in der libyschen Wüste; Beschreibung ihrer Denkmäler und wissenschaftliche*

- Untersuchungen über das Vorkommen der Oasen in den altägyptischen Inschriften auf Stein und Papyrus* (Leipzig, DE: J. C. Hinrichs, 1878), place 21, line 7.
36. Assmann, *Ma'at*, 224. See also James P. Allen, *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1988), 26; Jan Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*, trans. Andrew Jenkins (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), 206; Richard H. Wilkinson, *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 180; Jeremy Naydler, *Temple of the Cosmos: The Ancient Egyptian Experience of the Sacred* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1996), 91–93, 147.
 37. PT 1774–76.
 38. PT 265.
 39. Sethe, *Urkunden*, §VII/27.
 40. P. Leningrad 1116B/69, as in Wolfgang Helck, *Die Prophezeihung des Nfr.tj* (Wiesbaden, DE: O. Harrassowitz, 1970), 57.
 41. Sethe, *Urkunden*, §IV/2026.
 42. Stela of Taharqa year 6, lines 3–5 (Kawa version), as in M. F. Laming Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa I* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).
 43. See also Naydler, *Temple of the Cosmos*, 93–97.
 44. Alicia Maravelia, “Of Eternity, Everlastingness, and Stars: Notions of Time, Space, Duration and the Firmament in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts,” in *Time and Space at Issue in Ancient Egypt, Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographia 19*, ed. Gaëlle Chantraine and Jean Winand (Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2018), 83–84.
 45. Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 76; Miroslav Verner, *Temple of the World: Sanctuaries, Cults, and Mysteries of Ancient Egypt*, trans. Anna Bryson-Gustová (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2013), 5; David, *Temple Ritual at Abydos*, 12–13; Françoise Dunand and Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 51.
 46. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 8–51.
 47. Verner, *Temple of the World*, 7.
 48. Kurth, *Temple of Edfu*, 8.
 49. Kurth, *Temple of Edfu*, 9.
 50. Kurth, *Temple of Edfu*, 9.
 51. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 68–77.
 52. Emily Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 58–59.
 53. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 62–65, 68–77, for other examples. Also Maraelia, “Of Eternity, Everlastingness and Stars,” 83–85. The story of

- Osiris being saved by Isis is found in many places. See PT 219 and CT 80 for examples.
54. Maraëlia, "Of Eternity, Everlastingness and Stars," 41; Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 88; Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 51.
 55. Naydler, *Temple of the Cosmos*, 148.
 56. Mariam F. Ayad, *God's Wife, God's Servant: The God's Wife of Amun (c. 740–525 BC)* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), 134–52.
 57. Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 171.
 58. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 22–23. Also, apparent in CT 78 is the need for one who brings about "eternal recurrence." See Allen, *Genesis in Egypt*, 21–27.
 59. Dimitri Meeks and Christine Favard-Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 20; Verner, *Temple of the World*, 72; Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 70; Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 88–89; Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 56–57.
 60. For example, see David, *Temple Ritual at Abydos*, 31.
 61. Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 206.
 62. Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 88–89; David, *Temple Ritual at Abydos*, 41; Meeks and Favard-Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods*, 123.
 63. Lamy, *Egyptian Mysteries*, 19.
 64. John Gee, "Execration Rituals in Various Temples," in *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Interconnections between Temples*, ed. Monika Dolinska and Horst Beinlich (Wiesbaden, DE: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 67–80.
 65. Kurth, *Temple of Edfu*, 64–65.
 66. Kurth, *Temple of Edfu*, 66.
 67. See, for example, PT 23, 214, and 244. See also Kerry Muhlestein, "Execration Ritual," in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Willeke Wendrich and Jacco Dieleman (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2008), 1.
 68. Verner, *Temple of the World*, 32.
 69. The Papyrus of Nesimin is also known as Papyrus Bremner-Rhind and is housed in the British Museum. Hereafter I cite the publication of the text found in Raymond Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—I," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 22, no. 1 (1936): 121–40; Raymond Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—II," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23, no. 1 (1937): 10–16; Raymond Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—III," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (1937): 166–85; Raymond Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—IV," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24, no. 1 (1938): 41–53.
 70. P. Bremner-Rhind, as in Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—I," 122–23.
 71. P. Bremner-Rhind, as in Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—I," 124.

72. P. Bremner-Rhind, as in Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—I," 124–25.
73. P. Bremner-Rhind, as in Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—I," 127.
74. Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—III," 172–73.
75. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 33–34.
76. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 36–37.
77. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 81.
78. Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 84–86.
79. Kerry Muhlestein, "Empty Threats? How Egyptians' Self-Ontology Should Affect the Way We Read Many Texts," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 34 (2007): 115.
80. Muhlestein, "Empty Threats," 115.
81. For examples, see J. F. Borghouts, "The Victorious Eyes: A Structural Analysis of Two Egyptian Mythologizing Texts of the Middle Kingdom," in *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens, Band 2: Religion, Zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf überreicht von seinen Freunden und Schülern* (Göttingen, DE: Hubert & Co., 1984), 704; J. F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 51–82.
82. P. Leiden I 348 11/2–8.
83. Muhlestein, "Empty Threats," 118.
84. Maravelia, "Of Eternity, Everlastingness, and Stars," 99.
85. Maravelia, "Of Eternity, Everlastingness, and Stars," 99. Maravelia was not speaking of temples per se, but her idea of sacred space and time creating everlastingness and eternity apply perfectly to the temple.
86. Again, it is only from later periods that scholars know details about the rituals described here, though there is evidence for a great deal of continuity from earlier time periods (perhaps less so with the earliest eras, which were a formative period). See Robyn Gillam, "The Daily Cult: Space, Continuity, and Change," in *Evolving Egypt: Innovation, Appropriation, and Reinterpretation*, British Archaeological Reports International Series 2397, ed. John Gee and Kerry Muhlestein (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 60–62, 67.
87. Ultimately, it was always supposed to be the king who participated in these rituals. But practically that could not happen, so priests served as proxy for the king. See John Gee, "Prophets, Initiation and the Egyptian Temple," *JSSEA* 31 (2004): 97–107; Gillam, "The Daily Cult," 59.
88. Gillam, "The Daily Cult," 59–60.
89. See Finnestad, *Image of the World*, 90–101; Dunand and Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt*, 90–91.