

**THE RELIGIOSCAPE OF MUSEUMS: UNDERSTANDING  
MODERN INTERACTIONS WITH ANCIENT RITUAL SPACES**

by

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The term *religioscape*, or the spatial parameters of religious space, is conventionally linked to groups that adhere to specific religious ideologies and venerate the same deity/deities. However, elements that make up a religioscape, such as tradition and ritual, and both group and solitary worship or adoration, can thrive without a definite deity. A specific ritual space is necessary to many world religiouscapes. This thesis will explore the modern Western museum (both open-air and purpose-built) as a specific ritual space, and consider how the museumification of elements from four ancient Egyptian temple complexes engage both curators and modern tourists visiting these structures as part of a new active religioscape – the modern religioscape of Museums. To demonstrate the new religioscape of Museums, this thesis employs primary observational research and secondary literary research to investigate modern display of the structures from four Egyptian temple complexes including the Luxor temple complex *in-situ* in Luxor, Egypt; the Temple of Dendur in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, United States; the gate of the Temple of Kalabsha in the Eastern Stüler Building alongside the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg in Berlin, Germany; and the Temple of Taffeh in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, the Netherlands. The Pergamonmuseum in Berlin is also examined, as it is the future location for the Kalabsha gate. Through this investigation, this thesis finds that it is not the amount of “original” context surrounding a structure within a museum (both open-air and purpose-built) that embeds it within the religioscape of Museums, but the atmosphere and



expectations related to these structures as experienced by the believing worshippers, the museum tourists. Thus, museum tourists, as a modern religious group, display specific types of ideologies that constitute a new religioscape and aid in the overall discussion of museumification of religiously-important objects.

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## **PREFACE**

I would like to acknowledge all of the individuals who assisted in the completion of this thesis. Dr. Erin Peters, my amazing and dedicated thesis advisor and Egyptology extraordinaire; Dr. Robert Hayden, whose passion in class invigorated me to write a book; Caroline Fazzini, for her encouragement and willingness to help me bounce around ideas; Dr. Gretchen Bender of the Department of History of Art and Architecture and the Friends of Frick Research Award; Dr. Peter Koehler of the University Honors College and the Brackenridge Summer Fellowship; Dr. Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir and Dr. Carrie Weaver who sat on my committee; and lastly my mom, dad, sister, and grandmother, as well as my “lake family,” for their constant emotional and occasionally technical support.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The modern tourism industry is one of ritual and expectation. When visiting museums or historic sites, visitors customarily enter grand buildings, pass a security guard, pay an entrance fee, and are given a map to follow for direction throughout the institution or site; this leads them to the anticipated awe-inspiring treasures that teach visitors about “mysterious” bygone eras and the ways of life that came before the visitor’s time. This pattern of ritual and expectation can be seen particularly at conventional Western brick-and-mortar museums as well as “open-air” museums where visitors can walk through archaeological remains or reconstructed buildings, where the expectations of “authentic” or historically-accurate experiences are high. This thesis considers how the modern tourism industry of these two types of museums reinvigorates formerly-sacred objects from ritual spaces and spiritual connections with new types of traditions, rituals, and ideologies. This thesis argues that these museums and sites – often seen by the general public as unbiased, secular institutions – influence how visitors interact with past religious landscapes and ideologies, and that the modern museum industry recreates ritual space in a way that revitalizes ritual structures into a new type of “religion.” This thesis considers modern tourism to museums to include visits to sites where objects and architecture are *in-situ* and to museums with objects and architecture removed from *in-situ* locations, both with atmospheres and contexts created by curators and other museum staff.

In order to investigate how the general public interacts with religious monuments of the past in current museum displays, this thesis will question what constitutes a religious landscape

(or “religioscape,” meaning the spatial parameters of religious space, defined further below), and ask: can sites of tourism related to museums that display ancient sacred or ritual material be seen as parts of active religioscapes? Additionally, what types of visitor interactions with formerly-sacred objects demonstrate visitors experience these objects as ritual-oriented? Four monuments that were once parts of pagan temple complexes in ancient Egypt form the case studies to analyze these questions. Three of these structures (the Taffeh temple, the Kalabsha gate, and the temple of Dendur, which is a temple-gate pair) are now housed inside Western museums as public exhibits.<sup>1</sup> The fourth (the temple complex of Luxor) remains *in-situ* by the Nile in Egypt as an “open-air” museum. This thesis tracks the historical and modern religious use of these sites in order to establish timelines and credibility on the aspect of continuous historical use.

## 1.1 THEORETICAL METHODOLOGIES

### 1.1.1 Anthropology

This thesis is a part of two primary fields of study: anthropology and museum studies. The main anthropological theory that informs this thesis is antagonistic tolerance, which is a process described by Robert Hayden’s team that deals with religious domination, violence, and tolerance.<sup>2</sup> Hayden and his team examine global patterns of use, destruction, and/or rededication

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis specifically discusses Western museum and museum contexts, and includes Egypt within these parameters as the Egyptian Antiquities Service formed based off of Western archaeological methods and preferences.

<sup>2</sup> Robert M. Hayden et al., *Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites and Spaces* (New York: Routledge, 2016), *passim*. (Note that all page numbers of *Antagonistic Tolerance* noted are from the ebook version and do not necessarily correspond with page numbers from the print book.)

of shared sacred space. When a sacred space is reoriented, intrinsically altered, or destroyed, it can be accompanied by a change in the political and/or religious dominance in the geographical region. The antagonistic tolerance model “applies to communities who define themselves and each other as Self and Other primarily on religious grounds.”<sup>3</sup> This means that, generally, when the Self population takes control of an area, the sacred spaces of the Other population are often taken over, reoriented, redecorated, and/or resanctified in order to fit the needs of the Self population’s religion. In the context of this thesis, the “Self” population pertains to museum staff and governmental tourism agencies who control the sites visited in the modern museum landscape as well as the visitors who go to these sites, and the “Other” are the past religious groups who used the temples. Likewise, the Self population reorients, redecorates, and resanctifies the ancient Egyptian temples within modern museum or tourism spaces. This is not done with necessarily antagonistic intentions; however, it is done in a manner that reflects the expectations, aesthetic desires, and ritual needs of the modern Self population, unavoidably subjugating the Other population to a secondary role in presenting their own culture.

In the general antagonistic tolerance model, although the intent of the governing Self party may not be to completely destroy the Other population, this can be a result. When this occurs, a *religioscape* becomes an *archaeoscape*. These terms refer to different relationships between the state of a sacred structure as well as related physical elements and the practice (or non-practice) of the associated spirituality. *Religioscapes* are “physical markers of the space in which practitioners of a given religious community interact, and thus... [are] the spatial parameters of social presences.”<sup>4</sup> Religioscapes are inherently fluid and their built environment

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<sup>3</sup> Hayden et al., *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

changes as the ideological environment changes.<sup>5</sup> *Archaeoscap*es, on the other hand, are the physical remnants of a past religiouscape that can be observed and establish “absence...of practitioners of that religion.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, religiouscapes are living landscapes of religious practices, worship, and membership where the religion is actively functioning. If that religious population were to suddenly disappear from the area, an archaeoscape is left behind. This term first and foremost includes structures and areas that were part of the non-active religion’s sacred spaces.

Along with religiouscape and archaeoscape, a third type of landscape, a *secularscape*, is also part of the antagonistic tolerance model, and refers to “the use for secular purposes of structures that were built as religious buildings and that retain visible attributes of the earlier religious use.”<sup>7</sup> It is neither a current religiouscape nor archaeoscape, but can act in competition with or usurp them. They are generally formed with the secularization or desanctification of components of a religiouscape, sometimes through the process of museumification. Rose Aslan notes that the process of museumification “considers every place and object connected to a distinct culture or religion to be an artifact that can be preserved and re-presented in an acceptable format.”<sup>8</sup> Phillip Feifan Xie continues that museumification “offers a metanarrative of ‘real things’ in a sealed environment [where] artifacts and material objects must be classified, labeled and displayed in order to distinguish them from those of other institutions.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 134-51.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>7</sup> Hayden et al., *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 135.

<sup>8</sup> Aslan, “Museumification of Rumi’s Tomb,” 4.

<sup>9</sup> Phillip Feifan Xie, *Authenticating Ethnic Tourism* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2011), 110.

Various authors refer to the museumification of objects or structures as a secular one, particularly when discussing the museumification of entire mosques in the early Republic of Turkey or churches in the USSR.<sup>10</sup> However, instead of de-sanctifying religious sites as the Turkish and Soviet governments seemed to do, the museums in this particular section of the landscape of museumification seem to *re-sanctify* the temples. The difference may lie in what religions are being used within the museumification process. Islam and Christianity were still very active religions within Turkey and the USSR, respectively, as well as around the world; Egyptian paganism, on the other hand, has been predominantly out of common practice since the latter half of the first millennium AD.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the structures within this modern religioscape would most likely not, in today's society, be easily entertained for the possibility of re-dedication for continued use; they are not currently in public demand by any neopagan religious groups.<sup>12</sup> Museum institutions presumably do not aim to "limit the power of [the] religious institutions"<sup>13</sup> they hold, particularly in this case of ancient Egyptian temples; thus, although Western museum institutions are generally secular, they act in a sacred manner to instead resanctify these temples

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<sup>10</sup> Rose Aslan, "The Museumification of Rumi's Tomb: Deconstructing Sacred Space at the Mevlana Museum," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 2.2 (2014): 13; Hayden et al., *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 134-149; Rabia Harmanşah, Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, and Robert M. Hayden, "Secularizing the Unsecularizable: A Comparative Study of the Hacı Bektaş and Mevlana Museums in Turkey" in *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites* Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey, eds., New York: Columbia University Press (2014), 336-367.

<sup>11</sup> In the last fifty years, there has been a revival of ancient Egyptian paganism known as Kemetism; however, the group does not even officially list ancient Egyptian structures among their holy sites, most of which are actually in the United States. See The House of Netjer, "Temples and Shrines," *Kemeti Orthodoxy*, n.d.

<sup>12</sup> I say "easily entertained" as such a claim would be rare but not impossible. Neopagans are a small but active group that does practice certain types of activism within the museum sector. For example, the British neopagan advocacy group Honouring the Ancient Dead works to have the bones of ancient individuals from pagan cultures that are now housed within museums in the UK repatriated back to them, claiming a religious connection to the deceased.

<sup>13</sup> Hayden et al., *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 142.

instead of desanctify them. Museums are active places of visitation, ritualistic actions, and ideologies, much like religioscapes.

Many Egyptian temples fall loosely into the patterned model of antagonistic tolerance. After being used for up to 3,000 years as places of pagan worship, these temple complexes began to be converted into Coptic churches after campaigns by Roman emperor Theodosius in 391 and 392 CE,<sup>14</sup> although temples were not forcibly closed until the mid-sixth century CE by the Byzantine emperor Justinian.<sup>15</sup> Justinian's successors enforced anti-pagan legislation throughout their terms,<sup>16</sup> so temple spaces were either destroyed or structurally converted for Christian worship.<sup>17</sup> Emad Ghaly suggests financial reasoning behind the reuse of ancient structures, as well, as converting a structure is presumably cheaper than building a new one.<sup>18</sup> The early 600s CE, however, brought a new religion, Islam, at a time when Christians were fighting amongst themselves and Muslims had expanded their control of Egypt.<sup>19</sup> Islam became the prevailing religion. During this time, many of the pagan temples and converted churches or chapels began

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<sup>14</sup> Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel and Ulrich Gotter, eds., *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2008), 180.

<sup>15</sup> Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, ed., *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia: The International Rescue Campaign at Abu Simbel, Philae and Other Sites* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd, 1987), 40.

<sup>16</sup> Emmel in Hahn et al., *From Temple to Church*, 180.

<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that the antagonistic tolerance model is often misread by critics as “foreseeing constant conflict when we actually predict mainly peaceful interactions, albeit between parties with unequal rights to rites” (Hayden, *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 152). Hayden along with other researchers on the project have corrected this position, particularly in later publications. See Hayden, *Antagonistic Tolerance* and Tugba Tanyeri-Erdemir et al., “The Iconostasis in the Republican Mosque: Transformed Religious Sites as Artifacts of Intersection Religioscapes,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 46 (2014): 489-512, for more information.

<sup>18</sup> Emad Ghaly, “The Coptic Monastery at the First Pylon of Karnak Temple,” *JARCE* 53 (2017), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Walter E. Kaegi, *Muslim Expansion and Byzantine Collapse in North Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 205, 176.

to serve domestic purposes, usually as shelter or storage. It was not until the Napoleonic invasion at the turn of the nineteenth century that European interest in Egyptian temples would increase, as discussed later on. In the modern day, many temples are open for tourists and scholars alike.

Although each temple or structure that will be discussed has been a part of more than one religioscape, this project will not describe how these case studies fit into the model of antagonistic tolerance. Instead, the theory informs this thesis's use of concepts of archaeoscape and religioscape, through which this thesis approaches museum objects/tourist destinations that had more than one "life." Additionally, this thesis observes the antagonistic tolerance theory's use of the terms "Self" and "Other," although in relation to modern museum institution staffers and Western visitors and past religions and religiouscapes, respectively. These concepts are productive ways to analyze how the various moments in history are handled within a new sacred context – or, more accurately to this thesis, "ritual" context – of the modern museum tourism industry, although it includes supposedly secular institutions (museums) as this thesis will explore.

### **1.1.2 Museum Studies**

This thesis is also a part of the field of museum studies, which studies the history, present, and future of museums in the broadest sense. The primary museological topic this thesis engages with is museums as sacred spaces. Towards museums as sacred spaces, Gretchen Buggeln notes that there is a history of Westerners approaching museums as religious spaces,<sup>20</sup> especially after

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<sup>20</sup> Gretchen T. Buggeln, "Museum Space and the Experience of the Sacred," *Material Religion* 8.1 (2015): 34.

the Enlightenment spurred the creations of national museums, despite their focus on humanism and rationality.<sup>21</sup> During the Enlightenment, “promoters of these spaces and collections knew, perhaps unconsciously, that there was something to be gained by suggesting a supernatural power behind their enterprise.”<sup>22</sup> In 1824, English critic William Hazlitt visited the National Gallery in London, which he called a “sanctuary” and “holy of holies,” and compared it to “going on a pilgrimage – it is an act of devotion performed at the shrine of Art!”<sup>23</sup> Sacredness was reflected in use of architectural styles that were once part of the historical pagan or Christian landscapes. Carol Duncan finds that art museums have systematically been compared to structures such as palaces or temples, and “from the eighteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries, they were deliberately designed to resemble them.”<sup>24</sup> The architecture of many museums is neoclassical,<sup>25</sup> which has its roots in Greco-Roman temples (porticos, columns),<sup>26</sup> whereas others often use forms seen in Roman or Christian architecture (domes, long hallways with natural light).<sup>27</sup> Both revivals carry a certain type of monumentality, history, and, thus presumed authenticity, not unlike religious structures built for the point of worship. The idea of museums as sacred space goes beyond architecture, and can be seen in the ways visitors

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>23</sup> Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995), 15

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>25</sup> Victoria Newhouse, “The Museum as Sacred Space,” *Towards a New Museum* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2007), 47.

<sup>26</sup> Examples include the main entrance of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the façade of the British Museum in London; and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

<sup>27</sup> Examples include the main entrance of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Hof van Busleyden museum in Belgium; the importance of natural light in sacred spaces carries even into modernist designs, including the walkway of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague or the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Some of these examples were found in Jason Farago, “Why Museums are the New Churches,” *BBC Culture*, July 16, 2015.



experience the space, especially in ways that are ritualistic, as this thesis will expound upon.<sup>28</sup> A ritual experience, either large or small, can be “transformative: it confers or renews identity or purifies or restores order in the self or to the world through sacrifice, ordeal, or enlightenment.”<sup>29</sup>

Museums have long sought to inspire the transformation of the human spirit and enlightenment of the mind through creating their displays or caring for collections. Jason Farago, a writer for the BBC, sums it up as following:

These days we frequently use religious language when talking about art. We make ‘pilgrimages’ to museums or to landmarks of public art in far-off locales. We experience ‘transcendence’ before major paintings or large-scale installations. Especially important works – Mona Lisa at the Louvre, most famously – are often displayed in their own niches rather than in historical presentations, all the better for genuflection. What is the busiest day of the week for most contemporary art museums? That would be Sunday: the day we used to reserve for another house of worship.<sup>30</sup>

While the concept of museum space as sacred space is commonly part of museological scholarship, it not always integrated into other disciplines’ discussions on museums. This is not to say other disciplines would find public Western museums either “sacred” or “atheist.” Still, most remain, at their mission and foundation, secular; however, they tend to saturate their halls with the aura of ritual influence, constructed through various means that will be discussed throughout this thesis.

Additionally, the public often seems to view museum institutions as unbiased, despite the reality that personal outlook or opinion is often a large part of any creative process (such as designing an exhibition). A 2001 survey from the American Alliance of Museums indicates that more Americans trust museums and historic sites than they trust university professors, corporate

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<sup>28</sup> Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>30</sup> Farago, “Why Museums are the New Churches.”

researchers, local papers, or the US government.<sup>31</sup> The public often assumes that “exhibitions are the by-products of research, translating the ideas of academe into a comprehensible format for non-academics.”<sup>32</sup> But as Stephanie Moser argues, museum displays really are “discrete interpretive documents of great significance to the history of scholarly disciplines and the evolution of ideas.”<sup>33</sup> They use elements such as architecture, design, light, layout, texts, and colors to relay a specific message to their visitors.

Research and writing on the topic of museums as sacred or ritual space often focuses on art museums and two-dimensional artwork; this thesis will look at this concept from a different angle. It will instead consider three-dimensional architectural objects/artifacts and how they fit into this schema. The architectural structures this thesis deals with are in (or will soon be in) five different types of museums: one “open air” site overseen by a national government (Luxor Temple Complex – Luxor, Egypt), one large-scale survey art museum (Metropolitan Museum of Art – New York, USA), one modern art gallery as part of a many-institution state museum system (Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg in the East Stüler Building – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany), one ancient architectural museum as part of that same system (Pergamonmuseum – Berlin, Germany), and one national antiquities museum (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden – Leiden, the Netherlands).<sup>34</sup> This range of sites will aid in the examination of different types of curator-given context and visitor expectation of a variety of institutions within the general museum landscape.

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<sup>31</sup> “Art Museums and the Public,” *Smithsonian Institution Office of Policy and Analysis*, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Stephanie Moser, “The Devil is in the Detail: Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge,” *Museum Anthropology* 33.1 (2010): 22.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> All museums and sites studied are public entities with no religious affiliation.

## 1.2 ASWAN DAM AND UNESCO

Barring the example of Luxor's *in-situ* "open air" museum, each of the above-mentioned institutions have ancient Egyptian temples and gates in their collections because they were removed from the edge of the Nile River in order to save them from being lost to Lake Nasser. In 1899, a dam was built over the Nile River in Aswan, Egypt (see Figure 1). A campaign to survey and report on these temples began in 1909, with a report by G. A. Reisner.<sup>35</sup> The first Archaeological Survey of Nubia lasted from 1907-1911, the second from 1929-1934, which coincided with the various raisings of the dam. The dam was continuously raised until 1960, with the establishment of the Aswan High Dam.<sup>36</sup> Developed for irrigation purposes and to stop the annual flooding of the Nile, the Egyptian government was well aware of the cultural dangers of building the dam, that it would destroy the ancient and modern sites at the border of southern Egypt and northern Sudan.<sup>37</sup> The numerous Egyptian, Roman, and Nubian temples were of principal concern, including the temple of Dendur, which would be completely covered by water with the final raising of the dam. Many temples were already partially flooded throughout a portion of the year,<sup>38</sup> and upon the invitation of the Egyptian government in partnership with UNESCO various interested parties, including archaeologists and architects from around the world, came to study them before they were lost forever.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 49.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>39</sup> Erin Peters, *Egypt in Empire: Augustan Temple Art and Architecture at Karnak, Philae, Kalabsha, Dendur, and Alexandria* (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2015), 13.

The temples were studied *in-situ*, but nothing could or would be done to stop the waters from climbing up around the temples.<sup>40</sup> This project affected over twenty-four temples in Egypt.<sup>41</sup> Some were abandoned and now lie approximately 200 feet under the Nile, including the temple of Gerf Husein,<sup>42</sup> and the chapel of Abu Oda.<sup>43</sup> This loss was avoided as much as



Figure 1: Map of Egypt. Original sites of the temples studied in this thesis denoted. Image edited by author over base map of Egypt from (c)2017 Google - Map data (c)2017 GeoBasis-DE/BKG ((c)2009), Google, Mapa GISrael, ORION-ME.

possible, because, as President Nasser of Egypt noted, “the preservation of the legacy of mankind is no less important than the construction of dams, the erection of factories and the greater prosperity of the people.”<sup>44</sup> The acknowledgement of the cultural importance of these temples indicates their worldwide status. The abandonment of these temples no doubt turned them into archaeoscapes, and Nasser’s

ideology of preservation marked a revival of interest in these temples as

<sup>40</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 51-52.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Cyril Aldred, *The Temple of Dendur* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

archaeoscapes. Their revival was based on the ideology stated above by Nasser: preservation is important.

UNESCO and the Egyptian government sent out an official request of assistance to UNESCO member states to help save the endangered temples.<sup>45</sup> According to the request, they would receive certain entitlements if they did so, including extra excavation allowance as well as entitlements to fifty percent of all finds during excavation.<sup>46</sup> Numerous countries stepped forward, and smaller temples were given as “grants-in-return” to some of the countries that had assisted the most in saving them; these temples were to act as “new ambassadors extraordinary” to the world.<sup>47</sup> From this, there are now four small Nubian temples and one gateway that are housed outside of Egypt. These include the Temple of Debod, which sits in a city park in Madrid, Spain; the Temple of Elleysia inside the Museo Egizio in Turin, Italy; the gateway of the Ptolemaic Temple of Kalabsha in the East Stüler Building with the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenburg in Berlin, Germany; the Temple of Taffeh in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, the Netherlands; and the Temple of Dendur in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, USA,<sup>48</sup> the last three of which are case studies in this thesis.

When the temples and gateways were moved out of Egypt, the government of the Arab Republic of Egypt released a few stipulations on how the temples distributed to the US, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy were to be used. They required the structures to go “to museums or scientific centers open to the public” that can take appropriate steps to “ensure its permanent

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<sup>45</sup> Aldred, *The Temple of Dendur*, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 69.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 136.

<sup>48</sup> Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson Inc., 2000), 242.

safety” and “create an environment appropriate to its archaeological character.”<sup>49</sup> These stipulations, however, were followed in different ways by the new owners of the four distributed temples (the stipulations did not adhere to the gateway that was gifted to Germany), which will be discussed in the following chapters. Although the stipulations seemed strict, the governments of the countries who received the temples still had some flexibility. For example, the stipulations were not adhered to completely in Madrid, as the Temple of Debod was placed outdoors (which makes preservation or “permanent safety” more difficult), and in a park (not specifically a “museum or scientific center”).

### **1.3      CONTEXT PROVIDED BY MODERN “RULERS” AND VISITOR INTERACTIONS**

Museums, along with any related organization that creates historic displays, play an extremely important role in the demonstration of ritually-oriented space to the public, via their staff members’ creation of historic information and atmospheric conditions. These creators and their teams choose elements of design (natural versus artificial lighting, wall color, object placement, etc.), textual content, placement of objects, and more. These choices usually culminate in an intended pathway through an exhibit or historic site, as well as an intended use by visitors: for example, if there are texts for an object, most likely the curators want them to be read. They – under the control of boards, administrators, donors, and sometimes even government agencies –

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<sup>49</sup> From the “Guidelines for Making Application for the Temple of Dendur,” an official packet created and distributed to interested institutions and cities by the US government, which states that an October 1, 1959 declaration by the United Arab Republic (now the Arab Republic of Egypt) required these of host nations.

construct the precise environment for an object.

For museums or agencies that hold ancient Egyptian temples, these display creators – usually curatorial teams – are reconstructing both physical and spiritual environments, and in the antagonistic tolerance model employed in this thesis, this would make the display creators the “rulers” of the new “Self” population, and the museum visitors part of their believing flock. However, it is important to note that like other “rulers,” curators and their larger institutional teams are restricted by certain “laws,” including technical limitations of a space, regulations from governments or museum boards, financial restrictions, and more. The creation of an exhibition is a multi-layered project with decisions and input coming from within and around the institution that is creating it. Thus, the true “rulers” of this modern religioscape is not specifically a certain curatorial team, but the home institution as a whole. These modern “rulers” will be called “institutional creators” throughout this thesis. Through this line of thought, this thesis will also consider how the transfer of power to a new ruler from the old revives these structures so that they are considered “sacred,” or at least “ritualistic,” again, despite a lack of central deity or deities. Worship patterns and rituals are now those of museum and tourism rituals, such as buying a ticket or entering a space removed from the outside world. The presiding religioscape has changed, but the idea remains similar. In this model, museum and historic site rituals are analogous to the rituals performed around religious communities, even if the ideologies have changed. Religioscapes include communities coming together in collective mindset and reverence.

These communities are the “population” that controls how a structure is used, despite the institutional creators or other “rulers” who dictate its creation. The ways people organize themselves and behave within specific places imbue those places with sacred importance. Roger

Henrie writes that “space is sacralized by human action and behavior, and certain spaces become sacred because people treat them differently from ordinary spaces.”<sup>50</sup> For example, as will be expanded upon in Chapter 3, Roman Emperor Augustus commissioned the Temple of Dendur, on which he was depicted as pharaoh, through which he solidified himself in the Egyptians’ and Nubians’ minds as the undisputed ruler of Roman Egypt, following the pattern of Egyptian, Libyan, Nubian, Persian, and Ptolemaic rulers before him. Augustus never visited the temple himself;<sup>51</sup> although Dendur was commissioned by him, it was not *used* by him, as it was by at least one individual who carved a religio-legal inscription into its wall in 10 BCE. Furthermore, it was the public use/disuse of a sacred space that encouraged rulers to convert the temple into a church. Likewise, it was the public’s disuse that declared the structure religiously “abandoned.” The public also used Dendur along specific conventions used to honor the structure (such as gouging or adding graffiti), which included graffiti to memorialize the sacred qualities of the temple and the gateway.<sup>52</sup> J. A. Baird writes that there are numerous examples from around the ancient world proving that “graffiti were a part of the normal use-life of [a] sanctuary, rather than a defacement of it.”<sup>53</sup> Peter Brand writes that exterior walls around the Theban area, including Karnak and Luxor temple complexes, had evidence of pharaonic graffiti as well as gouges.<sup>54</sup>

In the same vein, the visiting public to museum institutions decide to either use or not use

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<sup>50</sup> Roger L. Henrie, “The Perceptions of Sacred Space: the Case of Utah and Other Sacred Places in Mormondom,” *All Theses and Dissertations – BYU* (1972), 7.

<sup>51</sup> James Allen, “Dendur and the Temples of Egypt.” Lecture, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Graffiti as a sign of both public use and overall respect is discussed in Chapter 2 and the Conclusion.

<sup>53</sup> J. A. Baird, “The Graffiti of Dura-Europos,” in *Ancient Graffiti in Context*, J.A. Baird and Clarie Taylor, eds., (New York: Routledge, 2011), 64.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Brand, “Veils, Votives, and Marginalia: The Use of Sacred Space at Karnak and Luxor,” in *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, Peter F. Dorman and Besty M. Bryan, eds (Chicago: Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago, 2007), 64.



the pathways, texts, or activities that the institutional creators produce. Jeanne Kilde writes, “lay believers and neophytes, allowed only in the courtyard [of a religious space], easily understood the messages about power articulated symbolically by such actions and [sacred] spaces,”<sup>55</sup> which can be related to how, in museum spaces, the institutional creators act as rulers and can even articulate the power of museums or modern society. These creators designate the rules and give the space an intended pathway, while visitors ultimately decide whether to follow those rules or create different rituals.

This thesis investigates how museumification of sacred structures affects the objects of archaeoscapes of past religions, instead of objects or structures of religioscapes that could still be used for their originally-intended purpose. Thus, there is a lack of tension between living “Self” and “Other” groups active in modern times. This will make sure that the revitalization and reinstitution of these structures as part of a religioscape will be the religioscape of Museums, rather than suppressing them into a secularscape or a memorialization of a “false religioscape.”<sup>56</sup>

#### **1.4 PRACTICAL METHODOLOGY: OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH METHODS**

This thesis uses observational research to determine how visitor interactions with sites within the museum industry reveal a new kind of religioscape. Observational research has been a part of the discipline of anthropology since its founding in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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<sup>55</sup> Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *Sacred Power, Sacred Space: An Introduction to Christian Architecture and Worship* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8.

<sup>56</sup> Hayden et al., *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 145. A “false religioscape” is the purposeful implication of the presence of a religioscape when evidence for such is lacking, most likely done for political gain (implications of tolerance).

centuries.<sup>57</sup> This form of research is also key to the comparatively new field of museum studies, which has evolved in last few decades.<sup>58</sup> Judy Diamond et al. writes that observation “is the most straightforward means of finding out how people use informal environments,” particularly in museum contexts, and suggests tools such as counting and tracking movements as well as both basic (tracking behavioral information) and systematic observations (which includes tracking latency, frequency, duration, and intensity of specifically outlined behaviors).<sup>59</sup> Each of these methods will be used for this thesis to determine the ways visitors use museum and related sites as they might sacred spaces, designed by “rulers” (institutional creators) and experienced by specific populations (museum visitors). The methods involved in this research follow traditional anthropological research (specifically non-participant observation of a group of people partaking in a ritual) combined with the exhibition and visitor evaluation methods of museological research.

As the sole researcher for this thesis, observational research was performed by the author at the temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan in New York, the temple of Taffeh at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, the Netherlands, and the Kalabsha gate at the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg and the Pergamonmuseum, both in Berlin, in spring 2017. Visual analysis of the display and atmosphere of each site was documented, in order to understand visitor experiences at these sites. Additionally, throughout the observational process, Moser’s article,

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<sup>57</sup> Michael Angrosino, *Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2007), xv.

<sup>58</sup> L. Davidson, “Visitor Studies: Towards a Culture of Reflective Practice and Critical Museology for the Visitor-Center Museum,” in *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies* 2, H.R. Leahy, S. MacDonald, and C. McCarthy, eds. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 505.

<sup>59</sup> Judy Diamond, Jessica J. Luke, and David H. Uttal, *Practical Evaluation Guide: Tool for Museums and Other Informal Educational Settings* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Plymouth, UK: Altamira Press, 2009), 55-65.

*The Devil is in the Detail*, on the study of elements such as architecture, design, light, layout, texts, and colors informs the analysis on the considerations of exhibit design to ascertain the level of sacredness exuded by a display. Understanding the visitor experience allows for analysis of the current use of these structures, and reveals an innate sacredness, developed and exposed by museum institutional creators, within the museum context, which would indicate a valid religioscape within the realm of tourism surrounding them. Personal reviews and accounts of visiting the Luxor temple complex are used in order to gain similar information, albeit from secondary sources.

## **1.5 CHAPTER ORGANIZATION**

Chapter 1 takes us to ancient Thebes, considering the historic almost-continuous construction from Egypt's Middle Kingdom (c. 2055 – 1650 BCE) through the thirteenth century. It uses this history to inform the museum tourist use of the temple complex of Luxor and its relation to both the Egyptian government and the local Islamic religioscape. The history of Luxor is presented and related to modern-day affairs, in which the concept of cultural *muscle memory*, and the ability of once-religious traditions and rituals to transcend original or intended ideologies is discussed. These festivals show that it is possible for sacredness to transcend religious ideologies and continue through thousands of years to modern day, as the religioscape of Museums does. Luxor is in partial ruins, giving the feeling of a “presumed authenticity” to visitors. This case study is an outlier in that it is the only one that remains *in-situ*, but it works to enrich the dialogue as a comparison between “open-air” museums and more traditional Western museum institutions.

Chapter 2 begins the discussion of the secularization of sacred space and the revitalization in the religiouscape of Museums with the temple of Dendur, as this temple is now displayed in the Sackler Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, United States. Of the institutions that received the relocated temples and gateways, the Met has made the largest attempt to bring a certain number of elements into the display to make it appear *in-situ*; it attempts to transport visitors to the Nile River during the time of Augustus. Furthermore, the curators' display at the Met works to restore a kind of life to the temple complex, as it may have originally been experienced.

Chapter 3 examines the gate of the Temple of Kalabsha currently on display at the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg (East Stüler Building) in Berlin, Germany in order to add to the debate of the secular/sacred museum space. In its current location, the Kalabsha gate has little *in-situ* atmospheric context and has been placed in a traditional *white cube* art gallery.<sup>60</sup> This chapter explores whether the amount of *in-situ* atmospheric context presented affects how visitors interact with it, and if it can be considered part of the religiouscape of Museums under investigation in this thesis.

The Temple of Taffeh in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, the Netherlands is the subject of Chapter 4, and examines less structured uses of sacred space as its primary theme in the religiouscape debate. Its presence in the courtyard/lobby of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, instead of being inside the museum itself creates a more relaxed atmosphere than the other structures. The curators of the Temple of Taffeh create semi *in-situ* atmosphere, although it

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<sup>60</sup> My use of the term *white cube* is in reference to the trend beginning in the early twentieth century where museums (art galleries in particular) chose to exhibit works in interior spaces with little architectural or other elements to distract a visitor from the work itself. There was and has continued to be a “whitening of museum space, space that seemed ever more anonymous” (Newhouse, *The Museum as Sacred Space*, 48). More detail will be provided in Chapter 3.

is much more modernized and minimalist than the Met's display of Dendur. Visitor interactions with Taffeh are discussed, as well as how the temple relates to other modern elements (such as a café or gift shop), and how these add to the religioscape of Museums. Although it has more atmospheric context than the Kalabsha gate, it has less textual or historic information available to its visitors. The Temple of Taffeh is the final case study of this thesis and shows how visitors interact with a structure that is more of an introduction component rather than the main event.

The results of these four chapters are synthesized in the conclusion, in which I argue that the different types of context surrounding an ancient Egyptian temple within a museum institution develop different types of ritual, worship, and sacredness within visitor interactions, and that all contexts develop a combined and tangible religioscape of Museums. In order to examine the concept of a religioscape of modern Museums that incorporates ancient religious sites, this thesis assesses the various lives of four ancient Egyptian temple complexes through visitor interactions that can be deemed sacred, in a number of times and contexts (ancient and modern).

Through this examination, this thesis ultimately argues that modern use of museums makes up a valid religioscape.<sup>61</sup> Thus, this thesis will explore the idea of religiouscapes surrounding certain collections within the museum industry, from here on referred to as the *religioscape of Museums* – with Museums capitalized to differentiate it from other uses. The religioscape of Museums includes a variety of agents, including tourists, visitors, curators, staff members, scholars, and more who influence and interact with the religioscape. The case studies within this thesis will relate directly to one example of a religioscape of Museums, ancient

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<sup>61</sup> Tanyeri-Erdemir notes that the term “religioscape” has been used in a great variety of ways, some of them dissimilar to the way she, Hayden, and the antagonistic tolerance team use it.

Egypt. Other religioscapes exist as well within the broader scope of the religioscape of Museums surrounding other collections. The boundaries of this particular religioscape include the rooms or displays surrounding ancient Egyptian temples or temple structures that the institutional creators have jurisdiction over, as well as the temple structures themselves *in-situ*. Any structure that was once present on the ancient pagan Egyptian religioscape and are theoretically able to be visited are qualified to be part of this modern religioscape of Museums.

This religioscape of Museums contains a set of ideologies (that ancient structures are inherently worthy of being saved, remembered, admired, and protected), held by both those in power (curators, institutional creators, governments) and those who follow their rules (museum visitors). It celebrates rituals that are enhanced when museums or institutions are involved (museum sites enhance a space with context or intended pathways to guide visitors). People take pilgrimages to these sites for knowledge, excitement, or intellectual awakening (instead of for, say, physical healing) – the reasons people come do not have to be the same, as with other active religioscapes. This thesis concludes that it is not the amount of “original” context surrounding a structure that embeds it within the religioscape of Museums, but the atmosphere and expectations related to these structures as displayed within a museum institution or site itself. This thesis demonstrates that modern use of Museums is an active religioscape that follows an ideology, and the type of context (*in-situ*, “original,” bare, or modernist) within the modern museum setting determines what aspect of sacredness or ritual from the religioscape is enacted at that particular site.

## 2.0 THE TEMPLE OF LUXOR IN EGYPT

Visitors have been continually coming to the Luxor temple complex in Luxor, Egypt (ancient city of Thebes), since before the Middle Kingdom (c. 2055 BCE – c. 1650 BCE). They came as religious pilgrims to worship the ancient Egyptian gods as well as semi-divine pharaohs. More recently, visitors usually have one of two reasons for coming to the East Bank of Luxor: to tour the remains of Luxor and Karnak temple complexes or the Islamic religious pilgrimage for the *moulid* festival of Muslim saint Abu'l Hajjaj. In order to explore these uses of Luxor's sacred space, this chapter will examine the structural and religious history of the temple complex and the populations that used it, consider continuities between ancient and modern festivals, and through this begin the discussion of how tourism can be described and thus should be studied as a valid religiouscape.

Tourism developed around Luxor temple complex in modern times under the direction of the Egyptian government. This chapter investigates whether turning once-functioning sites from the ancient Egyptian religion into tourist sites defiles any remaining religious gravity, as a “forced desanctification,”<sup>62</sup> or if the intrinsic “sacredness” of the site transfers to a new type of spiritual journey: tourism. This chapter argues the latter, and that tourism itself forms a religiouscape at Luxor along with other revived and re-integrated pagan temples within the Museum industry. As Luxor is also an active Islamic site, this thesis will contend that the religiouscape of Museums is added to an area that already holds a religiouscape.

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<sup>62</sup> Hayden, *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 134.

This chapter ultimately finds that as the temple complex of Luxor is still *in-situ*, its sacredness for modern tourists is heightened as it appears to be closest to what it looked like in antiquity, which is a thread that will continue in later chapters with temple features that are no longer *in-situ*. Additionally, by comparing modern tourist practices to the Muslim use of the space, it will be concluded that Luxor's sacred space is a religiouscape in two active ways: modern tourism and modern Islam.

## 2.1 ANCIENT EGYPTIANS IN LUXOR (THEBES)

What is now the city of Luxor in Upper Egypt has been in use since 3200 BCE when it was called *Waset*, commonly known now as the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes, reaching its height of royal and political importance in the New Kingdom.<sup>63</sup> During the Middle Kingdom, however, a number of religious structures were erected at Luxor. Many of these structures did not survive to modern times because they were built of mudbrick; others were demolished, considerably rebuilt, or enhanced by later, more elaborate edifices.<sup>64</sup> Thebes, like most ancient Egyptian cities, was built on the east bank of the Nile. Across the mighty river, the Valley of the Kings, housing tombs of pharaohs and powerful nobles, was built during the New Kingdom. As religiously connected to both Luxor and Karnak temple complexes, it only increased the popularity of the area, in both local and visitor populations. As Thebes grew, so did Luxor temple complex.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Elaine Sullivan, "Karnak: Development of the Temple of Amun-Ra," *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles, 2010), 1.

<sup>64</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Egypt*, 22.

<sup>65</sup> The Karnak temple complex, which was connected to the Luxor temple complex by an avenue of sphinxes, was even larger than the Luxor complex. This chapter will focus predominantly on Luxor temple complex due to its involvement in both the religiouscapes of Islam and tourism.



Pharaohs continuously added to the structure and thus to the glory of the temple complex, indicating a habitual sacredness of the space. The religious environment at Luxor seems to have been important to both the maintenance of pharaonic power and the creation of religioscapes, which, as discussed in the Introduction, are “physical markers of the space in which practitioners of a given religious community interact, and thus to the spatial parameters of social presences.”<sup>66</sup> Religioscapes are inherently fluid and their built environment changes as the ideological environment changes.<sup>67</sup> Archaeoscapes, on the other hand, are the physical remnants of a past religiouscape that can be observed and establish “absence, for centuries, of practitioners of that religion.”<sup>68</sup> This chapter illustrates that religion has continually been an important element of life in Luxor, where various religioscapes have been established throughout history including different forms of paganism, Coptic Christianity, and Islam. The last of these, Islam, still dominates the political and ideological landscape today in the Arab Republic of Egypt, even though the economy thrives on the tourism focusing on the physical remains of the Egyptian pagan archaeoscape.

### **2.1.1 Ancient Construction of Luxor**

As Elaine Sullivan notes, scholars agree that Senwosret I began construction of the Luxor temple complex during the Middle Kingdom as the surrounding city was built up as the new capital of a reunited Egypt.<sup>69</sup> Luxor’s original Middle Kingdom core included a barque (boat) shrine and is

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<sup>66</sup> Hayden, *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 37.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 134-51.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>69</sup> Sullivan, “Karnak,” 2.

the southwestern-most section of the temple (Figure 2: 9), and all other ancient Egyptian additions were developed northeastern from there outward, following the Nile toward Karnak temple. Luxor was substantially built during the reign of Amenhotep III, who erected a sun court and colonnade in Dynasty 18 of the New Kingdom (Figure 2: 4). Next, Ramesses II constructed a court, another barque shrine, and a pylon, among other monuments (Figure 2: 2, 3). A number of later rulers continued to add their own chapels, courts, temples, and kiosks within the Luxor complex, including the Avenue of the Sphinxes that physically leads to the Karnak temple complex.<sup>70</sup>

The Luxor temple complex reached its peak in the Dynasties 18 and 19. This was during the New Kingdom, an era that showed an “expansion of Egypt’s political and economic power... [which] led to both the building of numerous new temples and the expansion of many which already existed.”<sup>71</sup> It was during this time that stone rather than mudbrick became the main building material, with the first temples entirely made of stone beginning to appear.<sup>72</sup>

This is a primary reason why Luxor exists today in its New Kingdom and later forms when many

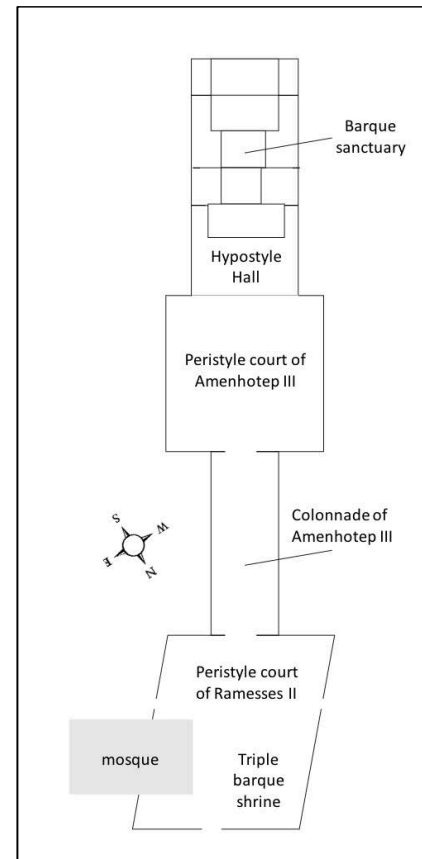


Figure 2. Plan of the temple complex of Luxor. Drawing by author, base plan after Strudwick and Strudwick, *A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor*, 68.

<sup>70</sup> For a summary of the building at Luxor, see Sullivan, “Karnak,” 1-26.

<sup>71</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 24.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

other Middle Kingdom structures do not. The site continued to change in the Third Intermediate and Late Periods through additions by the Nubian Kushite kings, the Assyrians, Achaemenid Persians, Alexander the Great, and the Romans who each in turn ruled over the lands and people of Egypt.<sup>73</sup> One can still see the outline of a *castrum*, or Roman military camp, within and



Figure 3 Fresco remains of Roman imperial cult chamber of the temple complex of Luxor. Photography by Victoria Maatta, University of Pittsburgh, 2015.

around the Luxor temple complex, and frescoes have recently been restored in the imperial cult chamber built within the temple proper (Figure 3).<sup>74</sup>

By 400 BCE, much of the ancient Egyptian lands had converted to Christianity, and numerous churches were established.<sup>75</sup> At least four Coptic churches were raised inside Luxor, although none remain today and there are only a few residual elements that reveal the temple complex's. By 639 BCE, an Arab army from Sinai had taken Egypt from Byzantine control.

From this point forward, the Luxor area was

considered Islamic by rule, and eventually the population became predominantly Muslim, which continues today.<sup>76</sup> The first noted physical element of the religiouscape of Islam was a mudbrick

<sup>73</sup> Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick, *A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor: Thebes in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 198.

<sup>74</sup> Michael Jones and Susannah McFadden, eds, *Art of Empire: The Roman Frescoes and Imperial Cult Chamber in Luxor Temple* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 89, and Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 48.

<sup>75</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 29.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

minaret erected at Luxor in the tenth century.<sup>77</sup> In the thirteenth century, the Abu'l Hajjaj mosque was built directly on the Coptic church that was the most central within the Luxor temple complex. There may actually be archaeological evidence for this church underneath the mosque, but as the mosque is in use, the information may never be uncovered.<sup>78</sup>

### 2.1.2 Pagan Use: Egyptian Gods and Kings

Tourists from around the ancient Mediterranean began visiting Thebes between the third century BCE and the second century CE.<sup>79</sup> Before this point, visitors to the area came mostly from other parts of Egypt; one major draw was religious tourism for the annual Beautiful Festival of the Valley and the *Opet* festival.<sup>80</sup> These ancient tourists made a pilgrimage to Luxor temple complex that was built by various rulers throughout millennia, as mentioned above. Scores of rulers continued building because it was central to the important *Opet* festival, which was an Egyptian religious celebration that venerated the connection of the pharaoh and the gods. This signals an awareness that “legitimacy as an Egyptian ruler depended on... formal acceptance [at Luxor] by Amun-Ra during the *Opet* Festival,”<sup>81</sup> as Luxor was known to be where “god and king

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<sup>77</sup> Elizabeth Wickett, *For Those Who Sail to Heaven* (Brooklyn, NY: Icarus Films, 1990), DVD.

<sup>78</sup> Strudwick and Strudwick, *A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor*, 207-9; Additionally, according to Wickett, *For Those Who Sail to Heaven*, there is a local legend that one man attempted to take apart the mosque with an axe in order to excavate the archaeological remains underneath; when he tried to start, his arm holding the axe became “transfixed” and he was forced to stop. No one ever tried again.

<sup>79</sup> Strudwick and Strudwick, *A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor*, 204; David Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun: Egyptian Temple Construction and Theology in Roman Thebes* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012).

<sup>80</sup> Bell, “The New Kingdom Divine Temple,” 140.

<sup>81</sup> Leonard Bell, “Luxor Temple and the Cult of the Royal Ka,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 44.4 (1985), 270.

were rejuvenated.”<sup>82</sup> This influenced strong leaders from both Egypt and abroad such as Ramses II, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy I, and Augustus to build there to affirm himself as the true king who was to be respected as a semi-divine member of the Egyptian pantheon. According to ancient Egyptian tradition and religion, as documented by Lanny Bell, a ruler was divine only once becoming one with the royal *ka*, a process that most likely took place during the *Opet* festival at the temple complexes of Luxor and its larger neighbor Karnak.<sup>83</sup> Luxor was also likely dedicated to rebirth and may have been the location of the crowning of these kings as well.<sup>84</sup>

The *Opet* festival was a glorious and magnificent affair that celebrated the god Amun. Erin Peters gives a detailed description of the path of the *Opet*, which began in the inner sanctum at Karnak Temple with the barques of the king and queen accompanied by a barque that held Amun-Ra’s cult statue. The procession continued through various pylons within Karnak, and assorted statues of gods on their own barques joined before the group processed the two miles to Luxor Temple, either over land or by river. The gods and the king and queen interacted with the public during the procession and were even “rejuvenated” by these exchanges with them.<sup>85</sup>

The purpose of this *Opet* festival has been highly discussed in scholarly literature. Peters and Bell both note that the importance of this festival for a king to reunite with his *ka* (spirit) and thus live forever in the afterlife. Other sources, however, focus more on the *Opet* festival as celebrating the marriage and fertility of the pharaoh, as *Opet* means *fertility*.<sup>86</sup> Bell discusses

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<sup>82</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 71.

<sup>83</sup> Bell, “Luxor Temple and the Cult of the Royal Ka,” 261.

<sup>84</sup> Leonard Bell, “The New Kingdom Divine Temple: The Example of Luxor” in *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, ed. B. E. Shafer, (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 138.

<sup>85</sup> Jones and McFadden, *Art of Empire*, 2; Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 68-69.

<sup>86</sup> Fluck et al., *Egypt: Faith after the Pharaohs*, (London: The British Museum, 2015); Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*; Hornell, “Boat Processions in Egypt; etc.

Amun's role as a "self-generating fertility god"<sup>87</sup> and the numerous representations of the divine conception and birth of various pharaohs within Luxor.<sup>88</sup> Michael Jones and Susannah McFadden discuss the immersion of the Luxor landscape in numerous festivals and processions in addition to the *Opet*, which linked Luxor as a part of a larger "interconnected mythological and ritual landscape."<sup>89</sup> All researchers stress the ultimate importance of royal barques and their use by kings within the *Opet* festival. Sacred barques were pulled on land as well as along the Nile, and Luxor temple's original core was a room dedicated to the sacred barque.<sup>90</sup> The importance of the barque to the people of Luxor was so prominent that rulers of Egypt like Alexander, the Ptolemies, and Romans (at least until the reign of Nero) continued to celebrate it.<sup>91</sup>

## 2.2 POST-PAGAN USE: COPTIC CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

In 383 CE, pagan temples throughout the Roman Empire were ordered to close by emperor Theodosius under Christian doctrine. By the mid-400s CE, Valentinian was "[sanctioning] the

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<sup>87</sup> Bell, "Luxor Temple," 259.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>89</sup> Jones and McFadden, *Art of Empire*, 2-3.

<sup>90</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 48.

<sup>91</sup> Alexander the Great, whom came to be considered a son of Zeus-Ammon by his Egyptian subjects (Bell, "Luxor Temple," 254), helped continue the importance of the *Opet* festival by rebuilding the free-standing barque shrine within the confines of Luxor (Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 71). He was also "undoubtedly" formally accepted as a legitimate Egyptian ruler, as curved ram's horns (Alexander's symbol of divinity in the Hellenistic world) appeared in association with Egyptian god Amun (Bell, "Luxor Temple," 270). Additionally, there is evidence that processional festivals such as the *Opet* occurred until the fourth century CE, and the *Opet* itself was mentioned explicitly until the reign of Nero (Klotz, David, *Caesar in the City of Amun: Egyptian Temple Construction and Theology in Roman Thebes* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012), 387-8).

persecution of pagans and destruction of their religious structures,” resulting in many Egyptian temples being closed for pagan religious functions. If temples were not destroyed, they were utilized instead as chapels, basilicas, and areas of prayer for the new faith.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Heike Behlmer writes that it seems that almost every pharaonic temple in Thebes shows evidence of once displaying signs of Christian reuse or settlement – signs that have mostly been erased due to the rapid increase of interest in ancient Egypt during the late 1800s onward.<sup>93</sup> As mentioned above, Luxor temple had at least four Coptic churches or areas of worship built within its walls. Neighboring Karnak temple complex also housed a number of areas of Christian worship,<sup>94</sup> yet certain traditions and rituals of the pagan *Opet* festival survived this period, as its parallels with the modern Islamic *moulid* festival (described below) are strikingly similar.



Figure 4. Abu'l Hajjaj mosque situated inside the archaeological remains of the Luxor temple complex. This photograph was taken from inside the peristyle court of Ramses II. Photograph by Victoria Maatta, University of Pittsburgh, 2015.

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<sup>92</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 29.

<sup>93</sup> Behlmer, Heike, “Christian Use of Pharaonic Sacred Space in Western Thebes: The Case of TT 85 and 87,” in *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, Peter F. Dorman and Betsy M. Bryan, eds. (Chicago: The Oriental Institute University of Chicago, 2007), 163.

<sup>94</sup> Ghaly, “The Coptic Monastery,” *passim*.

In the thirteenth century, the mosque dedicated to Sidi Abu'l Hajjaj was completed (Figure 4). It was built within the pagan temple complex as well as on the remains of a Coptic church that was also inside the temple complex; sand began to cover parts of the complex, and people built houses on top of this sand mound.<sup>95</sup> According to locals, “the entire town of Luxor was once contained in the precinct of the temple.”<sup>96</sup> The Luxor temple complex was, at this point, both partially an archaeoscape (pagan) and a religioscape (Islam), as well as domestic space.

### **2.2.1 Modern Luxor as an Islamic Site**

In the modern day, tourism overwhelmingly surrounds ancient Egyptian sites. The “dead” religion of ancient Egypt is still able to be a part of modern culture, even a modern culture connected to a deep-rooted religion like Islam. Elizabeth Wickett claims that the main courtyard through which Luxor residents went to visit the Abu'l Hajjaj mosque (Figure 4) was flanked by two statues of Ramesses as recently as 1925.<sup>97</sup> This could indicate that the entrance to the mosque was once the same space as current tourists use to access the temple complex and situates the ancient Egyptian religion within a physical context of Islam. Similar to the Egyptian, Ptolemaic, and Roman rulers before them, local Muslims may have built the mosque within the

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<sup>95</sup> Wickett, *For Those Who Sail to Heaven*.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Elizabeth Wickett, “Archaeological Memory, the Leitmotifs of Ancient Egyptian Festival Tradition, and Cultural Legacy in the Festival Tradition of Luxor: The Mulid of Sidi Abu'l Hajjaj al-Uqsori and the Ancient Egyptian ‘Feast of the Opet,’” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 45 (2009), 403.



temple in part to stabilize indirect connections between the former power of the ancient Egyptian religioscape, now archaeoscape, with the power of the new Islamic religioscape.

While the Abu'l Hajjaj mosque is currently used by Muslims, Wickett notes that it is also used by Christians: locals claim that during the *moulid* festival, which revolves around the mosque, local Copts sing chants for the Muslims and support and congratulate them in other ways.<sup>98</sup> Still, as Christians retain their ideologies, the remaining religioscape within the Luxor temple complex is Islamic; both early Christian and pagan religioscapes (within the physical outlines of the temples themselves) have faded away, becoming archaeoscapes (although the modern Christian religioscape remains intact throughout other areas of the city). Due to its size, the temple complex of Luxor remains central to these proceedings. Even with the size of Luxor temple complex and the museum and tourist industries in the city, the Islamic religioscape may show a subtle but active dominance over the Other population of these tourist and pagan landscapes through the perceptibility and centrality of the mosque;<sup>99</sup> further, mosques surround the main tourist areas of Luxor and Karnak temple complexes.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Wickett, *For Those Who Sail to Heaven*.

<sup>99</sup> *Perceptibility* and *centrality* come from the theory of antagonistic tolerance; they refer to the pattern of religious institutions of the Self (or ruling) population needing to be the most perceptible or noticeable institution of an area, and/or be located in the center of that area. This ensures that the Other (or subject) population is consistently reminded which group is in charge (Hayden et al., *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 42-45).

<sup>100</sup> In the modern city of Luxor, a number of different religioscapes and archaeoscapes exist today. There is still an active Christian presence in Egypt overall with recent census data showing the population is ninety percent Islamic and ten percent Christian, with less than 2,000 individuals claiming to be Bahà'í and 200 individuals claiming to be Jewish, according to 2016 data from the Central Intelligence Agency. Within the main area of the east bank of the modern city of Luxor, there are twenty-three active religious houses of worship. Of those twenty-three, six are churches and seventeen are mosques, giving the churches a high twenty-six percent position within religious institutions within the main tourist area of the city. However, when mapped, a pattern appears: all six churches are clustered together in one part of the city, between the two temples. Furthermore, mosques physically cut the churches off from both Luxor and Karnak archaeological remains. Although Egyptian cities tend to be segregated, this segregation

Although the physical elements of the religiouscape of Islam seems to surround the pagan archaeoscapes at Luxor, this does not necessarily mean that there is contact between them. It is possible for modern visitors to the temple complex to barely notice the attached mosque. The Egyptian government controls the pagan archaeoscape and the tourist religiouscape (the archaeological remains of the Luxor temple complex); the Islamic leaders of Luxor control the Islamic religiouscape (the mosque). The two separate entities share a physical space but do not share ideologies regarding that space; two different religiouscapes are actively functioning and retaining their sense of self despite the proximity.

### 2.3 MODERN RELIGIOUS INTERACTION AT LUXOR

In Egypt, *moulid* festivals (also spelled *mulid* or *mawlid*) (Figure 5) celebrate the birth of one of the many Muslim saints in Shia Islam. In Luxor, the *moulid* celebrates the medieval Islamic sheikh Sidi Abu'l Hajjaj in his shrine near the temple complex of Luxor every year.<sup>101</sup> S.

Wachsmann describes the *moulid* festival that he witnessed in 1998, where, “during the *moulid*, celebrants draw boats mounted on wagons around a processional route (*dura*)... several men in a

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could possibly be deliberate. The Abu'l Hajjaj mosque is within the archaeological remains of Luxor Temple; there is another mosque less than 200 feet away across the street. Although there are no mosques within Karnak archaeological remains, there are no less than six within a 200-foot radius on either side of the temple. Meanwhile, the closest church to either site is around 1,000 feet away from the edge of Luxor's archaeological remains. This reveals that although Christianity is most likely a small, yet sizable portion of Luxor's modern population, its populace and religiouspace are both dwarfed by those of Islam.

<sup>101</sup> Wickett, *Archaeological Memory*, 403.

processional boat belonging to the felucca-men [soldiers] held up models of their namesake vessels.”<sup>102</sup> Hornell describes the scene sixty years earlier in 1938:

On the fourteenth day of the month Sha'ban the participants in the procession gather in the Markaz square, adjoining the mosque of Sheykh el Miqashqash, around the gaily-beflagged boats of Sheykh Yisef Abu 'l Haggag. These are mounted on four-wheeled lorries, drawn by men and boys hauling on ropes attached to the shafts. Each boat is freshly painted; each has been fitted with a mast whereon is hoisted a blue-striped lateen-sail. Privileged children, preferably those of the people who claim descent from the saint, crowd aboard, swarming everywhere. Flags inscribed with sacred texts are carried before and after the boats, and float, from the masts.<sup>103</sup>

Additionally, Fluck et al. describe the *moulid* festival as one celebrated by both Christians and Muslims.<sup>104</sup> Wickett shows an example of this in her film, recording local Copts chanting what are presumably prayers while Muslims make their way through rituals surrounding the Abu'l Hajjaj mosque.<sup>105</sup> Fluck et al. also notes that the Fatimids (who ruled from 969 to 1171 CE) sponsored a number of religious and public feasts during their rule. Most were abandoned in the following periods,<sup>106</sup> yet the *moulid* festival has continued. This, one could argue, has to do with its connection to the ancient *Opet* festival, discussed next.

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<sup>102</sup> S. Wachsmann, “Panthenaic Ships: The Iconographic Evidence,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 8.2 (2012), 261.

<sup>103</sup> James Hornell, “Boat Processions in Egypt,” *Man* 38 (1938), 145-46.

<sup>104</sup> Fluck et al., *Egypt: Faith after the Pharaohs*, 187.

<sup>105</sup> Wickett, *For Those Who Sail to Heaven*.

<sup>106</sup> Fluck et al., *Egypt: Faith after the Pharaohs*, 186.



Figure 5. Muslims participating in a procession as part of the moulid festivities.  
Still from YouTube video by user HolgerBro, posted January 1, 2011.

### 2.3.1 The *Moulid* versus the *Opet*

The feasibility of viewing modern Museums as a religiouscape is increased by understanding that there is evidence of the active parts of religious traditions continuing beyond the dissolution of the ideology behind the actions of the tradition. If a ritual can withstand changes in its contextual ideology and bypass changing in presiding religiouscapes, then the rituals modern museum visitors perform around ancient temples can be seen as continuations of rituals of past religiouscapes appearing in a new religiouscape, as well. One example of this is the ancient *Opet* festival and the modern *moulid* festival. Almost every source of literature that mentions both the *moulid* festival and the *Opet* festival marks them as at least manifesting something of a continuation of each other.<sup>107</sup> In 1938, James Hornell wrote, “this gorgeous festival has dwindled

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<sup>107</sup> M. A. Canney, “Boats and Ships in Processions,” *Folklore* 49.2 (1938), 144; Wachsmann, “Pantheanic Ships,” 261; Elizabeth Wickett, “Funerary Lament and the Expression of Grief in

away lamentably [from its *Opet* origins]. Its character has changed completely. Its elaborate ceremonial has been annexed and degraded into a ragged procession through the streets of Luxor in honour of an obscure Muhammadan saint... in which foremost place is given to one or two small boats.”<sup>108</sup> Either the *moulid* has changed drastically since 1938, or Hornell was simply dismissive to Islam, because the festival today is reported to be a grand event involving dancing, faux stick fighting, a procession, multiple car-sized or larger symbolic barques, ceremonial dress, and other entertainment festivities.<sup>109</sup>

In a 2009 article, Wickett cites the story of Abu’l Hajjaj and the pilgrimage miracle with the boats as evidence that “the sacred boat paraded in his festival [is] in commemoration of that critical event” instead of a continuation of the *Opet* festivities as other scholars have argued.<sup>110</sup> However, in an interview with a local man in her 1999 film *For Those Who Sail to Heaven*, the man tells Wickett there is also legend that the three boats used in the *moulid* began as symbolic representations of three Egyptian pagan gods, Amun, Mut, and Khonsu; they no longer carry this distinction. Besides the continuation of using three boats, other similarities between past pagan and modern Islamic Luxor include symbolic stick fights and the climbing of a mast, as well as the admiration of a “secret door” or “soul door,” a celestial object which acts similarly to the false door of the ancient Egyptians.<sup>111</sup> Just as ancient Egyptian festivals can still have resonance with modern people where a religion continues “beyond the life of the worship of the old gods,”<sup>112</sup> the continuity of these traditions have parallels to the continuity of tourism, whether it

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the Transforming Landscape of Luxor,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 32 (2012), 114; Wickett, “Archaeological Memory,” 403; etc.

<sup>108</sup> Hornell, “Boat Processions in Egypt,” 145.

<sup>109</sup> Wickett, *For Those Who Sail to Heaven*.

<sup>110</sup> Wickett, “Archaeological Memory,” 405.

<sup>111</sup> Wickett, *For Those Who Sail to Heaven*.

<sup>112</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 98.

is part of the pagan religiouscape of the *Opet*, the modern Islamic religiouscape regarding the *moulid*, or the modern religiouscape of Museums.<sup>113</sup>

## 2.4 TOURIST INTERACTION AT LUXOR TEMPLE COMPLEX

Tourist access to the archaeological site itself is through a gate on the east side of the site, perpendicular to where the Avenue of the Sphinxes leads to Karnak temple complex. The price of admission is listed differently on various sites, but all seem to be around fifty to sixty Egyptian pounds (around 3 USD), paid at the entrance gate. To enter the temple itself, visitors walk past towering statues of Ramses II; if one were to turn around, they would see the Avenue of Sphinxes leading towards the Temple of Karnak. Once past the First Pylon, visitors enter an open colonnaded courtyard; to the east, visitors can see the Abu'l Hajjaj mosque, built on the site. Next, a hypostyle hall extends about one hundred meters, lined by papyrus-capital columns, and culminating in another open courtyard. Inner sanctuaries including the barque shrine built by Alexander the Great are beyond the second courtyard. Visitors can access most of the temple area that is uncovered.

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<sup>113</sup> For example, Wilkinson discusses a festival day that honors the rising of the Nile, held annually on what is now June 19. In such a ceremony, the ancient Egyptian gods were also worshiped, as everything was connected, and thus the gods were connected to the rising of the Nile which sustained the people and their crops. This event must have been “important enough in the culture of the Egyptians and so embedded in their consciousness” that when Christianity entered the region, the festival did not disappear. Moreover, the modern-day Coptic church still holds a celebration on June 19, but instead of directly saying it is for the Nile, it is deemed the feast Day of St. Michael – patron saint of the Nile (Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 98). Today, there are occasionally galas or musical celebrations that make up the same areas pagans once used to celebrate the *Opet* festival. One example is a 2014 “Future of Tourism in Egypt” conference.



*Figure 6. Statues along the Avenue of the Sphinx, which connects Luxor and Karnak temple complexes. Photograph by Victoria Maatta, University of Pittsburgh, 2015.*

In order to investigate how visitors interact with Luxor's courts, columns, and pylons, second-hand observational research was conducted because a first-hand trip to Luxor was not possible. In lieu of primary observational research, the analysis of visitor interaction with Luxor was done through examination of visitor comments and travel blogs online. The source that was most commonly referenced is TripAdvisor's page for Luxor Temple.<sup>114</sup> Comments from December 12, 2006 through July 5, 2017,<sup>115</sup> are included in this examination; of the 2,993 comments posted by that point, 1,758 were in English and are the comments that will be examined in this chapter.<sup>116</sup> According to TripAdvisor, visitors of all language groups

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<sup>114</sup> "Luxor Temple," *TripAdvisor*, comments from December 2006 to July 2017.

<sup>115</sup> The first comment was posted on December 12, 2006 by user Natalie1986. The second was posted a year and a half later on April 20, 2008 by user boo5. Since that point, comments are posted regularly, usually every few days or weeks.

<sup>116</sup> Only English comments were considered as I as the sole researcher am not proficient in any of the other languages used. As mentioned, 1,758 of the 2,993 comments were in English. The next-highest language group was Russian (216), followed by Spanish (202), Italian (200), Portuguese (126), Chinese (traditional and symbols) (125), German (119), and French (93). Of note is that only 20 comments were in Arabic, Egypt's official language.

overwhelmingly had positive experiences at Luxor Temple, with 74.6% of visitors rating their experience with five out of five stars. Only eight visitors in total rated their experience with one or two stars.

TripAdvisor has suggested terms to search through reviews. These are commonly-written terms or phrases from the comments themselves. They indicate patterns in what tourists focused on and remembered. It was determined that these phrases made up five categories: praises on visiting at night (“beautiful at night,” “visit at night,” “lit up at night,” “light show”); mentions of surrounding attractions (“Karnak,” “avenue [of the Sphinxes],” and “Nile River”); architectural terms (“columns,” “temple,” “site,” and “obelisk”); personal feelings (“awe-inspiring” and “amazing place”); and historical mentions (“Ramses II,” “ancient Egyptians,” “Egyptian history,” and “Alexander”).

To determine visitor focus (in substitute of length of time spent doing certain activities, as is recorded and analyzed in the next chapters), comments were searched for mentioning words specific to the investigations in this thesis.<sup>117</sup> Terms chosen to be searched for included “Ramses,” “entrance,” “pagan,” “ancient,” “modern,” “mosque,” “church,” “label,” “information,” and “feeling.” Upon reading the comments and finding other commonalities, the terms “magical,” “magic,” “respect,” and “atmospheric” were among those added to the search.

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<sup>117</sup> A “search all comments” function was used for this, thus, any comments that misspelled the searched word were not included in these counts.



Table 1: Appearance of terms within TripAdvisor's Luxor Temple comments

label/text	0	Alexander the Great	57
Augustus	1	magic/al	70
pagan	1	Roman	71
respect	6	church/chapel	77
graffiti	9	hieroglyph/ic/s	77
fresco	11	Christian/ity	85
exit	12	obelisk	100
Kingdom	13	entrance	112
sacred	13	Ramses	117
Copt/ic	24	feeling	119
modern	24	column	151
information	26	mosque	189
Greek	28	ancient	206
religious/religion/s	43	Egyptian	219
Muslim/Islam/ic	49	amazing	333
atmosphere/ic	52	night	376
awe	54	guide	386

The words *magic* or *magical* regularly showed in comments that were referring to the atmosphere at nighttime, and *night* appeared often as a suggestion of the time of day to go, as there is a “light display” (lights put on the pylon and statues) every evening after the sun sets. This was often described as *atmospheric*. Additionally, at least three commenters who used the word *atmospheric* said so in relation to the call to prayer emanating from the mosque’s speakers and echoing around the temple walls; this call highly increases the perceptibility and dominance of the mosque over the pagan site, at least for a few minutes. Many commenters suggested the use of a *guide*, many stating that otherwise one would not understand the site. Some of the uses of *guide*, however, warned tourists that some locals posing as guides were actually scam artists. No commenter mentioned *texts* or *labels*, although one commenter mentioned the existence of “information signs in both English and Arabic in several areas which showed the layout of the

temple and explained its significant features;”<sup>118</sup> at least three others commented in dismay on the lack of signage with information available. Additionally, at least ten reviewers talked about touching the walls; eight encouraged it, two spoke against it.<sup>119</sup> One commenter even made a distinction between this “open-air” museum and a Western museum:

*“...Unlike the British Museum you can actually touch the walls and obviously lots of people have, judging [by] the darkened patches around Amun's manhood.”*<sup>120</sup>

To develop an idea of visitors’ ideologies, comments with the word “mosque” were studied. Of the 1,758 English comments, 189 of them mention the word “mosque.” The majority of these comments simply mentioned its presence, usually in conjunction with mentioning what they believed to be Coptic remains (but were most likely Roman), as well.<sup>121</sup>

*“...The temple contains a mosque, a piece of coptic [sic] Christian murials [sic] and walls of hieroglyphics...”*<sup>122</sup>

*“...The mosque of Abu'l Haggag dominates the Ramses II court. This demonstrates the continuing adaption of ancient monuments to modern use.”*<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> retireeVancouver, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, March 2, 2017.

<sup>119</sup> Ironically, one reviewer encouraged touching the hieroglyphics *because* they were preserved so well.

<sup>120</sup> Jacqui S., TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, April 27, 2012. “Amun’s manhood” is a reference to the supposed fertility benefits of touching a specific relief of the god.

<sup>121</sup> According to Jones and McFadden, the misinterpretation of the Roman imperial cult frescoes as part of an early Christian church originated as early as the 1820s (Jones and McFadden, *Art of Empire*, 1); this misconception clearly still persists today, at least outside official scholarship.

<sup>122</sup> Cytara, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, April 4, 2016.

<sup>123</sup> Abrumar, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, April 30, 2015.

*“...What is particularly unusual and interesting is the assimilation of Ancient Egyptian, Muslim and Christian influences that have since been added over the years. Look out for the mosque and the Christian frescos.”*<sup>124</sup>

Most likely, what these commenters and more were actually referring to were imperial Roman frescoes that remain on the temple walls and “represent a striking example of the way in which Rome was superimposed on ancient Egypt in the heart of Thebes.”<sup>125</sup>

Some additionally commented on the oddity of the evidence present of other religions:

*“Get a guide to understand the site better, its [sic] funny to see the mosque up high on the roof of the temple at the entrance.”*<sup>126</sup>

*“...Slightly strange that there's a mosque perched on top...”*<sup>127</sup>

*“...Oh and a 14<sup>th</sup> century mosque was built IN Luxor Temple and its [sic] still being used today!”*<sup>128</sup>

*“...Notice the Mosque [sic] and the christian [sic] pictures which you don't see at other Egyptian temples...”*<sup>129</sup>

This last commenter was not alone in the assumption that Luxor was alone in its use by Christians. Others, however, were less enthralled, some even enraged, with the presence of either the mosque or what commenters assumed were Coptic elements:<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Adammawright, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, March 29, 2016.

<sup>125</sup> Jones and McFadden, *Art of Empire*, 89.

<sup>126</sup> Abhi2001\_10, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, October 21, 2016,

<sup>127</sup> Lisaeades, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, January 3, 2013.

<sup>128</sup> Georgette H., TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, June 5, 2013.

<sup>129</sup> Markwoodcock, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, August 30, 2015.

<sup>130</sup> Most likely, what they are referring to are the Roman imperial cult chamber frescoes.

*“...Sit and enjoy the gargantuan and majestic columns, statues and size of it all... Sad to see Mosque [sic] built over it t [sic] in one part...”<sup>131</sup>*

*“...Unfortunately [sic] the Christians that used the temple as church [sic] on roman ages [sic] and the Muslims that built a Mosque [sic] on top of the temple haven’t help [sic] to preserve the site entirely but the whole ancient Egyptian atmosphere can be felt entirely.”<sup>132</sup>*

*“...But in the case of Luxor temple the symmetry of the temple’s entrance way has been destroyed. This is a shame, but it is not as egregious as the mosque constructed by locals on the ancient site. Using construction materials looted from ancient monuments the mamelukes and muslims [sic] built many an eyesore along the Nile and the one at Luxor temple is the most offensive.”<sup>133</sup>*

These commenters seem to have adopted the modern Western view that the “original” of an object or structure is to be preserved over other elements. This line of thought impairs one’s full appreciation of the history of a structure, but does reveal the underlying ideology within the Museum landscape that presentation of the original life of an object is more “authentic” or somehow superior to subsequent additions or elements. Other comments revealed this in the insistence that the mosque was *accidentally* built over the archaeological remains of the temple. It is the belief held by many commenters that if the Muslims had known the temple was there, they would not have built over it, as many believe preservation has always been as ideological important as it is today to Western museum visitors. Additionally, there was also an amount of misinformation in the comments, but these comments reveal ideologies and expectations

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<sup>131</sup> DenverFrequentTrav, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, January 13, 2016.

<sup>132</sup> Ceccoman, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, September 3, 2010.

<sup>133</sup> ART196, TripAdvisor, *Luxor Temple*, April 22, 2016.

pertaining to the religioscape of Museums surrounding Egyptian temples as well as what the frescoes pertained to.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, some visitors to Luxor's Museum landscape continued to yearn for original context and atmosphere, whereas others were fascinated by the seemingly continuous use of the sacred space by varying religions and accepted the assimilation of ancient and modern religions at Luxor as a curiosity or even a benefit to the structure as a whole. Many commenters on TripAdvisor claimed they spent one to two hours inside the complex, and felt as if they were consumed by the history and the grandeur of the colossal site. The element mentioned the most as inundating visitors with a sense of "sacredness" is partially man-made rather than a natural part of the *in-situ* landscape itself; the "light show" at the end of each day. Thus, even *in-situ* landscape seems to require a modern curator (of sorts, in this case) to turn this structure within the Museum landscape completely into an element of the religioscape of Museums.

### 3.0 DENDUR IN THE UNITED STATES

Chapter 2 discussed the development of a modern Museum religiouscape surrounding the ancient Egyptian temple complex of Luxor in Luxor, Egypt. This portion of the thesis will link this discussion on the religiouscape of Museums as is provable in how tourists interact with ancient structures with a new case study: the temple of Dendur. As mentioned in the Introduction, the Temple of Dendur is now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. This chapter along with Chapters 4 and 5 will examine ancient Egyptian temples and/or gateways that have been removed from their *in-situ* locations along the Nile to Western museum institutions across the United States and northern Europe. The Temple of Dendur (along with its gateway) was accessioned into the Metropolitan Museum of Art's (colloquially called the Met) collection in 1968, and on view to the public since 1978. After a brief introduction to Dendur's historical lives, this chapter examines Dendur within the Met by describing and evaluating its current display and how visitors interact with the display through audience observation. This examination illustrates that increased levels of ancient context and atmospheric similarity to *in-situ* sites intensifies the sacred nature of the temple for visitors, thus further developing the religiouscape of Museums that seems to also exist among temples remaining in Egypt, as discussed through the example of Luxor in the previous chapter.

### 3.1 HISTORY AND HISTORICAL USE OF THE TEMPLE OF DENDUR

#### 3.1.1 Pagan Construction and Use

The temple of Dendur was built by Caesar Augustus of Rome around 15 BCE near the ancient city of Tutzis, which is on the bank of the Nile at the border of ancient Egypt and Nubia.<sup>134</sup> The Temple of Dendur (Figure 7) was built against a cliff, facing east. A rock-cut shrine was built against the cliffs. The temple itself was a three-room temple proper with a gateway that led up from the Nile River. A large cult terrace stood between the gateway the Nile.<sup>135</sup>

The border of ancient Egypt and Nubia was home to a great number of smaller ancient Egyptian temples, especially those of Greco-Roman origin built under the Ptolemies and the

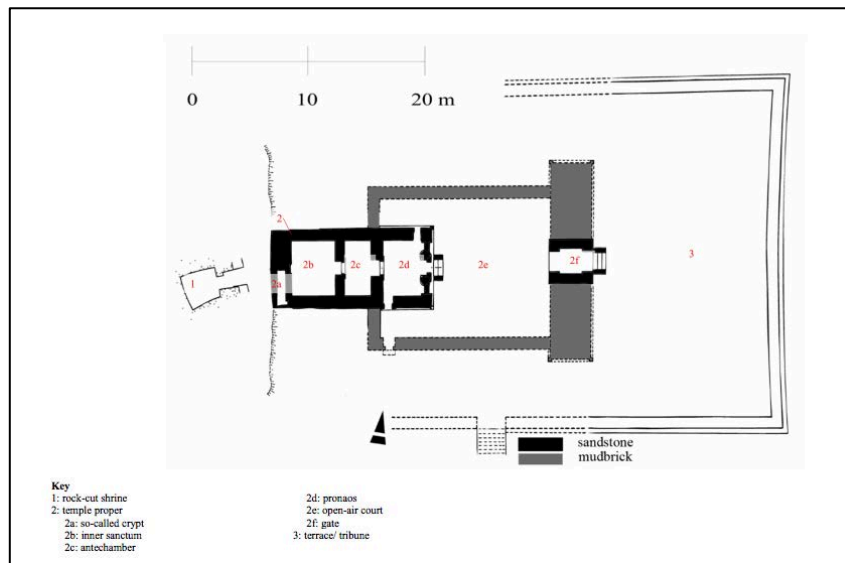


Figure 7. Plan of the Temple of Dendur. From Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 428.

Romans when they each ruled Egypt.<sup>136</sup> At least twenty-four temples across Egypt were built under the first Roman Emperor of Egypt, Caesar Augustus (who was known as Octavian until 27 BCE) from 30 BCE to 14 CE.<sup>137</sup> These temples, including Dendur,

<sup>134</sup> Dieter Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 244.

<sup>135</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 259.

<sup>136</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 39.

<sup>137</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 3-4.

were steeped in pharaonic tradition, but were unmistakably different from pharaonic temples at the same time,<sup>138</sup> as architectural styles developed with new dynasties of sovereigns, particularly starting around the Late Period.<sup>139</sup>

Dendur's function is debated by modern scholars. Some, such as Dieter Arnold, and curators at the Met believe it was a cult temple;<sup>140</sup> others, such as Torgny Säve-Söderbergh and



Figure 8. The Temple of Dendur in-situ, early 1900s. From Gaston Maspero, *Les Temples Immenses de la Nubie* (Cairo: Impr. de l'Institut Français d'Archeologie Orientale, 1911) Pl. LXXXIV.

Cyril Aldred, believe that it was a funerary temple, built to honor two deceased sons of a local Nubian chief.<sup>141</sup> The sons, Pedesi and Pihor, were given divine status at Luxor,<sup>142</sup> and were “probably added to the regional pantheon in the Augustan period.”<sup>143</sup> It was a fairly minor temple and comparatively small (only 5.5 m high), causing nineteenth-century explorer and novelist Amelia

<sup>138</sup> B. E. Shafter, *Temples of Ancient Egypt* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University, 1994), 191.

<sup>139</sup> Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 305.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 244; the Met's belief in Dendur as a cult temple is evident by the insertion of a cult statue of a Priestess within the temple display, discussed below.

<sup>141</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Egypt*, 138; Aldred, *The Temple of Dendur*, 40. Ironically, Aldred's work was published by the Met.

<sup>142</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 218.

<sup>143</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 7.



Edwards to describe it as “tiny,” and looking akin to “an exquisite toy.”<sup>144</sup>

The majority of the temple (excluding the back two rooms) is covered with images of Augustus as pharaoh, making offerings to Egyptian divinities. Isis, Osiris, and Horus occur commonly,<sup>145</sup> because they form the main triad of Egyptian gods home to the temple at Philae, which is the religious center of the region at the border of Egypt and Nubia (also called the Dodekaschoinos, Greek for “Twelve-Mile District”) where Dendur was built. Augustus’s pharaonic titles use hieroglyphs and cartouches proclaiming him as “Caesar,” “Emperor,” and “Pharaoh.”<sup>146</sup> This established his legitimacy as a rightful pharaoh, as well as instituted himself, a Roman military dictator who became the first emperor, as part of the long tradition of past pharaohs.<sup>147</sup> Arnold writes that “architecture... submits to totalitarian authority, which secures its power and immortality in stone,”<sup>148</sup> a concept that Augustus made use of during his reign. Many of the temples Augustus built in this region, including Dendur, reflect a clear theme of raising local gods to elevated statuses on these temples. At Dendur, various regional gods including Mandulis (a Nubian god related to Horus, also worshiped at Kalabsha and Philae),<sup>149</sup> Satis of Elephantine (a protective Nubian deity)<sup>150</sup>, and Arensnuphis (a deity from the Kingdom of Kush,

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<sup>144</sup> Aldred, *The Temple of Dendur*, 6.

<sup>145</sup> Aldred, *The Temple of Dendur*, 45-46.

<sup>146</sup> James Allen, “Dendur and the Temples of Egypt,” Lecture, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City, New York, 2001).

<sup>147</sup> Although Augustus imbued images of himself within temples such as Dendur, Peters notes the antagonism that second- and third-century CE classical authors claimed existed between Augustus and the Egyptian religion, although she herself advised caution on taking these ancient historians’ word as law (Peters, *Empire in Egypt*, 5).

<sup>148</sup> Arnold, *The Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 309.

<sup>149</sup> Lorna Oakes, *Pyramids, Temples and Tombs of Ancient Egypt: An Illustrated Atlas of the Land of the Pharaohs* (London: Hermes House, Anness Publishing Ltd, 2003), 209.

<sup>150</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 164.

also worshiped at Philae),<sup>151</sup> were represented in the decoration.<sup>152</sup> Augustus lined the Dodekaschoinos with temples, creating a regional religious landscape in which Dendur was created to function within. By creating a number of sacred spaces, he connected himself with the people and the gods, and the land as well. Thus, the religiouscape of Augustan-era pagan worship was established within the Dodekaschoinos.

Local favor may also be why the two brothers were featured so prominently; Pedesi is featured in eighteen scenes (twelve times as the chief god being worshiped) and Pihor featured in nine scenes (three times as the main god).<sup>153</sup> In comparison, Isis, a major goddess, is physically represented on twenty-three occasions, and as the primary deity in sixteen of them.<sup>154</sup> Augustus combined Egyptian and Nubian religious scenes under a Roman heading (himself as pharaoh) to secure its importance and connection to the powerful religious center at Philae. He, like many rulers before him, added his authority to the power of Egyptian religion through this sacred space for those who worshipped there.

While the exteriors of temple complexes were alive with religious and secular activities through most of the year, the secluded inner rooms of temples were highly restricted spaces, except to specific priests.<sup>155</sup> At Dendur, the public was allowed into the pronaos (the front room of the temple proper) during festivals, although not during the non-festival times of the year, as per Egyptian tradition.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>153</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 263.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

### 3.1.2 Post-Pagan Use and Transformation

Although Christianity was introduced to Egypt with the transition of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, paganism continued to function on a community level in Nubia until the Byzantine emperor Justinian began closing the pagan temples of Philae,<sup>157</sup> around 535 CE.<sup>158</sup> The Temple of Dendur was converted within forty years of Justinian's mandate.<sup>159</sup> Cyril Aldred proposes that to turn the Temple of Dendur into a working Coptic church, a few structural changes were made: a presbyter by the name of Abraham put a cross on the roof, the reliefs were covered in plaster, and the orientation of the building was reversed with the southern doorway of the pronaos now being used as the main entrance to the building.<sup>160</sup> There are also cuts into the stone columns and façade of Dendur that were part of the functioning church,<sup>161</sup> and the inner space of the temple was made to appear more open and bigger in order for the public to enter (Figure 9).<sup>162</sup> If Dendur was built to function as a funerary temple, it would have only been open to priests and close family for offerings, whereas churches have greater public access. These types of transformations were common with temples, turning them into churches.

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<sup>157</sup> Philae, an important Nubian site, was one of Egypt's last pagan religioscapes. This, Säve-Söderbergh writes, was acceptable to most of the native people, as by that point, "the whole of Nubia had embraced the new faith," (Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 40), although the 200-year resistance of Philae does contradict this statement. Christian kings created a "Nubian state which counted among the great political and cultural powers of its time" (Ibid., 61).

<sup>158</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 40.

<sup>159</sup> Allen, "Dendur and the Temples of Egypt"

<sup>160</sup> Aldred, "The Temple of Dendur," 57.

<sup>161</sup> Wall text, Sackler Wing, *Temple of Dendur* (March 2017).

<sup>162</sup> Aldred, "The Temple of Dendur," 57.



Figure 9. Coptic modification to hold a wooden apse. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.

The practice of reuse of sacred spaces was not new when Christianity spread through the region. Ancient Egyptians had reused portions of their own sacred structures for hundreds of years by reusing stones as fill or building blocks for a new temple.<sup>163</sup> Still, the

Christian reuse of sacred space, or

portions of sacred structure, for a new religion with new ideologies was novel. Dendur was one of the structures reused in its entirety. It is possible that Christian use of Dendur lasted until its religious abandonment with Nubia's conversion to Islam in the thirteenth century,<sup>164</sup> around 600 years after the arrival of Islam in Egypt.<sup>165</sup> With the Napoleonic expedition of Egypt in the late eighteenth century, a renewed fascination with Egyptian history, culture, and artifacts was stimulated and caused a frenzy of European interest to travel to Egypt and sites like Dendur.<sup>166</sup>

Other visitors interacted with the temples of Nubia by studying them. The writings of Napoleon's scholars in the *Description de l'Egypte*, published in thirty-six volumes from 1809-1830, "awakened nothing short of a mania for all things Egyptian, and adventurers, antiquarians, artists and scholars began to travel to Egypt in increasing numbers."<sup>167</sup> This may have caused the

<sup>163</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Egypt*, 51.

<sup>164</sup> Aldred, *The Temple of Dendur*, 57.

<sup>165</sup> I have not found evidence in the literature of Dendur being used for Islamic purposes.

<sup>166</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 12.

<sup>167</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 31.

number of the graffiti inscriptions visible to visitors on the temple and portico of Dendur today, evident from some of the dates on the temple walls (Figure 9).

After Muhammad Ali opened travel to European tourists in the nineteenth century, a flood of people visited Egypt. A 1914 travelers' guide to Egypt discouraged its readers from taking objects from the temples they visited.<sup>168</sup> It claimed that Coptic evidence (any loose artifacts left over such as pieces of wood) soon



Figure 10. Example of graffiti that adorns the temple and gateway of Dendur. This particular graffiti on the left is from 1820. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.

disappeared from the temple, as travelers in the nineteenth century picked up souvenirs, and archaeologists of the earliest twentieth century dug quickly past Coptic objects to reach the pagan objects underneath.<sup>169</sup> Photographs that are part of the label display in the Sackler Wing at the Met of the temple *in-situ* in the mid-nineteenth century reveal that the elements that made the temple into a Coptic church (such as a wooden apse) are gone by that point; only the holes seen today can be seen then.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Karl Bædeker, *Egypt and the Sudan: Handbook for Travellers* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1914), clxxxviii.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, clxxxviii.

<sup>170</sup> Temple of Dendur Sackler Wing informational panels (pre-May 2017).

### 3.2 RULER INTENTIONS VERSUS PUBLIC USE

Visitors to Egyptian temples either took “souvenirs,” or pieces of the temple back with them, or added graffiti to the temple walls.<sup>171</sup> This is one example of how use of a structure is determined by the public that interacts with it rather than the rulers who commissioned and/or completed the creation of the structure. Ancient graffiti were carved for a number of reasons, such as religious acts and records of tourist visits, and included “crudely scratched ex votos depicting the gods or cult equipment... formal attestations to [the] piety [of the graffitist],” or unsanctioned reliefs carved by artists.<sup>172</sup> Such graffiti indicate that ancient people found a structure worthy of visiting, worthy of admiration, or that they held similar ideological beliefs. The same can be said of more modern times: well into the nineteenth century, travelers carved their names into the Temple of Dendur.<sup>173</sup> This is in direct opposition to the common attitudes towards modern graffiti that began around the 1920s,<sup>174</sup> which were generally synonymous with “vandalism,” until more recent debates about graffiti as an art form.<sup>175</sup> Thus, graffiti in the case of ancient temples must be looked at intertemporally, “recognizing the practices observed in any given moment reflect the political [or social] conditions of that moment.”<sup>176</sup> After the raising of the

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<sup>171</sup> As early as 10 BCE, graffiti had begun to be inscribed into the temple; this particular mark was made by a Pakhom who wrote to next to a figure of Pihor. This graffiti mark, however, was likely sanctioned by those in charge of the structure.

<sup>172</sup> Peter Brand, “Veils, Votives, and Marginalia,” 64.

<sup>173</sup> Aldred, *Temple of Dendur*, 57.

<sup>174</sup> The practice grew during World War II and cemented itself as an important part of hip hop culture in the 1980s and 1990s. Due to this, graffiti became synonymous with “vandalism,” although there is much debate in both the art and general public communities as to whether or not graffiti is actually an art form. Whitehead, Jessie L, “Graffiti: The Use of the Familiar,” *Art Education* 57.6 (2004), 26-28.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Hayden, *Antagonistic Tolerance*, 152.

Aswan Dam in the early-mid twentieth century and before the UNESCO Campaign, however, many of the temples located in Nubia became harder to visit as water covered them for most of each year.<sup>177</sup>

### 3.3 UNESCO AND RELOCATION

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Temple of Dendur and its gateway were two of six rescued structures that were sent abroad. The Temple of Dendur was awarded to the *people* of the United States and was required to be available to the public; even public transportation systems were to be considered in placement.<sup>178</sup> UNESCO rescued the temple from the banks of the Nile in 1962, but was not transferred to the United States until 1967.<sup>179</sup> When deciding which city would receive Dendur, the US government under President Carter added its own guidelines (in addition to those established by the Egyptian government and discussed in the Introduction) for submitting an application to house Dendur. Carter mandated that the temple must be at a site that allows the temple to be available to scholars, at a site that preserves them, and provide information that would be advantageous to the general public.<sup>180</sup> These stipulations are important to note because it shows that both the US and Egyptian governments had clear ideas of what would retain the dignity of the structure, and thus the sacredness of the space, and worked to implement them. The temple was awarded to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The Met fought hard for the temple, stating that they believed that the temple “will acquire

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<sup>177</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 126.

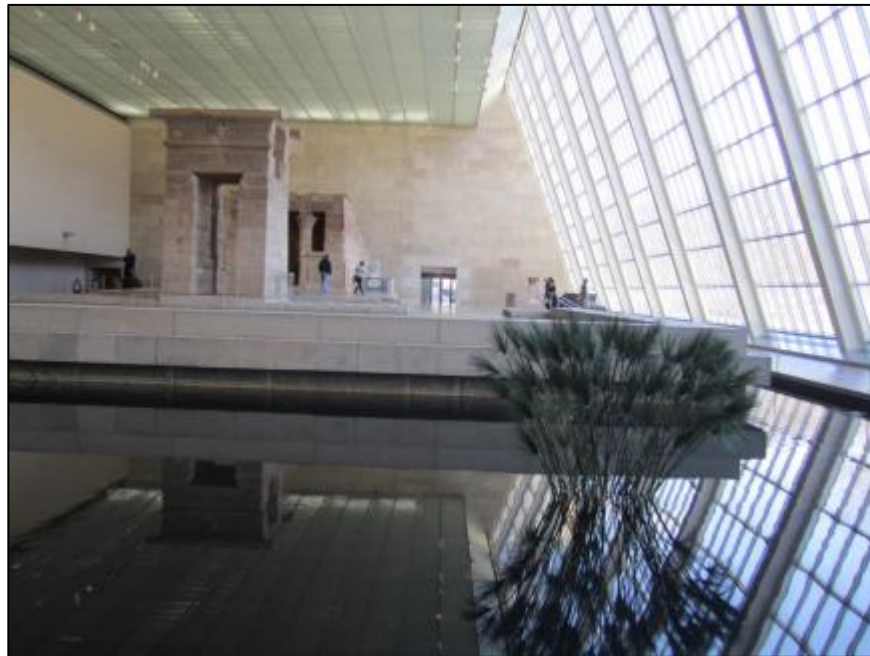
<sup>178</sup> “Guidelines for Making Application for the Temple of Dendur,” October 1959, “Dendur Temple 1965 –,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>179</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 138.

<sup>180</sup> “Guidelines for Making Application for the Temple of Dendur.”

added meaning if it is related to a comprehensive Egyptian collection such as ours.”<sup>181</sup> It was rebuilt within a new wing of the museum and finally revealed to the public in its full form in September of 1978.<sup>182</sup> The Metropolitan went to great care to not only preserve the structures but steep them in atmospheric context as well, as will elaborated on in the following section.<sup>183</sup>

### 3.4 THE MET DISPLAY



*Figure 11. Temple of Dendur, Sackler Wing, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.*

The Met went to extreme lengths to follow the stipulations of both the US and Egyptian governments, even making sure that the temporary space that held the temple while they were

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<sup>181</sup> Letter from Henry G. Fischer to Harry McPherson, December 22, 1965, Box 6 Folder 2, Noble Papers, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>182</sup> Temple of Dendur opening invitation, 1978, Folder Temple of Dendur 1965 –, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>183</sup> Roche, Kevin and John Dinkeloo and Associates, *The Second Century: The Comprehensive Architectural Plan for the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971).



building the permanent Sackler Wing was accessible to the public.<sup>184</sup> The final display space reflected the *in-situ* environment, specifically the environment around the time of the creation of the temple (Figure 11); the Met must have believed that keeping the “original” layout and atmosphere of the temple would increase its integrity. For example, they did not reconstruct any Christian aspects of the temple’s display, only the original pagan. It can be argued that this increase in context and integrity, as stated previously, should raise the level of sacredness of the structure, and thus add to the religioscape of Museums. Issues of “authenticity” have been continually central to museums throughout history. There is even record of the Library and Musaeum of Alexandria borrowing original papyri, copying them, and then secretly returning the copy instead of the original “to ensure the authority and authenticity of its holdings.”<sup>185</sup> Thus, viewing an object as genuine or original, at the point of its understood “original” creation, is important in the tourism industry to both creators and visitors.

### **3.4.1 Layout of Dendur within the Sackler Wing**

To recreate the temple’s context and integrity, Met curators placed the temple of Dendur and its gateway within a sand-colored environment with a great deal of natural light and a reflecting pool to the southwest of the gateway, where the Nile would be in relation to the structures *in-*

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<sup>184</sup> As mentioned, the Met even made sure to note that, even though the Sackler Wing would take time to build, the Temple of Dendur would be free for the public to view even before that point. They wrote that they would create an “air structure” to be placed in Central Park directly behind the museum. One document reads, “One will be able to observe scholars deciphering the hieroglyphics, and the Museum staff examining the stones” (Noble Box 6, Folder 4). They also intended to hold lectures and seminars within the structure for larger groups. I did not find any sources that said whether or not they did hold these lectures.

<sup>185</sup> Barker, “Exhibiting Archaeology,” 298.

*situ*. The Sackler Wing was built specifically for the Temple of Dendur. The intent of its deliberate construction was to best mimic the temple's surroundings *in-situ* (Figures 7 and 11).<sup>186</sup> The room itself has a tranquil atmosphere as well as an open layout, with nothing to cut off a visitor's line of vision around the room. The main entranceway to the Sackler Wing is through another Egyptian gallery, the Art of the Amarna Period Hall (Gallery 121). Once in the space from this entrance (just to the left of the viewpoint of Figure 11), the visitor has about twenty feet of space in front of him/her before s/he comes across a low pond. The gateway is across this pond, with the temple proper behind it, but one cannot access it from across the pond. As if the Nile were there, water stops visitors and forces them to find another path and come at the temple itself perpendicularly. James Allen, former curator of the Department of Egyptian Art at the Met, said that this tasks modern visitors to enter the way the ancient priests did.<sup>187</sup> The northeast wall of the museum, facing Central Park, is entirely made of glass, allowing natural light to penetrate the entire room. This was done deliberately as the rising and setting sun was extremely important in ancient Egyptian culture, especially the ancient Egyptian religion and their ideas of life and death. Additionally, this would ensure that the temple was available to the people of the United States at all hours, as they had the ability to view it from Central Park.

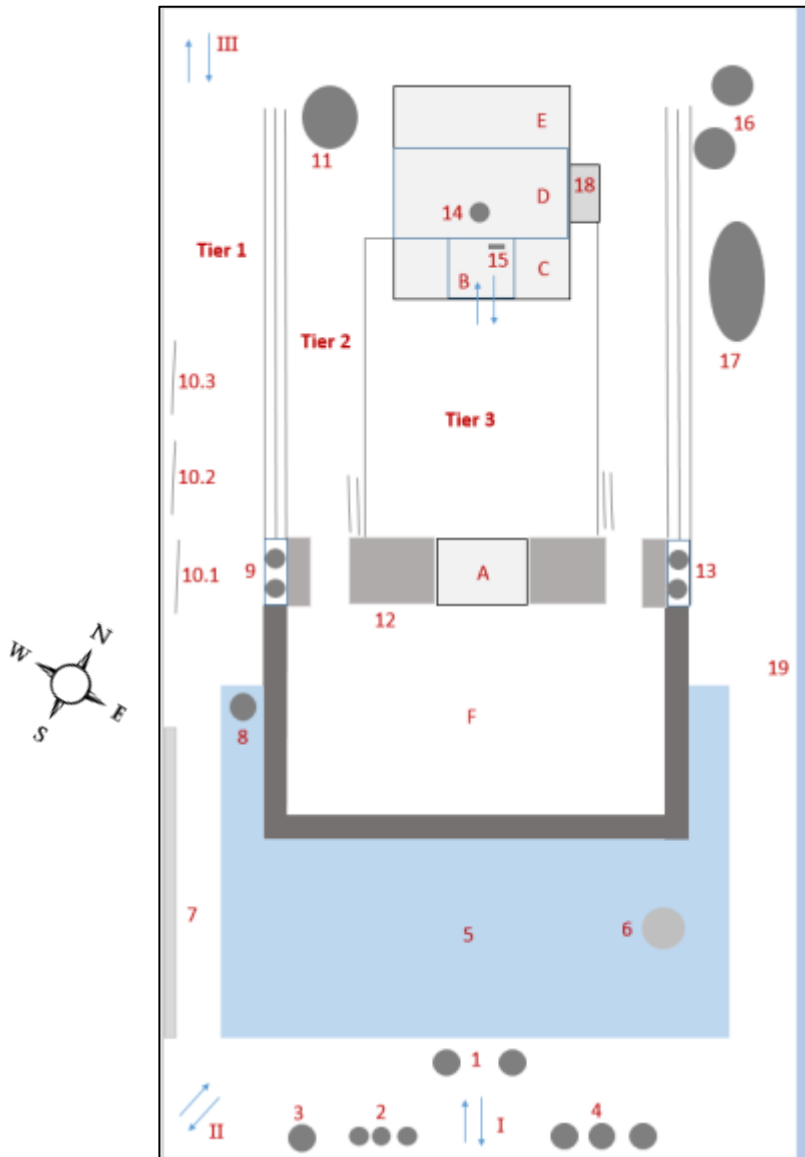
The room itself is organized in three tiers (Figure 12). The first tier is the entrance tier, welcoming visitors to engage with New Kingdom, Ptolemaic, and Roman Egyptian statues and relief fragments as well as text that discusses the temple and its history. It also includes the reflective pool (Figure 12: 5) in which they have planted papyrus (Figure 12: 6). This tier contains the three entranceways: the main one from the Art of the Amarna Period hall (Gallery

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<sup>186</sup> Aldred, *The Temple of Dendur*, 78; Säve-Söderbergh, *The Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 139.

<sup>187</sup> Allen, "Dendur and the Temples of Egypt."

121) (Figure 12: I); a large open walkway from the Study Gallery with Objects from the Late New Kingdom to the First Century A.D. (Gallery 130) (Figure 12: II); and lastly, a small, doorway off to the side of the back of the room leading to the American Wing (Gallery 702) (Figure 12: III).<sup>188</sup>



Although updated in April 2017, in March 2017, this tier also held three clusters of approximately 1m by 1m text panels hung on the southwest wall (Figure 12: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3). Each cluster included information on a specific aspect of the temple or its history along with *in-situ* photographs. The first cluster talks about the Temple of Dendur *in-situ* and shows plans of the temple complex; the second cluster show pictures of the temple *in-situ* and discusses the UNESCO project; the third cluster notes the cuts and additions made to the temple when it was converted into a Christian church.<sup>189</sup> Such information given by curators is often all

Figure 12. Plan of the display of the Temple of Dendur in the Sackler Wing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image created by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.

the visitors know about an object. To

<sup>188</sup> This last door most likely meant to function as an exit, but the Met's open layout often causes guests to use this as an entrance as well.

<sup>189</sup> Wall text, Sackler Wing, *Temple of Dendur* (March 2017).

use the analogy of curators and other institutional creators as rulers, the institutional creators dictate what is and is not important to understand about an object to the public. Restrictions of information can aid visitors in their quest to learn; smaller amounts of information are more easily retained. However, this limitation can also confine visitors to only what is written by institutional creators, one way museum institutions are not unbiased sources.

The second tier is accessible by two long sets of steps that reach from the pool almost to the back wall. The majority of the tier is enclosed by three long, low ledges that visitors use as benches. These “benches” emulate the cult terrace that was once the largest feature of the Dendur temple complex. Cult terraces are public areas of temple complexes outside of the major roofed structures, a concept of which did not develop until the Late Period.<sup>190</sup> The terrace was not removed with the rest of the temple complex during the UNESCO campaign, but the Met felt it was important to recreate this feature with new materials due to its probable use as either the “primary access entrance” or important cultic ritual space.<sup>191</sup> The *in-situ* terrace was 28.3 m long, 17.8 m deep, and at least 3.5 m high,<sup>192</sup> which the Met matched as much as possible. Besides the terrace, this tier also includes other statues, including a New Kingdom sphinx, most likely to add context to the temple and gateway.

The third tier is much smaller, holding only the entrance gate and the temple itself. There is approximately 10 m between the temple and the gateway, which adheres to the *in-situ* distance as close as possible. The gate measures 3.76 m wide, 3.66 m deep, and 6.63 m high;<sup>193</sup> the temple is slightly shorter, with its façade measuring 5.50 m high.<sup>194</sup> The temple itself seems to blend into

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<sup>190</sup> Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 305.

<sup>191</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 264.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

the back wall, giving the illusion that it could either go on forever, or that it has become part of the museum itself. The entirety of the layout seems to merge together. Long lines are used to visually extend the space. There is not one single staircase that forces guests into a line to get up onto the second or third tiers; instead, the steps are long and almost seem to fade into the “benches” (the cult terrace), inviting congregations to flow upward. This slow slope elevates Dendur physically and metaphorically above anything or anyone else within the Sackler Wing. This would most likely have been similar *in-situ*, as sets of steps led up to the temple (Figure 7).

The museum protects the temple and the gateway from visitors’ hands with stanchions, as well as the constant vigilance of multiple security guards. These protective measures appear to work for the temple, as I observed visitors touch the sphinx next to the temple more than the temple itself. While the security guards reprimanded people for touching the sphinx, it was not roped off like the temple and gateway. Additionally, during my observational study, I witnessed a few conversations that revolved around not being able to touch the temple. An adolescent boy said to a much older man who was with him, “I wish they had one stone that people could touch. That way people can feel like they’re touching something the Egyptians touched.” Later, a man in his twenties whispered to his female partner, “I wish... I would pay money to touch it,” referring to the temple pronaos.

Visitors were permitted to enter the pronaos of the three-roomed temple, which measures 4.60 m wide, 3.11 m deep, and 4.64 m high;<sup>195</sup> their progression any further was halted by a rope that also kept visitors away from the walls of the inside of the pronaos. A Ptolemaic statue of the Priestess Tagerem from Upper Egypt is displayed in the second room of the temple. A small

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 278.

square label with a few sentences of information about this statue is propped up on the floor of



*Figure 13. Statue of the Priestess placed within the Temple of Dendur at the Met; view of the back two rooms (sanctuary). Photograph by Erin Peters, 2015.*

the pronaos. The back room (sanctuary) is almost completely out of the scope of vision of visitors; however, it is possible to see that the temple extends a total of three rooms back, approximately 5.7 m (Figure 13).<sup>196</sup> At the exterior of the temple, visitors are blocked off by ropes from the immediate outside walls of the structure. Visitors were also able to stand on either the front or back of the gateway, but were not allowed on either side or to walk through it.

Reliefs adorn almost every visible surface of both the temple and the gateway; ancient and Victorian-era graffiti are visible on both

structures as well. With the amount of stanchions, ropes, and security guards, visitor access was fairly restricted.

### **3.4.2 Accuracy of Modern Display to the *In-Situ* Setting**

During the planning of the display in the 1960s and 70s, curators intended there to be separate raised platforms for the pronaos and the temple itself; however, although this would have been a distinct and dazzling display of the temple, it was not true to the *in-situ* arrangement. Throughout

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 292.

the process, the Met fought for accuracy (at least in relation to the original Augustan construction) in display. In 1994, the Sackler Wing was partially redone in order to correct a mistake in “both height and inclination” of the temple after the wing’s completion in 1978.<sup>197</sup> Also in 1994, the curators decided to open the pronaos for the public to be able to enter the temple,<sup>198</sup> as the ancient pagan public would have been able to do during festivals.<sup>199</sup> A few objects were added as well, including the sphinx (Figure 12: 11), the Amarna-period talatat reliefs on the walls (Figure 12: 7), and other statues.

The same 1994 renovation that opened the pronaos included the addition of two Amenhotep III statues, placed at the main entrance of the Sackler Wing (Figure 12: 1). This was done in order to add “monumentality and architectural progression to the temple and gateway and enhance the ancient Egyptian character of the site”<sup>200</sup> – yet unrelated to the Temple of Dendur in era, original location, or construction. This calls into question what the most important aspect of the overall display of the wing is meant to be, as the statues are from mid-1300’s BCE but the temple is from 15 BCE. Should the Sackler Wing be a representation of Dendur at its creation, as the other 1994 addition/correction suggested? Or does it aim to be a conglomerate representation of Egypt? A similar issue could arise with the placement of the Priestess Tagerem statue inside the temple (Figure 12: 14), as even the label itself (Figure 12: 15) states, “this statue is *not* a cult image of a deity that would have been placed inside the sanctuary of the temple”

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<sup>197</sup> “Temple of Dendur Reopens to the Public,” 1994, Dendur Temple – Clippings and Press Releases, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>198</sup> “The Temple of Dendur Opens Front Porch, by Glenn Collins,” 1994, Dendur Temple – Clippings and Press Releases, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>199</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 283.

<sup>200</sup> *The Biweekly*, Sept 23, 1994, Dendur Temple – Clippings and Press Releases, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

(emphasis added).<sup>201</sup> Additionally, the statue is from the Delta region, which is at the opposite end of the Nile from

Dendur.<sup>202</sup> Even though the curators seemed to try to create an *in-situ*

atmosphere as much as possible, it remains that adding statues from

different eras, regions, or

contexts could theoretically

decrease the sacred nature

of the temple if the intent was to recreate its Augustan context. However, all of these objects can still be categorized as *Egyptian*, and, to many tourists, there is no difference beyond that marker.

These objects are arguably relevant in context, especially to the average museum visitor who is not an Egyptologist. Indeed, the seated statues of Amenhotep and the sphinxes likely feed into the expectations that visitors have when it comes to monumental or important ancient Egyptian displays.<sup>203</sup> This thesis proposes that “context” relative to a past sacred life of an object increases the sacredness and thus the connection to the religious landscape of Museums; the exhibition of Dendur calls into question whether or not this context has to be accurate in time, and location of its moment of creation.



Figure 14. Image of projection on the Temple of Dendur for the "Color the Temple" program at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photograph by Erin Peters, 2015.

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<sup>201</sup> Object label, Sackler Wing, *Priestess Tagerem Statue*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Recall the claim in Chapter 1 that, supposedly at one point, one had to walk past the Ramses statues to enter the mosque.



In 2013, the Met made an effort to add accuracy to the display of the Augustan-era context with a project called “Color the Temple,” in which the Department of Egyptian Art and then Met MediaLab collaborated to display what the temple could have looked like in antiquity. Along with conservators, Peters carried out polychromy research to recreate and then project the colors that once adorned the temple in ancient times through digital technology created by Matt Felsen and Maria Paula Saba. This was done partially to introduce the concept that Egyptian temples were not always a sandy or beige color to museum visitors.<sup>204</sup> This program still runs on certain Friday and Saturday nights at the Met, and shows the institution’s continued dedication to encouraging visitors to experience Dendur in what is as close to the ancient *in-situ* context as possible while remaining in New York.

Additions and modifications continue to occur in the Sackler Wing. For example, the text panels that were observed in March 2017 have been rewritten in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of Dendur at the Met. The new texts make the excellent distinction that the temple, although built by the Romans, is built in the style of the Egyptians, and with some figures from Nubia. However, there is no longer a full panel detailing the changes the Copts made to the structure. Instead, its conversion is mentioned once, on the new timeline, and instead the nineteenth century explorers are discussed.<sup>205</sup> Additions include a map as well as an architectural layout that compares the Temple of Dendur complex’s layout in the Met to its former *in-situ* layout in Egypt. This highlights the dedication of staff for accuracy of display.

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<sup>204</sup> Matt Felsen and Erin Peters, “Color the Temple: Using Projected Light to Restore Color,” *Met Digital Underground*, Dec 24, 2015.

<sup>205</sup> Wall text, Sackler Wing, *Temple of Dendur* (May 2017).

### 3.5 VISITOR INTERACTION

Observation of how visitors can identify how spaces are actually used, whether or not it is similar to how curators and other institutional creators intend. Visitor interactions with the Temple of Dendur were observed in three sessions of three hours each over a two-day period (a Friday and a Sunday) in mid-March 2017. Four types of interactions were focused on in this research: text interaction, inter-unit discussion, duration of units inside the temple itself, and general use of the Sackler Wing space.<sup>206</sup> The Sackler Wing is approximately 60 m by 46 m, allowing space to wander or gather, or to stop and observe. Due to this wide ambulatory space that surrounds the temple display, the informational text panels are fairly far from the temple itself, down on the first tier.

In the first element of this study, visitor interaction with the text panels was measured to assess how many visitors had access to historical context in addition to the atmospheric context imbued by the display. In one six-minute period beginning at 11:12am on Sunday, March 11, 2017, the number of people (not units) who did and did not interact with the text was recorded. In that short time frame, eighteen people walked by the text panels with the apparent intent of observing the temple and/or gateway from a closer angle. Of those eighteen, sixteen walked past the text and straight up to at least the second tier. Two people read the panels first and then moved to the temple. During this six-minute period, about the same number of people came

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<sup>206</sup> The definition of “interaction” varies in each chapter for each case study. Each will be explained in-text of each chapter. Additionally, one “unit” is one person or one group who function the same way. For example, if one group of four people all enter and exit together and function within the space in essentially the same pattern or way, they are one unit. If a couple enters and exits at different times or uses a space in completely opposite ways, they are two units. If one unit returns twice, that counts as two separate interactions.

down from the temple into the space where the text panels are hung on the wall. Five stopped to read the panels.

In another ten-minute observation period of people choosing to pass or interact with the texts (Figure 12: 10.1-10.3; Figure 15) beginning at 2:52pm on the same day, eleven people read first; forty-two passed and went straight to the temple; sixteen people read after walking down from the temple; six stopped and read the text panels but did not go up to interact with the temple. Note that this was a busier time of the day and there was a small fifteen-person line to get inside the temple while this observation was taking place (which may account for the six people who read but did not walk up). During observation, lines only formed at peak times, maybe twice or three times per day for approximately twenty minutes each.



*Figure 15. Visitors read and point to text and images on the new (May 2017) Temple of Dendur text panels. Visitors interact with these panels in ways parallel to how they interacted with the older panels (pointing, discussing, etc.). Photograph by Erin Peters, 2017.*

A teenage boy who passed and went straight up to the temple, did so because he already knew information on Dendur; he pointed to the text while walking and telling a middle-aged

woman what he knew.<sup>207</sup> Two people who passed pointed to the text and paused for less than a second before going up to the temple.<sup>208</sup> Another two people that stopped and read but did not go to the temple were likely a mother and teenage-son pair. The boy read the first panel section but not the others; the woman spent a great deal of time reading and studying the pictures but did not make it to the third text panel set (that details the Christian elements). After the second panel, this woman talked with the boy about the Aswan Dam and the UNESCO project (but did not use those titles). Overall, approximately two-thirds of visitor units that walked up to the panels either discussed the panels' content or pointed to something within the panel; this included almost all units that included children. My observation indicates that the material and presentation (sometimes having to compare text to photographs, as the man in the background of Figure 15 is doing) encouraged interactions.<sup>209</sup>

The second element of this study observed the amount of time guests chose to remain inside the temple itself, which indicates interest levels as well as the amount of connection that a visitor feels to the structure.<sup>210</sup> The average time spent inside the temple during one five-minute test period was thirty-four seconds. There were nineteen separate units recorded. Units observed included groups of young adults, both mixed and single-gender,<sup>211</sup> couples of all ages, families

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<sup>207</sup> "I read about this online. It was a temple moved here because it was being flooded..." The boy continued to talk while referencing the temple, but was at that point out of earshot.

<sup>208</sup> These cases were treated as "passing the text" and not as a true interaction with the text since a brief glance did not give them any sort of information about the temple.

<sup>209</sup> These are all based on interactions with the text panels in place in March 2017.

<sup>210</sup> Note that this observation was completed at a time of average busyness in the Sackler Wing; it was not empty by any means, but there was not a standing line to get into the temple. This was purposely done to ensure guests were not influenced to speed or slow their interaction inside by the pressure of a line outside.

<sup>211</sup> At any point during observation of all of the temples and gateways studied, gender was assumed based on the individual's personal presentation of self. As gender did not seem to play a factor in how visitors interacted with each other or with the temples, any accidental misgendering most likely should not affect the results or analysis within this thesis.

with children, and solo visitors. A woman who was part of a young adult male-female couple spent the longest amount of time in the temple (one minute, fifteen seconds); she discussed the inside of the temple (including the graffiti) with her partner who then left while she stayed an additional thirty seconds to read the statue's text panel. One of the families, a woman with two children, spent the second longest in the temple (one minute, five seconds). The shortest time recorded was a lone male in his twenties who remained in the temple for approximately five seconds in which he walked in, took one picture directly opposite of the entrance, turned, and walked out.

The third element of this study recorded the amount of people in each of the main areas of the Sackler Wing, which reveals the popularity and use of each area in relation to the others. On Sunday around 3:40pm, there were five people inside the temple, twenty people lingering on the third tier, and one person reading the text panel. There were also a number of people on the second tier, but people did not tend to linger on that tier unless they were taking photographs of themselves, the gate, or the temple, or sitting and talking on the "benches;" furthermore, visitors usually went there last, at first bypassing the second tier to go right to the third tier with the temple. During non-peak times (before noon or after 6pm), the wing itself was quiet, like a church; at one point around 10:00 am on Saturday, one woman whispered to her male partner, "Isn't it beautiful, Rich?"<sup>212</sup> At peak times (between noon and 6pm, high volumes of visitors came in seemingly random bursts), the room was full of loud conversations and laughter. There was even what seemed like an adult group on a museum-wide scavenger hunt who met up, collected points, and announced winners while sitting on the benches of the second tier. This tier is also the main area of the annual Met Gala as well as other festivals that use Dendur as an event

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<sup>212</sup> "Rich" is a pseudonym as observed visitors were unaware of the researcher's presence.

space. An official Met tour guide came through the space on Sunday afternoon but stayed close to the southwest wall of the temple where she could reference specific reliefs.<sup>213</sup>

The fourth and final element of this study documented conversations of visitors while they were inside the temple, which indicates individual factors of interest. For one eight-minute span inside the temple at a low-volume time (around 4:45pm on Sunday), ten visitor units were observed. One category of conversation and inter-unit references was the graffiti in and around both the pronaos and the portico. Visitors often took photographs of the graffiti (Figures 9 and 10), discussed it, and pointed it out to others within their unit. One unit consisting of a man and a young boy had a particular interest in the graffiti; they discussed it quietly and pointed out numerous instances of it to each other. Another man even said, “I think it’s funny, this is tagged. Like a bathroom wall,” in reference to the temple. These types of conversations, particularly around the graffiti, show that visitors recognize that these structures were abandoned for their ancient religious uses, as modern graffiti on structures suggests that structure is abandoned (or an

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<sup>213</sup> I also observed a tour guide presenting a section of the Met’s Highlights Tour. She discussed how the temple was built by Augustus, a Roman, to say, “*We’re here, but you can continue on as you were,*” to the Egyptians. She then described the layout of the temple briefly before moving to the north side of the temple to discuss the carvings there. She mentioned Isis as the primary goddess of the temple and pointed her out; she also gave her guests specific ways to identify Osiris as well as any pharaoh on a temple (crown, cartouches, “pointed skirt”). Although she does bring up the Augustus was not an Egyptian, there is no mention of it being used as anything else, neither for religious or tourism purposes. Met offers a number of tours through their numerous galleries, schedules of which are released daily, but are often repeated overall. Dendur is included in at least two of these free (with museum admission, which is also technically free) guided tours, “Museum Highlights” and “Arts of Ancient Egypt.” Copies of daily tour schedules are available at the front desks of the Met. The guide was professional and proficient; most of her information matched that of the 2001 Temple of Dendur informational lecture given by then-director James Allen mentioned previously, showing a consistency with guide training.

archaeoscape, in disuse), or is an art work. This visitor impression is beneficial in the development of the new religiouscape of Museums.<sup>214</sup>

A general outcome of the overall observational research was the indication that visitors wanted to have access to historical information about the temple, in direct spatial relationship to the architecture itself. As evidence, a number of visitors assumed that the text panel displayed near the floor of the pronaos with information about the Ptolemaic priestess (discussed above) would be related to history of the temple. I witnessed at least five confused visitors in relation to the location of the historical information, which was located outside of the temple itself in text panels hung on the west wall of tier one. Additionally, neither the temple nor the gateway have any tombstone labels or titles attached to them or near them. A handful of visitors read the entirety of the Priestess label (Figure 12: 15) with the intent of finding out more about Dendur, not about the statue.<sup>215</sup> Through the observational studies, it was found that visitors interacted with the other elements in the room related to Dendur almost as much as they did with the temple itself; this indicates the importance of display in shaping the new religiouscape.

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<sup>214</sup> With the intense interest in the graffiti, it is valuable that the curators decided to add a text panel discussing it as one of the new panels during May 2017.

<sup>215</sup> One example is a woman and her daughter who came into the pronaos; the daughter asked her mother what the overall structure was used for, to which the mother replied, “Oh, let’s find out.” She then bent over and read the entire Priestess text panel out loud for her daughter to hear. After, they paused for a moment, not acknowledging that the panel had not answered their question, before switching topics to point out the graffiti. This was one example of about three or four where the error was obvious. However, as at least one individual from almost every unit that entered the pronaos bent over to read the text, it likely happened more than that.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that while once a part of the religioscape of pagans (and then Copts) in Roman Egypt, the Temple of Dendur now stands as part of a new type of religioscape, the religioscape of Museums, under a new ruler, the institutional creators of the Met. After almost 2000 years on the edge of the Nile, it was used for rituals of the ancient Egyptian religion, as a worship space for Christians, a place where tourists venerated their travels, and an object of study for antiquarians. It is now displayed in a room of a museum that attempts to reflect its original *in-situ* placement, and this chapter has considered how the structure itself lends to its continuous image as “sacred,” as well as how the Metropolitan Museum of Art, its current home, reflects this continuous usage. The Met has chosen to privilege the Egyptian atmosphere of the temple, by discussing it in the text panels, recreating the space similarly to the time of Augustus, and adding ancient Egyptian statues. Overall, it is both displayed and received as a fascinating and interactive ancient sacred space, a wonder of the ancient world, as promoted by a Western art museum. Thus, it may be the context of being in a museum institution itself – a structure that, as discussed, is often experienced as “sacred” despite its secular foundations – that reintegrates the sacred nature of the temple.

As I have demonstrated through observational research, visitors treat the temple as sacred, being careful not to touch what they are told not to; gazing with awe upon the structure; attempting to learn ancient history and ideology through reading texts or labels; and discussing aspects of religion within the room. Visitors, surrounded with atmospheric context, in addition to other ancient Egyptian objects, are given a modern creation of an ancient *in-situ* context. Museum visitors treat the temple and gateway with what they deem is appropriate of a sacred



structure, including not touching it and having disbelief at the size and amount of recent graffiti that adorns the temple. As this chapter has established, visitor interaction with the display of the temple of Dendur in the Sackler Wing illustrates that constructed context surrounding these structures does not necessarily have to be accurate to the moment of creation in order to add it to this religiouscape of Museums. The next two chapters will consider two more sacred ancient Egyptian religious structures, a temple and a gateway, that have been relocated to museum collections.

#### 4.0 THE KALABSHA GATE IN GERMANY

To build on the discussion of ancient sacred structures in museum contexts, this chapter will examine the historical, current, and future situations of the Kalabsha gate, which is currently displayed alongside the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg, a Surrealist art collection, in Berlin, Germany.<sup>216</sup> It will also consider visitor interactions at the gate as well as atmospheric context surrounding the structure. Through this examination, this chapter will show the roles context and atmosphere of museums play in how a sacred space is treated by visitors and the different ways archaeoscapes are revived. The Kalabsha gate is currently in a “white cube” limbo, attached to a modernist art museum, and this context provides an excellent opportunity to determine the nature and amount of ancient atmosphere that is needed to revive a modern religiouscape of Museums. Ultimately, this chapter finds that the religiouscape of Museums is developed more from the expectations and arrangements of the museum setting rather than the structure itself.

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<sup>216</sup> Known as the *Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg*; *Sammlung* is German for *collection*.

## 4.1 HISTORY AND HISTORIC USE

### 4.1.1 Pagan Construction and Use

The temple complex of Kalabsha in the ancient city of Talmis was built in two distinct stages: Ptolemaic/early Augustan,<sup>217</sup> and later Augustan.<sup>218</sup> Although there has been some disagreement between earlier scholars on the timing of the first stage, most modern researchers agree that it was Ptolemaic, at least in construction.<sup>219</sup> There are indicators that the decoration was completed by Augustus instead of the Ptolemies. For example, the gateway – which was probably erected during the Ptolemaic period along with a sanctuary building (Figure 16) – was most likely decorated early in Augustus’s reign in a way that would “emphasize continuity with the Ptolemies.”<sup>220</sup> This



Ptolemaic complex consisted of a *Figure 16. The Ptolemaic Temple of Kalabsha sanctuary at its post-UNESCO site on Elephantine Island. From Peters, Egypt in Empire, 230.*

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<sup>217</sup> Not all scholars agree on the exact date of the first stage. See Raven, Maarten J., “The Temple of Taffeh: A Study of Details,” *Oudheidkundige mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van oudheden te Leiden*, 79 (1996): 41-51, for a review and updated conclusions on the construction timeframes.

<sup>218</sup> Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 209, even notes that there could have been a preceding temple to the Ptolemaic/early Augustan one – this speaks to the sacred nature (and probably prime location) of this area of Talmis.

<sup>219</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 201-202; Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 209.

<sup>220</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 203.

smaller square temple room as well as a gateway, built on a stone platform with a staircase leading up from the Nile to the platform.<sup>221</sup> Both structures were torn down and replaced by the Roman Temple of Kalabsha complex not long after that point; a smaller Ptolemaic chapel was kept and re-worked into the Augustan complex.<sup>222</sup>

This new Roman-built Temple of Kalabsha (Figure 17) was much larger, with a pronaos, an offering hall, a visiting gods hall, and a sanctuary. Arnold notes the “extraordinarily slim columns” as well as side porticoes that were not connected to the temple.<sup>223</sup> There was also a “towering cult terrace [that] was built above the Nile and connected by a causeway to the huge pylon of the temple.”<sup>224</sup> It was dedicated to Mandulis, a god of Nubia, along with Isis and Horus – two deities in the Osirian triad home to Philae, and discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>225</sup> As with Dendur, local gods were important to temples in the region of the Dodekaschoinos, specifically in their relation to Augustus. Augustus is pictured with both the Lower and Upper Egyptian crowns, often giving offerings to these gods.<sup>226</sup> Although unfinished (as was common for Egyptian temples), Kalabsha was the largest free-standing temple in Lower Nubia, and, according to Wilkinson, is also “regarded as one of the finest examples of Egyptian architecture in Nubia,” made “entirely of sandstone and its interior skillfully decorated.”<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 208 and 240

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>224</sup> Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 240.

<sup>225</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 196 and 199.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>227</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 218.

#### 4.1.2 Post-Pagan Transformation and Use

Peters argues that the art and architecture of the Roman-built Kalabsha complex encouraged “the public’s participation in official processional rites at the front of the temple and personal worship at doorways and at the rear of the temple,”<sup>228</sup> even suggesting that the main reason the Ptolemaic temple complex was taken down was possibly to create this space for public worship.<sup>229</sup>

Although the pagan worship was conducted in specific areas, after Egypt’s conversion to Christianity, the innermost sanctuary at Kalabsha was freely opened to the public and used as a Christian church.<sup>230</sup> This sanctuary would have been off-limits for the public during pagan times, open during Christian times, and is still available for visits today as part of the museum industry. Demotic and figural graffito dot this temple.<sup>231</sup> Graffiti includes, according to Wilkinson, a Greek inscription of the victory of king Silko (a Christian king) over “nomadic tribes who threatened the area in the fifth century A.D.”<sup>232</sup> The site was presumably abandoned as a religious location in the Islamic era, as were the majority of temples during this time period, and most likely began being used as a domestic dwelling.

When temple complexes, such as Kalabsha, were used collectively and consistently in their original *in-situ* locations, they were religioscapes. Egyptian temples generally fell naturally into disuse (archaeoscapes) with the expansions of Christianity and Islam. This process happened much more quickly with the Kalabsha gate, which was torn down and reused as filler for a religious structure with a slightly different ideology (for Augustus as both Pharaoh and Emperor

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<sup>228</sup> Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 228.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>230</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 218.

<sup>231</sup> Peters, *Empires in Egypt*, 242 and 250.

<sup>232</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 218.

with his own legitimacy to that title, instead of continuing the same line of power from the Ptolemies, who he had overcome politically). Still, it remained a part (albeit unseen) of the religioscapes of the Egyptian religion under Augustus and then Coptic Christianity, before turning into an archaeoscape of religions that no longer used the structure.

## 4.2 RESCUE FROM THE NILE

When the Roman temple was taken apart for transportation as part of the UNESCO project in the 1961-62 season,<sup>233</sup> blocks from the earlier Ptolemaic temple were found, having been used as “filler” for the Roman temple, mentioned above.<sup>234</sup> During the campaign, the Roman Temple of Kalabsha was rescued from its precarious position thirty-one miles south of the Aswan High



Dam, and moved to an island with three other sacred structures south of the new dam.<sup>235</sup> The blocks that made up the Ptolemaic/early Augustan gateway of the Temple of Kalabsha were given as a gift to Germany for display in Berlin.<sup>236</sup>

Figure 17. The Augustan Temple of Kalabsha. The Ptolemaic gateway and the sanctuary were used as “filler” within this structure complex until the UNESCO project uncovered them in the 1960s. From Peters, *Egypt in Empire*, 242.

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<sup>233</sup> See Chapter 2 for more information on the UNESCO project.

<sup>234</sup> G. R. H. Wright, “Ptolemaic Remains from Kalabsha Temple Reconstituted on Elephantine Island,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 63 (1977), 156.

<sup>235</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 217.

<sup>236</sup> Wright, *Ptolemaic Remains from Kalabsha Temple*, 156.

The Kalabsha gate was transported to Germany to be placed among the Egyptian collection in West Berlin, part of the multi-institution state museum system, which from 1967-2005 was housed in the East Stüler Building across from the Charlottenburg Palace.<sup>237</sup> In 2005, the Egyptian collection moved to a new location within the Neues Museum on Berlin's Museuminsel, or *Museum Island*.<sup>238</sup> However, due to the massive proportions of the Kalabsha gate, it was left behind. Currently, the gate still stands within the East Stüler Building, but now alongside the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg, a modern art collection that focuses on surrealism (Figure 18). In response to the Egyptian gate on display near surrealist art works, Dietrich Wildung of the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus collection commented, "...isn't that a veritable



*surreal* exhibition concept?"<sup>239</sup>

The Kalabsha gate is set to be moved to the Pergamonmuseum, an ancient architecture museum that is also part of the state system, around 2025.

*Figure 18. The Temple of Kalabsha within the Eastern Stüler Building, along the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.*

<sup>237</sup> Gabriela Walde, "Surreale Welten am alten Schloss," *Die Welt*, 6 July 2008, Web, Sept 8, 2010.

<sup>238</sup> Audio guide, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg, Berlin, Germany.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

### 4.3 SITTING IN LIMBO – CURRENT SITUATION AND DISPLAY

The Kalabsha gate is no longer with the rest of the Egyptian collection, and not yet alongside other ancient structures in the Pergamonmuseum, it sits as a gateway to the world of Surrealism and the Scharf-Gerstenberg collections. Despite this division of Surrealism (an art movement active in the 1920s and 30s) and Roman-era Egypt, Wildung notes that the gate “actually fits very well” in the atmosphere of the galleries, citing artists with works in the collection such as Paul Klee who were influenced by ancient Egyptian architecture.<sup>240</sup> Even though Wildung’s comment suggests that different artistic styles *can* still inform each other and be cohesive, it is probably inconsistent with what visitors expect to see, or maybe what the museum’s institutional creators (or “rulers”), such as Wildung himself (a curator), tend to generally prefer. Museum creators may believe

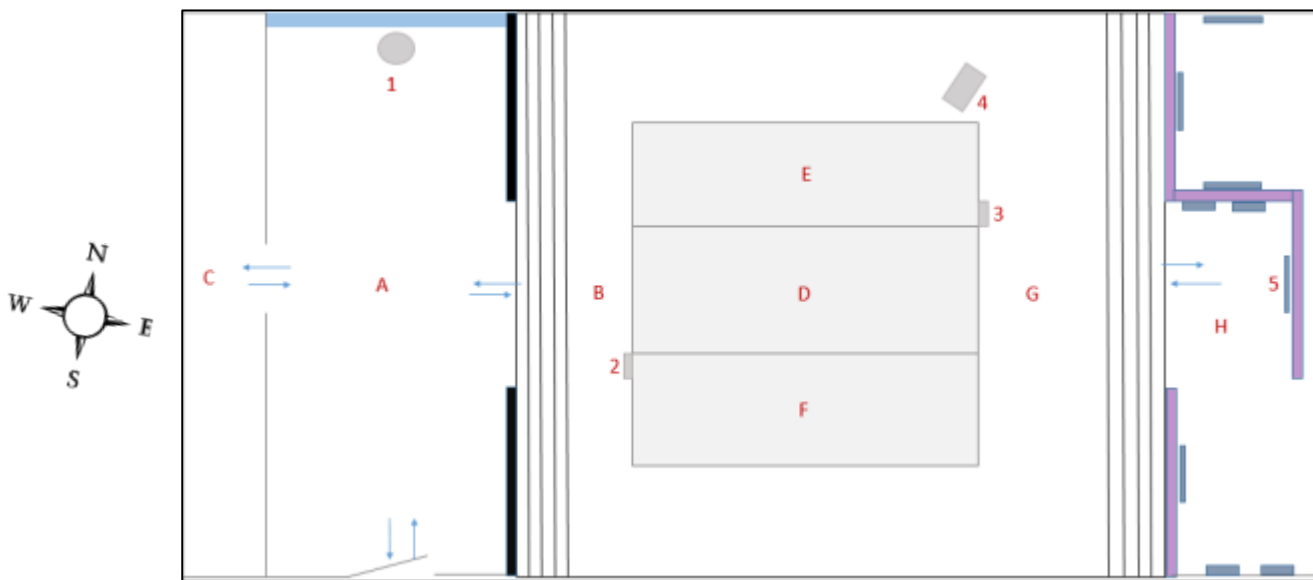


Figure 19: Plan of the display of the Kalabsha gate in the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg, June 2017.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.



the gateway will be more appreciated in the Pegamonmuseum, where it will still impress but will be less of a shocking addition to the museum space. The switch in location of the gate will be discussed in the art versus artifact debate that is part of museum studies, discussed below.

As with Dendur at the Met, it is important to understand the layout of the display of the Kalabsha gate in order to appreciate visitors' interactions and reactions with to it. The Kalabsha gate is placed in the center of a short, square room to the right of the main entrance (Figure 19: A) to the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg galleries. During the research trip in July of 2017, the entire space appeared dark and mysterious, as it is lit only by the main entrance near the Kalabsha gate, another door further into the galleries, and the lights installed by the museum in the arches. The entrance to this room is approximately 7 m high, taking up a large portion of that wall. The gateway is immediately seen to the right, and many people stand in the galleries' entrance lobby (Figure 19: A) to ponder the structure. The gateway itself (Figure 19: D, E, F) is 7.2 m high.<sup>241</sup> The gateway's room just fits the structure; with approximate 1.5 m for visitors to walk around it on either side if they choose. Four stairs accessed from the entrance room (Figure 19: A) extend lengthwise across the entirety of the narrow room and lead straight down to the gateway. The four steps are a smooth, grey-sand stone color, similar to the stone used for the floor. When standing at the gate, a small tombstone label attached to the gateway is visible at

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<sup>241</sup> Arnold, *The Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 240.

eye-level on both the eastern and western openings (Figure 19: 2 and 3) that relays the basic information of the temple to visitors (name, provenience, etc.) and gives a track number for the audio guide. A small sign beneath the label also asks visitors not to touch the structure. Behind the gate, the walls are white. The ceiling is black with bright lights directed towards the Kalabsha gate. There are also four lights within the center of the gate as well, presumably to increase visibility of the reliefs underneath the lintel. At the northeast corner of the gateway there is a



*Figure 20. The Kalabsha gate in the East Stuler Building. Note the vaulted ceiling of the gallery space beyond the gate's room. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.*

panel of free-standing text (Figure 19: 4) discussing the temple, approximately one foot from the gateway itself. Beyond this area, there is an identical set of four steps that lead up into the Surrealist galleries. These galleries rotate, and the exhibition in June 2017 had lilac-colored temporary walls. The architecture of this latter portion of gallery hall includes a series of vaulted arches in a light-colored stone, similar in style to a Christian church. The arches made up the entirety of the ceiling and extended from the start of the gallery (after the Kalabsha gate) through to the back of the gallery (Figure 20).

### 4.3.1 Visitor Interaction

Visitor interactions with the Kalabsha gate were observed in order to recognize how visitors naturally use the space that has been created by curators and other institutional creators. These interactions were observed over the course of a five-hour period on a Wednesday in early June 2017. Fifteen visitor units in seventeen different interactions with the temple were recorded.<sup>242</sup> There were an additional ten units observed that were not timed due to situational constraints.

The first part of this observational study measured overall visitor interest in interacting with the ancient structure. The mean amount of time a unit spent interacting with the temple was seventy seconds (one minute, ten seconds). Interactions, in this case,<sup>243</sup> included visitors discernibly contemplating the gateway from the top or bottom of the steps, reading the tombstone labels, reading the texts, walking around or through the gateway, and discussions or contemplations of smaller elements of the reliefs or stonework. The high for total interaction was 191 seconds; the low was three seconds.<sup>244</sup> Visitors spent an average of twenty-two seconds underneath the gateway, either walking through or pausing to look at one of the inner reliefs. Eight units read the provided text panel, with an average of thirty seconds. Almost all units read one of the two labels provided at eye-level at either entrance to the gateway, with at least two

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<sup>242</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, in this thesis, one “unit” is one person or one group who function the same way. For example, if one group of four people all enter and exit together and function within the space in essentially the same pattern or way, they are one unit. If a couple enters and exits at different times or uses a space in completely opposite ways, they are two units. If one unit returns twice, that counts as two separate interactions.

<sup>243</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, the definition of “interaction” varies between the temples/gates used as case studies due to various constraints. This is an unfortunate happenstance that should be controlled for in future studies on the UNESCO temples and gates.

<sup>244</sup> Of those who interacted at all; not included here are the few guests that walked around the temple without stopping or even glancing at it.

units pondering it for up to eleven seconds and others glancing for one second.<sup>245</sup> From observing visitors interacting with the gate, the generalized modern ritual of interacting with the Kalabsha gate includes strict reading of texts and labels as well as slow contemplation while walking through the gate.

The second part of this study categorized different ways visitors use the gate. Most of the visitors interacted with the Kalabsha gate similarly to the way they interacted with the two-dimensional art works in the galleries hanging on the wall; there was a thoughtful, reverent atmosphere in the hall, one often associated with sacred spaces. Throughout the day, not a single person touched the gate. A few even stood with their hands determinedly clasped behind their backs and did not want to accidentally touch it, as if they were studying the *Mona Lisa*. The gallery display allowed for such long-term contemplation. For instance, the walls were white and unobtrusive, and the gate was the only object in the room. The Kalabsha gate appears to be in its own “white cube,” a concept commonly attached to modern galleries and museum space as sacred space, as discussed in the Introduction.<sup>246</sup> As evidence of reverent attitudes, visitors did not necessarily whisper, but they did speak in low tones. The Kalabsha gate received more solemn consideration than Dendur seemed to attract, which seemed to act as a meeting and resting place for most units.

Additionally, almost all visitors chose to walk through the gate instead of around it to get to the galleries; of the twenty-one recorded units who walked through or around the gateway, fifteen units walked through and only four walked around. Three units walked both through and

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<sup>245</sup>As the reading of labels was not consistently recorded separately from walking through or around the gateway, the average will not be included here.

<sup>246</sup> See Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*; Newhouse, “The Museum as a Sacred Space;” Buggeln, “Museum Space and the Experience of the Sacred;” Moser, “The Devil is in the Detail.”

around the gate. Two of these units explored the gateway in its entirety. The third appeared to be trying to find something else specific in the gallery and not interested in the temple; she walked around the temple on her way into the gallery to ask the security guard a question around the corner; one minute later, she reappeared and this time went through the temple instead of around it while walking through the room. Like this woman, most visitors seemed to unconsciously choose their path; it seemed natural for visitors to go under the gateway. A number of visitors who walked through then paused in order to look around the north or south jambs. However, upon seeing the blank wall of the sides of the gateway, they turned back to the jambs or inner registers, which both displayed reliefs.

Analyzing the amount of time and various types of visitor use of the display of the Kalabsha gate can indicate if this display is a revitalization of an archaeoscape into a religioscape, as with Luxor and Dendur. Visitors tended to act in expected ways, first considering the temple from the entrance, then reading the label, walking under the lintel slowly, and reading the longer text panel once they were all the way through. Most visitors went through these motions slowly, absorbing the relief work or discussing hieroglyphs along the way. Additionally, most discussions were hushed.

While at Dendur, large spaces prompted groups of people to congregate, the more intimate size of the space surrounding the Kalabsha gate promotes a solemn, sacred atmosphere. This is due to the constructed museum space that surrounds the structure, created by museum staff. The Kalabsha gate's atmosphere is presented by the museum to visitors. At least in the gate's current display in the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg, museum staff have created a fundamentals-only display with basic information and elements, such as the object, tombstone label, space to observe, and background text. The Met furnished the Temple of Dendur and its gateway with the

same basic fittings (minus the tombstone label), but imbued it with more atmospheric context, including stonework that emulates the temple's *in-situ* context, natural light as the temple was originally outside, Egyptian statues, and the benches meant to indicate the cult terrace. Visitor interactions with Dendur in the Met's display are shaped by these additions. One example is the relaxed atmosphere, evidenced by those lingering on the cult terrace ledge to rest or talk, or using the natural light to take photographs of themselves with the temple. The interactions with the Kalabsha gate, however, show how people respond to sacredness in a modernist environment, uninterrupted by design elements implemented at the temple of Dendur. The Kalabsha gate's display room and extending gallery were quiet, like the inner sanctuary of a church; an impression that was added to with the vaulted architecture in the extending gallery.

Furthermore, at every location except this one, the steps have lead *up* to the temple instead of *down* to the temple. This may be for logistical reasons, as the roof may not have been tall enough to accommodate the gate. However, the steps that lead *down* to the Kalabsha gate lead *up* to the Surrealist works, metaphorically raising them above the Kalabsha gate. In this way, the Kalabsha gate is again serving its original purpose, as part of a pathway that leads to the "main event" – in ancient times, the temple, in modern times, the Surrealist gallery. Still, visitors were constantly moving up and down the steps to get different views of the gateway. The fact that the temple is lower makes it both more literally and metaphorically accessible to visitors. Literally because one can get close to see detail or climb up the steps and more easily appreciate the higher art elements; metaphorically because it brings a civilization that has been so highly acclaimed in Western society to a more personal level.

#### 4.4 PERGAMONMUSEUM – FUTURE OF THE KALABSHA GATE

By 2025,<sup>247</sup> the gateway will be moved to a new wing of the Pergamonmuseum.<sup>248</sup> The Pergamonmuseum lies directly next to the Neues Museum (which houses the rest of the state-owned Egyptian collection) on Museumsinsel. It houses monumental structures including the Pergamon Altar and the Ishtar Gate, among other larger structures, reliefs, and replicas. The Kalabsha gate will be a practical addition to their collection, where, according to Wildung, “[the Kalabsha gate] will blend in with the great architecture of the ancient world.”<sup>249</sup> As the Pergamonmuseum is the most visited art museum in Germany,<sup>250</sup> the gateway will be highly accessible to the citizens of Germany (although this does not seem to be a requirement of obtaining the gate, as dictated by the Egyptian government for the other transplanted temples, as



it was not mentioned in any archival material concerning the UNESCO project).

As of 2017, the

*Figure 21. Mock-up of what the Kalabsha gate's display will look like when it is relocated to the Pergamonmuseum in 2025. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017; photograph of a longer video of the mock-up that is displayed at the Pergamonmuseum as of 2017.*

<sup>247</sup> A few different dates for the replacement of Kalabsha to within the Pergamonmuseum were given in various articles; the official Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg audio guide reports the date as 2025.

<sup>248</sup> Audio guide, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> “Visitor Figures 2014,” 3 and 15.

Pergamonmuseum has closed off a portion of their galleries to construct the fourth wing that will house the Kalabsha gate along with other structures. A video is currently displayed in the Roman architecture room that holds the Market Gate from Miletus that shows a prospective mock-up of the new wing, which includes a number of extra Egyptian elements as with the display of the Temple of Dendur. In the mock-up, a guest is shown nearing the Egyptian wing, the walls of which are painted a sandy color. Next, a white room with an elegant barrel-arched ceiling includes two sphinxes that guard the entrance to the room that holds the Kalabsha gate. Smaller statues line a short, wide, white hallway that lead to the Kalabsha gate – similar to the Avenue of the Sphinxes in Luxor, Egypt, and inferred by the Met’s display. In this mock-up, the visitor then comes into the room with the Kalabsha gate, which is a wide, long rectangular room where most of the walls are made of clear glass. The Kalabsha gate is directly in front of the visitor. There is space to go around the gate, which is flanked by two more sphinxes on either side, or to go under the gateway and into the rest of the room. After going under the gateway, the floor changes color from light to dark stone; on this darker stone stands columns from the temple of Sahure,<sup>251</sup> a colonnade fragment with seven columns, just as imposing as the Kalabsha gate. Upon passing this section, the floor changes back to light and there are various statues dispersed for visitors to examine. Visitors will exit this new hall (all one room defined by the continuous window walls) under a large stone lintel held up by three caryatid-like figures. Thus, the Kalabsha gate will be steeped in context of other works from the Egyptian period (the specific eras represented by the proposed sculptures was unclear in the video). If the textual design follows that of other

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<sup>251</sup> The Temple of Sahu-re is also currently housed alongside the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg but was not studied for this thesis.



structures within the museum, then the contextual background will be proficient as well;<sup>252</sup> and may also be available on audio guides, which current examples are thorough.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION: SECULAR REVITALIZATIONS OF RELIGIOSCAPES**

In the previous two chapters, it was determined that the greater the original or originally intended context created for the temple, the more “sacred” that structure is perceived to be by visitors, and thus there is a revitalized modern religioscape of Museums at these temples. However, although the Kalabsha gate is surrounded by little atmospheric context (unlike Dendur), visitors still treat it as “sacred.” This chapter has shown through observational research that the Kalabsha gate is in a modernist context, yet the structure is on a pedestal of sorts in its current display, deliberately separate from the rest of the galleries. As follows theories of museum space as sacred space discussed in the Introduction, here, the “original” context is not needed for visitors to revere and respect the structure because of its inclusion within a Western museum setting. The fundamentals-only display of the Kalabsha gate heightens the innate sacred qualities of the structure itself as akin to a modernist art work, and are part of visitors’ experiences with the gate, such as a visitor’s ability to slowly engage with elements of the gate without being in the way of other visitors. These visitor interactions show the gate is again part of a religioscape.

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<sup>252</sup> For example, informational text panels adorn multiple walls with the Pergamonmuseum’s display of the Ishtar Gate, and the audio guides had long descriptions and background information on multiple aspects of the display.

The temple of Kalabsha, while in Egypt, went from being part of a religiouscape to part of an archaeoscape;<sup>253</sup> although the gateway displayed in the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg was not standing within the final built structure, it remained an integral part of the temple complex as a whole, as blocks were reused for, presumably, their sacred quality and their ready availability.<sup>254</sup>

Because the gate had been taken apart and used as building filler, it can be argued that before entering the museum collection, it could have been forgotten, as with many other items deemed “artifacts,” or items of everyday use from past cultures typically handled by anthropologists and archaeologists. Yet, the Kalabsha gate’s transfer to the collections of the Berlin State Museums and on display in the Eastern Stüler Building has imbued it with sacred qualities because museum spaces often encourage types of ritualistic behavior with objects, even though most Western public museums are by definition secular spaces, intended to be unaffiliated with specific religious beliefs. Furthermore, as this chapter has demonstrated, visitors engage with the gate in a way that is similar to an art object because it is in a “white cube” setting with prearranged lighting and minimal context or distractions (besides the small labels and text panel). Observational research indicates it is studied slowly and at various angles by many visitors. In this way, the Kalabsha gate has become *art* instead of an *artifact*. Even the brick archway leading into the room of the gateway seems to frame the gate as if it were two-dimensional, symbolically inducting it into the world of art (Figure 18).

While curators and other institutional creators set up the display and context for the gate, and the temple of Dendur, as with any work of art *or* artifact, it is the visitors who determine its use,

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<sup>253</sup> After the UNESCO project moved the temple to Elephantine Island, the Temple of Kalabsha returned to being part of a religiouscape, the religiouscape of Museums, as with the Luxor temple complex.

<sup>254</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Egypt*, 51.

and thus its validity as a sacred space or religioscape. Visitors to museums use context to inform their use, and this chapter has found visitors use the Kalabsha gate in a ritual way. The gate's use is in many ways in opposition to the use of the Temple of Taffeh in the Rijkmuseum van Oudheden in the Netherlands, as will be explored in the next chapter.

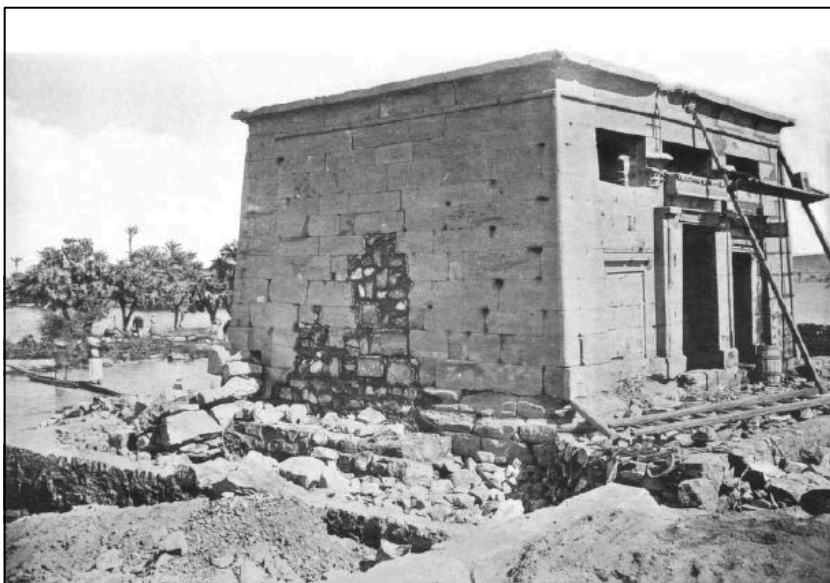
When transferred from the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg to the Pergamonmuseum, the Kalabsha gate will remain a ritual space imbued with the qualities of the religioscape of museums. It would be interesting future research to compare the final Pergamonmuseum display to the display of Dendur at the Met or the former display of the Kalabsha gate in its current position. Once at the Pergamonmuseum, the monumentality of the gate alongside other monumental structures will contribute to the reputation of the gate despite its disappearance from the public eye as “filler” for another temple for almost 2000 years. The Western population of the modern world decided it was still significant, and being placed in a museum context confirms this importance.

The new religioscape of Museums feeds off this importance, as its rituals include walking around a structure, staring, and looking at the art object; even “processing” beneath and around it (especially on guided tours). The Kalabsha gate is again walked through, thoughtfully considered, stared at in awe, and appreciated for its reliefs, as it most likely was in pre-modern times, but in a slightly different fashion. Still, although scholars can understand the hieroglyphs and other reliefs, they are not used or examined by modern-day museum visitors with the same ideology as the pre-modern pagan users – although the pagan public could not read hieroglyphs, either. Although it is no longer part of the religioscape of paganism, this chapter has demonstrated that it is used as respectfully, if not more, than if it had remained standing at the

Augustan temple of Kalabsha in antiquity as it transfers to a life as part of the religioscape of museum-visiting and tourism.

## 5.0 THE TEMPLE OF TAFFEH IN THE NETHERLANDS

In 1969, the Temple of Taffeh became one of the structures gifted abroad through the UNESCO campaign, arriving in the Netherlands in 1971. This chapter will evaluate the historical creation and use of the Temple of Taffeh as well as how it is displayed and interacted with in modern times as an object in the collection of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden. Like the chapters dealing with Dendur and the Kalabsha gate, the examination of Taffeh will consider what it means for a museum object to be treated in a ritualistic way, but in a notably different environment than the Met or the state museums in Berlin. The Rijksmuseum van Oudheden displays Taffeh in a more casual manner than Dendur or the Kalabsha gate are displayed, and through observational research, the chapter ultimately finds how the *type* of space and expectations of that space surrounding a structure can affect how museum visitors interact with it, while still being an active part of religiouscape of Museums.



*Figure 22. The Temple of Taffeh in-situ in the early 1900s. From Maspero, Les Temples Immerges de la Nubie, Pl. XLIX.*

## 5.1 HISTORY AND HISTORIC USE

### 5.1.1 Pagan Construction and Use

The Temple of Taffeh (Figure 22) was probably built between 1 AD and 14 AD.<sup>255</sup> Like Dendur and Kalabsha, at least a portion of its construction was likely part of the wave of Roman temples erected during the reign of Augustus.<sup>256</sup> Also like many of these temples, it was a sanctuary to Isis.<sup>257</sup> It stood at a right angle to what was presumably the main temple in the complex.<sup>258</sup> The Temple of Taffeh was a single-room complex with little relief or decoration.<sup>259</sup> The only decoration on the temple are the carved lintels, capitals, and false door, as well as sporadic ancient and modern graffiti. There were three entrances to the structure, two on what was the front of the structure and one on a side wall. The inside of the structure contained four two-by-three columns topped with “fine palmette/lily and palmette/papyrus capitals.”<sup>260</sup> Scholars agree that the Temple of Taffeh received further additions after its original construction, but they disagree on when and what these precise additions or reconstructions were.<sup>261</sup> Arnold writes that

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<sup>255</sup> Elizabeth Cummins, “Taffeh” in *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*, eds. Marjorie M. Fisher et al. (Cairo, The American University in Cairo, 2012), 397.

<sup>256</sup> Arnold, *The Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 240.

<sup>257</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 141.

<sup>258</sup> Arnold, *The Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 240.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> The Temple of Taffeh (also spelled “Taffa” or “Tafa”) has only been studied a handful of times. What’s more, each of the individuals who published their findings seemed to disagree on a number of important details about Taffeh, including its original and secondary construction dates. Thus, academic research on Taffeh is incomplete. Discussions on temples and objects involved in the Nubian Survey most often focus on Abu Simbel and its grand statues that were saved from the water’s edge. The scholars that have researched Taffeh include: Gunther Roeder, *Les temples immergés de la Nubie, Debod bis Bab Kalabsche* (Cairo: 1911); Hans D. Schneider, *Taffeh: Rond de wederopbouw van een Nubische tempel* (Voorburg, s’Gravenhage Staatsuitg:

the façade of the temple underwent “considerable alterations” in the third or fourth century AD, including the secondary entrance replacing the right screen wall, and elaborate lintels being added to the now two front doorways (which were reused from other structures).<sup>262</sup>

### 5.1.2 Post-Pagan Transformation and Use

According to former director of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Hans Schneider, Taffeh was converted into a Coptic church in the year 710 AD, ordered by King Merkourios of the newly-Christian Kingdom of Makuria on what is now the Sudanese-Egyptian border.<sup>263</sup> Christian additions include holes at the tops of the walls to hang oil lamps, a water bowl, painted saints’ portraits (not visible now, but still discernable in 1910), inscriptions, and graffiti crosses carved into the stone.<sup>264</sup> Due to the gaining influence of Islam in the area, Taffeh was abandoned religiously in the thirteenth century (around the same time the mosque within Luxor Temple was erected). At that point, Taffeh (like most temples of ancient Egypt) was used “as a home for humans and animals down to the twentieth century.”<sup>265</sup> Like Dendur, nineteenth-century explorers also visited the temple, creating sketches of the temple (Figure 22), and leaving their own graffiti, as they did with others we have discussed in previous chapters. Maarten Raven of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden indicates that it is likely that more recent graffiti has also been

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1979); Raven, “The Temple of Taffeh: A Study of Details,” 41-62; Maarten J. Raven, “The Temple of Taffeh, II: The Graffiti,” *Oudheidkundige mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden* 79 (1999), 81-102.

<sup>262</sup> Arnold, *The Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 240.

<sup>263</sup> Schneider, *Taffeh*, 106.

<sup>264</sup> Schnieder, *Taffeh*, 106; Raven, “The Temple of Taffeh, II: The Graffiti,” 84.

<sup>265</sup> According to the Fact Sheet provided by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden,

scratched onto the temple walls.<sup>266</sup> The practice of carving into or even touching the temple is considered “destructive” from modern a conservation point of view. However, as visitors to temples and tombs did in ancient times, it is another ritual that connects the modern and ancient visitors. According to Adam Łukaszewicz, some areas of ancient Egypt were “tourist destination[s] already in antiquity. Like today, tourists often signed their names in the places they visited.”<sup>267</sup>

## 5.2 RESCUE AND RELOCATION

When the first Aswan Dam was built in 1899, the waters rose so high that a boat going down the Nile collided with Taffeh (Figure 23).<sup>268</sup> Because of the danger of this occurring again, Taffeh was one of the first structures to be rescued in the UNESCO campaign in the 1960s and 1970s. Taffeh was gifted to the Netherlands in 1969, arriving at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, a small town about 43 kilometers west of Amsterdam in 1971. It was given to the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in recognition of the work of specialists from Leiden who assisted in the UNESCO project.<sup>269</sup> Schneider also notes that the Egyptian government wanted the temple to go to the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, as it would be a “natural addition to the museum’s Egyptian collection, one of the best in the world,”<sup>270</sup> as with Dendur being gifted to the Met. It

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<sup>266</sup> Raven, “The Temple of Taffeh, II: The Graffiti,” 81.

<sup>267</sup> He studied the Valley of the Kings, where, “Among the more than sixty tombs in this area, in at least ten there are inscriptions made by ancient travelers.” (Szymon Zdziębowski, “In a pharaoh’s tomb, archaeologist examines the inscriptions of ancient tourists,” *Science and Scholarship in Poland, Ministry of Science and Higher Education*, June 21, 2017).

<sup>268</sup> Säve-Sodebergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 140.

<sup>269</sup> Elka Schrijver, “The Netherlands,” *The Burlington Magazine*, 121 no. 915 (1979): 402.

<sup>270</sup> Säve-Sodebergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 140.



arrived as 657 blocks which were sent to a warehouse in Leiden.<sup>271</sup> Also like the Met, the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden decided to rebuild Taffeh within a newly-erected “wing” in their museum. This wing would be of “brilliant modern architecture” that would eventually house not only the temple, but also other works from supposedly the same era (Roman) that had been unearthed in the Netherlands.<sup>272</sup>

Because of the UNESCO stipulations that directed the display of Dendur and the other relocated temples, the Egyptian government required Taffeh to be placed somewhere that could be enjoyed freely by all citizens of the Netherlands.<sup>273</sup> The Met translated this request into a glass wall within their museum,<sup>274</sup> but the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden decided to make the entire room



Figure 23. The Temple of Taffeh in-situ in 1904, note the rubble and partial collapse. From Maspero, *Les Temples Immergés de la Nubie*, Pl. L.

Taffeh was housed in available to the public. The structure sits in the back half of a roofed courtyard, which is the entrance lobby to the museum, and can be accessed without paying an entrance, which is required for the rest of

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Shrijver, “The Netherlands,” 402.

<sup>273</sup> Säve-Sodebergh, *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia*, 140.

<sup>274</sup> It is interesting to note that the Pergamonmuseum also plans to incorporate a long glass wall in their exhibition of the Kalabsha gate.

the museum. After a renovation in the early 2000s, it now shares the space with a café, gift shop, ticket counter, lockers, and restrooms.

### 5.3 DISPLAY OF THE TEMPLE OF TAFFEH WITHIN THE RIJKSMUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN

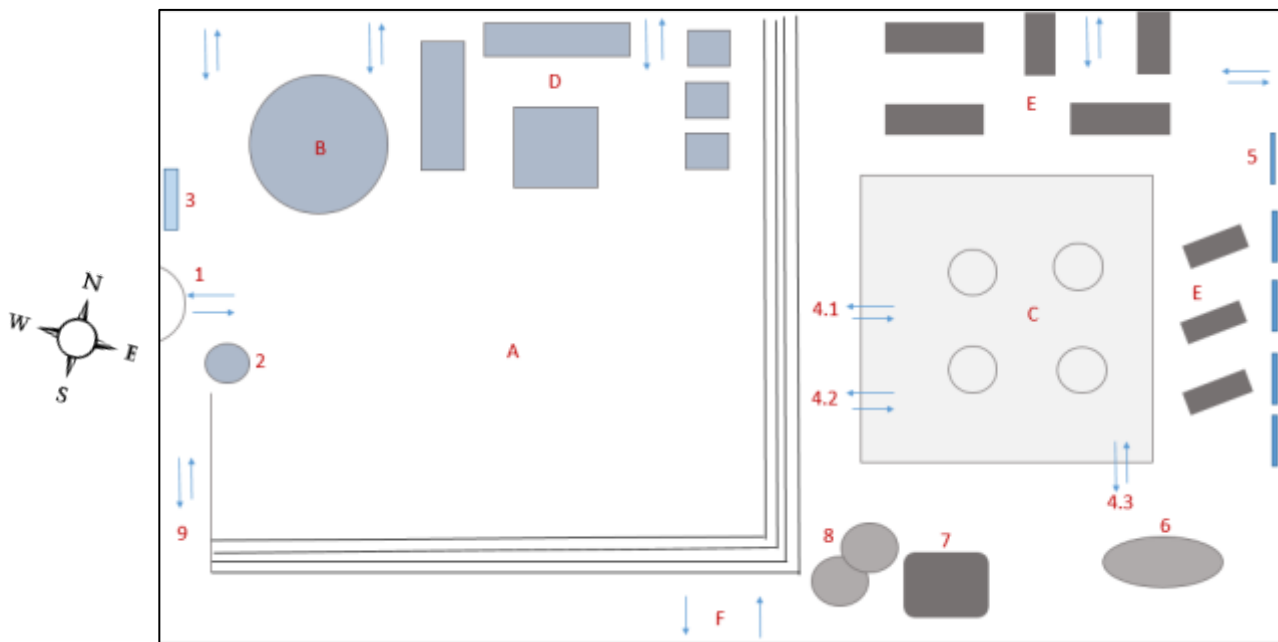


Figure 24: Plan of the courtyard or “lobby” of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden

The entrance lobby where Taffeh is displayed has commercial area for shopping and eating along the north perimeter (Figure 24: B, D, and E; Figures 25 and 28), and a large open section directly in the middle (Figures 24: A and 25). Visitors enter through a grand revolving door (Figure 24: 1) and an employee immediately greets them (Figure 24: 2). The ticket counter (Figure 24: B) is directly to the left of the visitor, with the gift shop (Figure 24: D) just next to it. There are tables for seating attached to the café, which is along the same edge of the wall, and can be accessed by

a set of stairs that extends width-wise across the room; Taffeh (Figure 24: C) stands on the center of that same level. There are two entrances to the temple on its western-facing wall (Figure 24: 4.1 and 4.2), as well as a smaller entrance on the southern-facing wall (Figure 24: 4.3). There are two Roman-era sarcophagi (Figure 24: 6 and 8) as well as a grand piano (Figure 24: 7) near the outside of that wall. There are a few more tables (Figure 24: E) as well as an area used to hang



*Figure 25. The Temple of Taffeh and Rijksmuseum van Oudheden display and café (far left) in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.*

artwork (Figure 24: 5) alongside the eastern wall of the lobby. Visitors can move between the higher and lower levels via the long set of stairs that cross the room width-wise. There is also a ramp (Figure 24: 9) to access the higher level.

The walls are made of vertical, even, sand-colored blocks. Niches spaced evenly around the room acted as either walkways or windows. Niches in the northern wall, alongside the ticket counter and the gift shop, lead to the bathrooms, lockers, and more of the gift shop; niches near

the tables on the same wall lead to the café counter; one niche on the northeastern corner leads to a meeting room, whereas the others on the eastern wall are semi-transparent windows. The same windows run down the southern wall, interrupted in the middle by the entrance and exit to the museum itself (Figure 24: F). The niches continue further up the walls as well as semi-transparent windows, keeping the space as open as possible.

The temple itself stands approximately 30 m from the main entrance, closer to the back (northeastern) wall, on the upper tier of the room. It is a light sandy color – similar to the walls – and has little decoration or relief on its walls. There are three doorways that allow visitors to enter and exit the structure. The larger two of these doors face the main entranceway of the lobby and are topped with sculptural relief on their lintels. The third door is smaller and was cut into the eastern end of the southeast wall of Taffeh. Inside, four columns with decorated capitals stand in darkness. The only other decoration inside comes on the false door on the inside of Taffeh's back wall.

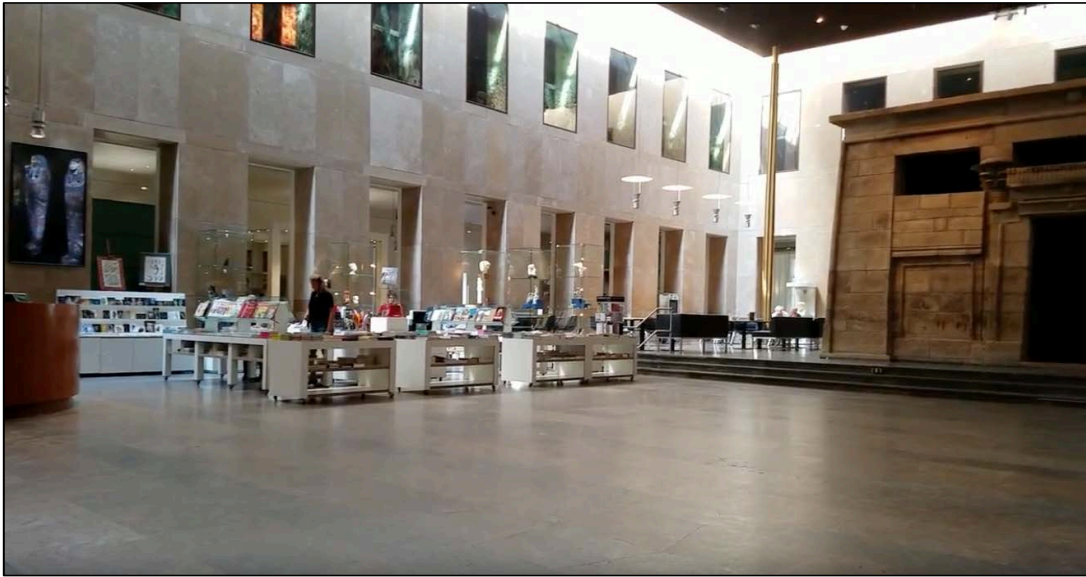
The temple's surroundings are supposed to be visually reflective of the environment from which it came, like the *in-situ* atmospheric context at the Met discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>275</sup> The walls are sand-colored limestone and seemed to extend upward and beyond the room itself. Schrijver's "artificial sun" that was to be installed<sup>276</sup> is not readily identifiable, but there was a decent amount of natural light. The light came through skylights that encircled the edges of the room, and did not shine directly on Taffeh as the majority of the ceiling was covered. The design of the hall is unobtrusive, but also not stark white like the Kalabsha gate's current display. The

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<sup>275</sup> Raven, "The Temple of Taffeh: A Study of Details," 41.

<sup>276</sup> Schrijver, "The Netherlands," 402.

color and texture of the walls and the floor blend with and compliment the temple, respectively; there are two other larger Egyptian objects from the same era (of which one guest assumed



*Figure 26. View of the larger space that surrounds the Temple of Taffeh (right) at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden. Note that the café (right of center), gift shop (center), and other expansions were added in the early 2000s. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.*

“must have come from the temple”); even the colors of the café and gift shop are unobtrusive enough as to not affect the effect of the Egyptian atmosphere of the temple. It does not, however, reach the level of intricate detail and deliberate recreation that the Met does with Dendur, with a more “modern” feel. As mentioned, it was almost an extension of the lobby itself.

Access to information on the background or context of the Temple of Taffeh is not readily available at the museum. Although the employees at the information desk/ticket counter had access to two-sided informational pamphlets in multiple languages to pass out to visitors, this did not seem to occur. Next to the counter, there was a stand full of brochures on other topics related to the museum; many people riffled through them, but none seemed to have information

on Taffeh. More than that, there is no sign tomb stone, or wall label to indicate the title or origin of the temple.

The lack of contextual information available in the gallery space must have been a decision made for a specific atmosphere, as the curators at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in the 1960s and 70s worked to create a beautiful and protective atmosphere for the temple,<sup>277</sup> which they have achieved to a high degree. The only clear adversary to preservation of the temple is its visitors. Visitors are not reprimanded when they touch Taffeh, which most do. This is the opposite of the practice at the Met, as multiple security guards and stanchions prevent visitors from touching the temple of Dendur. The Rijksmuseum van Oudheden's curator, Maarten Raven, lamented this practice as he recorded ancient graffiti of the temple, which is being slowly eroded away by modern graffiti and the constant touch of human hands.<sup>278</sup>

#### **5.4 VISITOR INTERACTION**

To identify differences in visitor behavior at museum sites due to context, the Temple of Taffeh and its visitors were observed at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden across two days in early June 2017. The observation of day-to-day interactions with the temple was limited to only the first day; on the second day, there were a series of Japanese dance and martial art performances in the open area in front of the temple (Figure 24: A). These performances gained large crowds that encircled the open area on all four sides; some visitors even leaned on Taffeh's doorframe to observe the performers. Some of the performers themselves used the northern side of the temple

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<sup>277</sup> Schneider, "Taffeh," 109-122.

<sup>278</sup> Raven, "The Temple of Taffeh, II: The Graffiti," 81.



to prop up their belongings while they waited for their slot. For this second day, use of the temple was purposeful rather than informative, and therefore not included in the data-set of this study.

The first part of this observational study documented length of visitor engagement with the temple, which illustrates the structure and its display's ability to hold the interest of visitors.

The length of direct interaction of fifty-two units visiting the temple (not



*Figure 27. Martial art demonstration taking place during a Japanese street fair on June 4, 2017. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.*

everyone went into the museum itself) were recorded.<sup>279</sup> The average time spent interacting with the temple was twenty-five seconds. Most of the time, “interaction” equated to being inside the temple. This was frequent because as soon as people exited the temple they moved onto one of the many other elements of the room, most often the sarcophagi next to the temple (Figure 24: 6 and 8), which were unrelated to Taffeh in everything except era (a similar concern to the New Kingdom talatat displayed near the Roman Temple of Dendur). Visitor times posing for pictures at the front of the temple were not recorded; similarly, when the only thing they did inside the temple is take photographs of each other posing, the time was not recorded. If they took pictures

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<sup>279</sup> Unfortunately, I was unable to record any conversations as I did with both Dendur and Kalabsha, as all (except one) that I encountered were in Dutch or another language unrecognizable to myself.

then began to look around, even for a few seconds, this time was recorded and included. Like Dendur (but unlike the Kalabsha gate), time visitors spent considering or pondering the temple from a distance was not recorded; this is because it was not always clear what someone was doing, as the area was also a meeting place and usually had a number of people there.

Visitors only went around the temple on the northern or southern sides to see either the sarcophagi (Figure 24: 6 and 8) or the pictures on the wall or tables behind Taffeh (Figure 24: 5). There were at least ten times when visitors walked around the northern side of the temple, peeked behind the eastern side, and immediately turned around and walked back to the center court. As Taffeh is mostly undecorated, especially on the sides and the back, and there was no contextual labels or texts, there was nothing extraneous to keep a visitor's interest for longer.



*Figure 28. The space to the southeast of the Temple of Taffeh within the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden that, as of 2017, held two sarcophagi, a piano, a small gallery, and extra seating for the café (back center). The smaller doorway of the temple leads directly to this space. Photograph by Mariah Flanagan, 2017.*

The lack of contextual atmosphere most likely played a large part in the observed low interaction of visitors with the temple itself.

The second part of this study recorded what visitors did before and after (or instead of) exploring Taffeh; this shows that visitors use the space as a transition area from the lobby to the museum itself. The lobby is also the primary entrance to the larger museum. As mentioned above, there is a café, a gift shop (Figure 26), ticket counter, restrooms, and lockers, access to an outdoor seating area and a meeting room, in addition to the temple in



the lobby space. In general, it seemed to be a jovial meeting place – there was no whispering, yet voices did not carry sharply, making it a relaxed atmosphere. People talked loudly surrounding the temple (although they did seem to be quieter inside). At different times, children ran around both the lobby and the temple while laughing. For example, two adolescent girls used the temple (all three doors), the ramp, and the open area on the first tier to run around while shouting and laughing;<sup>280</sup> they spent about thirty-two seconds of their approximate two-minute run within or directly around the temple. Another boy, also adolescent, ran quickly up from the gift shop to the main doors of the temple, then paused to look back at his parents who were still at the gift shop; he rocked back and forth towards the temple door, as if expecting his parents to reprimand him. When they did not, he jumped into the temple and ran through that as well.

Additionally, touching of Taffeh's walls was allowed and happened often, even though anyone attempting to touch the nearby sarcophagi were quickly reprimanded by the ticket booth staff. All of this seemed to “normalize” the temple as a simple element of the room; an entertainment space to explore after eating at the café and before shopping at the gift shop. As there were no informational labels or texts to speak of, it can be argued that Taffeh adds monumentality and importance (and possibly trustworthiness or general interest) to the museum as a whole. Visitors had to walk up three steps to get to either the museum or the temple. Reminiscent of the steps to walk up to Dendur, these steps were long, sleek, and of a dark, polished stone.

Observing museum visitors use the temple in a variety of ways illustrates that Taffeh fits into its own place within the ritual of a Western museum institution as an ambassador in a

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<sup>280</sup> There were at least three times where young children attempted this at the Temple of Dendur at the Met, and were stopped almost immediately by security guards.

transitional lobby, not the centerpiece of its own gallery, like Dendur in New York and the Kalabsha gate in Berlin. In museum lobbies, visitors might eat, drink, shop, and talk. Within this “lobby” space, Taffeh is almost separate from the museum itself – although it is still part of the ritual, and thus the religioscape, of modern Western museums. It welcomes and beckons visitors into the museum, acting as part of the architecture of transition from the outside world to the world of heightened awareness and sacredness of a museum.

The museum’s Fact Sheet echoes this transitional role and states, “the temple is used as the setting for all kinds of activities, as it was in the Egyptian past.” Religious spaces, ancient or modern, are commonly areas of quiet contemplation and respect as well as boisterous festivals, which are often loud and crowded, and equally sacred as secluded and quiet ones. Something does not have to be quiet for it to be sacred or part of a ritual. Other rooms or areas that are meant for gathering, talking, or celebration often surround ritual spaces. Recall that Dendur and Luxor are both used in this way for galas and other similar activities. For instance, the *Opet* festival (discussed in Chapter 1) used much of the areas in and surrounding Luxor and Karnak temple complexes, as well as the Nile River itself and some areas on the West Bank.<sup>281</sup> The *moulid* festival uses much of the same area except with the Abu’l Hajjaj mosque as the central site. While *in-situ*, the Temple of Dendur had a cult terrace that invited public use and celebration; today, that same area (in the form of benches that re-create the cult terrace) is often used for tourist groups to meet, as well as for large annual events such as the Met Gala.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 95 (figure).

<sup>282</sup> Laird Borrelli-Persson, “A History of the Met Gala in 60 Seconds,” *Vogue*, April 29 2017.

## 5.5 EVIDENCE OF RELIGIOSCAPE OF MUSEUMS

Taffeh's setting and display provide an increased modern take on an *in-situ* setting. Taffeh represents a scenario in which visitors used the space in two primary ways: viewing and entering the temple itself, and as transition from a lobby entrance to the main museum. Taffeh's visitors had wide interests within the space, and often used the temple as an object or as a transition from the lobby to the museum space itself. Many visitors touched the structure. Visitors did not touch the Kalabsha gate or the temple of Dendur (as much), whereas those who entered Taffeh seemed to touch the walls unconsciously, as one might reflexively touch fabric going through a fabric store. The TripAdvisor comments indicate that most people touched the walls of Luxor as well, or at least touched Amun.<sup>283</sup> Many people who posed with the structure for a picture did not go any further inside the temple. Taffeh became part of the architecture of the lobby instead of its own separate piece with its own separate history, thus changing its ritualistic treatments by visitors. The temple was used as a ritual structure worthy of being explored, touched, and admired, and can thus also be deemed a modern religiouscape of Museums.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

Within the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, the Temple of Taffeh seems to function as an object in the collection, like an ambassador at the point of transition between lobby and museum space – almost as a gate would function in a temple complex. Museum staff have achieved their restoration of the “sacredness” of the temple in different ways than their counterparts at the Met

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<sup>283</sup> Tourists touch Amun as a way to increase their chances of fertility.

or the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg. Taffeh, as it is part of the lobby entrance, is a relaxed space of meeting, reflection, and celebration. Its sacred nature comes not only from being inside a museum, as with Dendur or the Kalabsha gate, but also in that visitors can connect themselves to rituals of the past by touching the structure as they please. One example of this is the Japanese festival performances that took place on the second day of observation. Taffeh can be one's first stop, to welcome visitors and prime them for entry into main galleries of the museum; or, Taffeh can be one's last stop, where visitors are able to relax and spend time around the structure without feeling pressured to "see more" in other galleries. While direct visitor interaction levels were lower than Luxor, Dendur, or the Kalabsha gate, indirect interaction levels were higher, thus demonstrating that the religiouscape of Museums is embedded not only within this ancient sacred structure, but also in its surrounding elements. Furthermore, the lack of historical context given by the museum to visitors – and even a lack of reliefs on the temple itself (an aspect which is original to the construction) for visitors to attempt to interpret – lessens the amount of ideological comprehension that relates to the ancient atmosphere, and means this religiouscape is more related to modern Western museums. In conclusion, Taffeh's ritual qualities are reinvigorated through its position in a community-centered "lobby" area that encourages casual and intimate interactions, that are part of the religiouscape of Museums.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The chapters in this thesis have considered modern displays of elements from four different ancient Egyptian temple complexes as part of the museum industry. The Luxor temple complex, located *in-situ* on the East Bank of the Nile River, is in partial ruins, giving visitors a “presumed authenticity” of this complex in antiquity. The Temple of Dendur, and its associated gateway, have been removed from Egypt, but curators at the Metropolitan Museum of Art have given it atmospheric context for visitors to more easily relate to its original Egyptian context. The gateway of the Temple of Kalabsha is currently in a gallery fit for displays of two-dimensional art works, which is a small room with white walls and little atmospheric context but substantial historical context, and will soon be moved to be among other ancient architectural monuments. The Temple of Taffeh was reconstructed inside a new wing that functions as a lobby of a Dutch national antiquities museum with a large Egyptian collection. The analysis of these four different types of display through observational research has demonstrated that different types of museum institutions develop distinctive contexts to surround displays. Each of these institutions re-imbues its own ancient Egyptian temple with ritualistic qualities, thus embedding temples as physical features within the religiouscape of Museums.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 also consider how people use and react to temples in a drastic shift of location from their site of creation to Western museums. The temples of Dendur and Taffeh, along with the Kalabsha gate, are now ritual spaces (temples and their related structures) inside “sacred” spaces (museums) that are technically secular spaces. The Luxor temple complex

houses both an active mosque, as well as a working tourism space that was only uncovered in the 1920s, regaining its use and importance with the advancement of museum tourism.

## **6.1 VISITOR INTERACTIONS INDICATING A RELIGIOSCAPE**

Through a combination of exhibition evaluation and observational research of visitor interactions with the exhibitions themselves, this thesis concludes that different locations and presentations of the way ancient Egyptian temples were displayed changes the way modern visitors interact with ancient architectural structures, which indicates the type of ritualistic behavior and ideological notions of an active religiouscape of Museums.

The temple complex of Luxor is the only temple complex *in-situ*, allowing for an introduction to modern interactions with ancient ritual space. As it is still in Egypt, it implies “accuracy” of display or realism to modern tourists. TripAdvisor commenters who visited the complex participated in this display and integrated themselves in certain rituals, including the purchasing of tickets, the touching of a relief of Amun, nursing the ideology that the complex deserved to be preserved and visited, and using distinct language to discuss the site. Thus, the religiouscape of Museums begins here, as Luxor temple complex retains the most “ancient” or “original” contextual integrity of the four sites examined. Even more, multiple guests described the mosque’s call to prayer echoing around the complex as “atmospheric,” correlating both active modern religiouscapes at Luxor temple.

The structure of the Temple of Dendur itself is not only rebuilt with its gateway, but it is given a slightly modernist version of its original *in-situ* location. In other words, Dendur gives the first-century experience of the complex, and Luxor the twenty-first. The Met imbued the

structure with sacred qualities by installing it among other works from related eras in Egypt, and also adhered to the Western ideology of preservation by not allowing visitors to touch or run around the structure. The gate of the Temple of Kalabsha also had a no-contact rule, but the atmospheric context provided was in almost direct opposition to the Temple of Dendur. It had no references to its *in-situ* display, there were no other Egyptian objects present, and it was in a small room with white walls, unlike the wide horizon that would have acted as a backdrop to the gateway when it was standing *in-situ*. The Met fit the Temple of Dendur within the religiouscape of Museums by providing physical elements naturally associated with the structure (cult terrace, natural light, distance of the gateway, implication of a rock cliff behind the sanctuary), but visitor interactions with the “white cube” of the Kalabsha gate display demonstrated that it may not be the intensive atmospheric context that indicates the religiouscape of Museums, but the setting of structures instead.

The Temple of Taffeh reveals an entirely different type of context. During the Taffeh display’s redesign in the early 2000s, Taffeh was contextualized with modern consumer activities (a gift shop and a café) instead of archaeological or artistic collections. Visitors interacted with Taffeh more casually than they did with Dendur or the Kalabsha gate,<sup>284</sup> unconsciously touching the structure when they walked through, and leaning on the posts of the doorframe while someone else took photographs of them.

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<sup>284</sup> One amusing coincidence: As mentioned in Chapter 4, the second day of observation of Taffeh at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden was altered because of Japanese martial arts and dance demonstrations in the wide, open area in front of Taffeh. Ironically, a woman using the username Alenorse on TripAdvisor commented on the Luxor Temple forum on June 22, 2012: “...I just feel a little sad to see that many people do not respect this place as an old sanctuary. When I was there, a group of american [sic] Taekwondo was fighting [sic]. They certainly paid a lot to go there and do that in there. I don't know who could have such a sick idea ...” As a visitor, Alenorse’s expectations of what was appropriate for a temple complex seem to differ from the staff’s at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden.

Even with vastly different displays, visitor interactions with each temple paralleled each other. All visitors went through primary museum actions such as preparing physically and mentally for a visit, entering the site, buying tickets, and walking through the space; most visitors sought information, whether it be from a text panel, a tombstone label, or a guide; visitors looked around and engaged with the structure itself in some way; and with the exception of the current display of the Kalabsha gate, many visitors also congregated and paused at the structures in order to enjoy them or the company of the other visitors they came with. These interactions revealed that the visitors at these sites were engaging with the religiouscape of Museums, retaining the ideology that these structures inherently deserve to be seen, studied, admired, and preserved.



## 7.0 EPILOGUE: EXPANDING IMPLICATIONS TO MODERN EVENTS

Viewing the Western museum industry as a functioning religioscape may also give insight to current political events. One pressing example is the activities of the twenty-first century militaristic group, known as the Islamic State military group (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL/Daesh). Since 2013, IS has established itself as a formidable fanatical group that conducts and encourages horrific acts of barbarism and terrorism across the globe. While the string of mass homicides of civilians in the Middle East has received some international media coverage, their campaign to destroy cultural heritage has gone viral. A 2016 article from the American Society of International Law claimed that destruction included “mosques, shrines, churches, statues, tombs, and other religious and archaeological sites.”<sup>285</sup> What is fascinating is that the annihilation of these cultural heritage sites seemed to receive more press attention than the annihilation of masses of people in the Middle East, yet the recent attacks on Western cities (Paris, Berlin, Nice, London, Manchester, etc.) receives the most attention of all.<sup>286</sup> By destroying ancient structures that, as this thesis demonstrated, are under Western Museum ideology and thus deserve to be preserved, IS is attacking Western values without stepping foot on Western soil.

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<sup>285</sup> David W. Bowker, Laura Goodall, and Rebecca A. Haciski, “Confronting ISIS’s War on Cultural Property,” *American Society of International Law* 20.12 (2016): n/a.

<sup>286</sup> For example, various journalists have detailed the discrepancies between how most Western media handled the IS attacks on Beirut and Paris although only one day apart, Paris received the vast majority of media attention. *The Atlantic* writer David A. Graham even noted that Facebook opened their feature that allows people who currently live in areas affected by disasters to “check in as safe” in Paris, but not in Beirut (David A. Graham, “The Empathy Gap Between Paris and Beirut,” *The Atlantic*, November 16, 2015).

For example, the Temple of Bel, a Romano-Mesopotamian temple built in 32 CE in Palmyra, Syria, was destroyed by IS in 2015. That destruction had much to do with its long and important cultural history (like the Egyptian temples in this thesis). It was converted into a Christian church during the Byzantine era and then later into a mosque.<sup>287</sup> It was a part of the lives of pagans, Christians, Muslims, and atheists for its nearly 2000-year existence. The Temple of Bel is just one sacred structure destroyed by IS; since 2010, IS has destroyed countless sacred and ritual spaces and monuments.<sup>288</sup> UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova even deemed this destruction a form of genocide.<sup>289</sup>

Although many from academics to the media have waged calculated suppositions and deductions, there has not been a consensus as to *why* IS has specifically targeted archaeological sites such as the Temple of Bel. It has also been suggested that possibly IS intends to “rewrite its own version” of history by erasing the old.<sup>290</sup> Other people see these attacks as propaganda mostly intended to “shock the world” or as a challenge.<sup>291</sup> a defiant, unorthodox move in the world power chess game. It is part of the symbolic mind game of terrorism that has little to do with religion; IS has been known to destroy even ancient Islamic artifacts.<sup>292</sup> This also means that true motivation cannot be to simply eliminate polytheism, as monotheistic sites are also

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<sup>287</sup> Ben Quinn, “ISIS destruction of Palmyra’s Temple of Bel revealed in satellite images,” *The Guardian*, 1 Sept 2015.

<sup>288</sup> There is no recent information on the exact number of cultural heritage sites ISIS has destroyed; additionally, not all sources include the same items in the category of cultural heritage that deserves to be preserved (for example, in Chapter 2, how some visitors to Luxor saw the 700-year-old mosque sitting on the remains of Luxor as a modern encroachment).

<sup>289</sup> Hannah Ghorashi, “‘This is a Genocide’: Art Historian Zainab Bahrani on ISIS’s Destruction of Cultural Heritage,” *ArtNews*, 11 Nov 2015.

<sup>290</sup> Ghorashi, “This is a Genocide.”

<sup>291</sup> Amr Al-Azm, “Why ISIS Wants to Destroy Syria’s Cultural Heritage,” *Time*, 8 Oct 2015.

<sup>292</sup> Ghorashi, “This is a Genocide.”

targeted. These structures are not in use by the populations that once sustained them, particularly not the ones who built them. Thus, the pagan population of Palmyra was of no threat to IS.

This thesis adds to the ongoing, worldwide discussion by recognizing that destroying cultural heritage is one of IS's campaigns in order to gain dominance. IS's interest in the archaeological sites may stem from their recognition of the sites as active *religioscapes*, instead of lifeless archaeoscapes, that do threaten their existence. This thesis has called attention to the veneration of structures within the modern Western museum industry, which includes Egypt. The model of antagonistic tolerance can be combined with a deeper understanding of what counts as a valid (and thus threatening) *religioscape* (as demonstrated by this thesis and the development of the *religioscape* of Museums); this combination may help us understand trajectories of violence and dominance surrounding structures, areas, or regions with long histories of interchanging *religioscapes*.

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