

Popular Religion (Volksreligion)

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Definition and background in scholarship¹

“Popular religion” may be defined in the broadest sense as the traditional and changing beliefs and customs of the general Egyptian population of any social class that related to a world beyond the straightforwardly pragmatic—beliefs that were neither static nor uniform across regions or social groups. We prefer a broad definition and characterization along these lines, as well as the term “popular religion” (synonymous with “private religion”), to more circumscribed phrases such as “domestic religion”, “folk religion”, and “personal religion”, since these might limit investigation to a particular context, group, or individual.² Popular religion includes a range of practices and beliefs, some of which overlap with phenomena of “personal piety (*persönliche Frömmigkeit*)” (Luiselli, this volume).³ Moreover, no neat distinction can be made between popular religion and magic, which was integral to religion as a whole, both conceptually and in practice (Roeder, this volume), and must be included in any account.

Popular religion existed both independently of state-sponsored temple religion and in symbiosis with it, as well as being promoted by its institutions. Official personnel of state temples could be active in other roles and for other purposes as participants in popular religion. The interplay of the state and private religious acts can be observed, for example, for official expeditions, as at Gebel Zeit in the Eastern Desert, and around and within state-run temples, notably at Deir el-Bahri in Western Thebes, where it is clear

¹ This chapter was originally outlined by Geraldine Pinch, who then had to withdraw from the project. John Baines is very grateful to Elizabeth Waraksa for agreeing to take over the main burden of authorship. He also owes much to Lara Weiss for reviewing and commenting in detail on late drafts, and to several colleagues for references. We cannot give citations for everything mentioned; where possible, we include references for categories of material discussed.

² See also STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 17-23; PINCH, G., Redefining funerary objects, in: *Egyptology at the dawn of the twenty-first century: proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists, Cairo, 2000*, ed. Z. A. Hawass/L. P. Brock (2003), II: 443-447; WEISS, L. *Religious practice at Deir el-Medina* (2015).

³ See also LUISELLI, M. M., Personal piety (modern theories related to), in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2008); <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/49q0397q>; LUISELLI, M. M. *Die Suche nach Gottesnähe: Untersuchungen zur persönlichen Frömmigkeit in Ägypten von der 1. Zwischenzeit bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches* (2011). For a new approach, see BUSSMANN, R., Personal piety: an archaeological response, in: (eds), *Company of images: modelling the imaginary world of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1500 BC); proceedings of the international conference of the EPOCHS Project held 18th-20th September 2014 at UCL, London*, ed. G. Miniaci/M. Betrò/S. Quirke (2017), 71-91.

that the state sponsored popular religion,⁴ as it did in the first millennium, most strikingly with animal cults.⁵ Direct evidence for conflict between these two facets of Egyptian religion cannot be identified, even for the relatively well-documented Amarna period.⁶

In comparison with temple religion, popular religion is poorly attested in extant sources, whether textual, pictorial, or archaeological. This is the case for the non-literate majority of Egyptians and still more for the high proportion of people who lived in the countryside and are beyond the reach of archaeology. Furthermore, superficially promising material, such as devotional scenes on small stelae, is generally stereotyped and constrained by decorum.⁷ Only in rare instances where text and image correlate closely, or where traces such as use-wear patterns, iconography, and/or archaeological context make clear how an object or a location was used, can we speak of direct evidence for popular religious practice. Moreover, a high proportion of such practice probably consisted of oral performances and actions that would leave no material trace.⁸

In this chapter we delineate contexts in which popular religious acts can be posited as occurring from Predynastic to Graeco-Roman times, with a focus on the Dynastic period, in particular the New Kingdom. We identify relevant supernatural beings, practitioners, and beneficiaries. We discuss practices that can be associated with popular religion, review gaps in evidence and possible approaches to filling them, and note topics ripe for investigation.

Because evidence is sparse, Egyptological interpretations of popular religion vary widely, in part through differential response to the wide range of potentially relevant phenomena. This variation stimulates renewed engagement with the topic, which has been studied at least since syntheses such as Adolf Erman's *Ägyptische Religion* (1905), revised in 1934 as *Die Religion der Ägypter* (re-issued 2001). A major contribution was the 1916 article of Battiscombe Gunn, "The religion of the poor in ancient Egypt", which presented and discussed a small group of late New Kingdom expiatory stelae from Deir el-Medina,

⁴ See especially PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993).

⁵ See contributions to IKRAM, S., ed. *Divine creatures: animal mummies in ancient Egypt*. 2nd ed (2015).

⁶ RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 183-190; KEMP, B. J., How religious were the ancient Egyptians?, in: *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 5, 1995, 30; QUACK, J. F., La magie au temple, in: *La magie en Egypte: à la recherche d'une définition*, ed. Y. Koenig (2002), 41-68; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 6-7.

⁷ See e.g. BAINES, J. *Visual and written culture in ancient Egypt* (2007), 14-25.

⁸ See WEISS, L., The power of the voice, in: Haring, B./ O. E. Kaper, O./Walsem, R. van (ed.), *The workman's progress: studies in the village of Deir el-Medina and documents from Western Thebes in honour of Rob Demarée* (2014), 291-303; WEISS, L., Perpetuated action, in: Raja, R. /Rüpke, J., (eds), *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world* (2015), 60-70.

partly on the basis of a study by Erman.⁹ Erman in particular surveyed a much broader range of materials, and both scholars argued for the existence of specific religious attitudes, some of which bore evident comparison with certain modes of Christian religiosity. Other scholars who contributed to these debates include Flinders Petrie,¹⁰ whose focus was on material evidence, and, a couple of generations later, Siegfried Morenz,¹¹ whose prime interest was in personal religiosity. Consensus on how to model religious practice is elusive. For such questions, theoretical and comparative approaches,¹² together with increased study of archaeological evidence,¹³ may prove more fruitful than work on texts. A significant treatment that brings together archaeology, elite materials, and some theoretical discussion is Ashraf Sadek's *Popular religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom* (1987), while Anna Stevens's *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006) and Lara Weiss's *Religious practice at Deir el-Medina* (2015) are excellent case studies. A recent volume with articles in related areas is Christiane Zivie-Coche and Yannis Gourdon (eds.), *L'individu dans la religion égyptienne* (2017).

The scarcity of material from periods before the New Kingdom has stimulated the opposing interpretations that earlier Egyptian society was entirely pervaded by religion, as propounded by Jan Assmann,¹⁴ or that people were not strongly religious, as argued by Barry Kemp.¹⁵ We suggest that popular religion was present but often constrained to ephemeral settings and media, while focuses of religious action were not identical with those of later times (see further Conclusion). From the New Kingdom onward, public display by non-royal people became increasingly focused on religion. This development may have related more to changes in decorum than in belief and practice; both were

⁹ ERMAN, A., Denksteine aus der thebanischen Gräberstadt, in: *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1911, 1086-1110; GUNN, B., The religion of the poor in ancient Egypt, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 3, 1916, 81-94.

¹⁰ PETRIE, W. M. F., *The religion of ancient Egypt* (1906); PETRIE, W. M. F., *Objects of daily use: with over 1800 figures from University College, London* (1927).

¹¹ MORENZ, S., *Ägyptische Religion* (1960); MORENZ, S., *Gott und Mensch im alten Ägypten* (1964).

¹² See e.g., BAINES, J., Society, morality, and religious practice, in: *Religion in ancient Egypt: gods, myths, and personal practice*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1991), 123-200, with references.

¹³ Notably PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993); STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006); STEVENS, A., Domestic religious practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009)); <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>; WARAKSA, E. A., *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009).

¹⁴ E.g., ASSMANN, J., Die Verborgenheit des Mythos in Ägypten, in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 25, 1977, 7-43; reprinted in Assmann, *Ägyptische Geheimnisse* (2004) 31-57. Assmann does not cite evidence for the pervasiveness of religion. Discussion: BAINES, J., Egyptian myth and discourse: myth, gods, and the early written and iconographic record, in: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50, 1991, 85-92.

¹⁵ KEMP, B. J., How religious were the ancient Egyptians?, in: *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 5, 1995, 25-54.

surely involved, along with changes in the media and activities through which status was expressed.¹⁶

Written documents, as well as monuments with their pictorial decoration, can produce only limited evidence for popular religion because they derive from the literate, monument-commissioning minority. It is necessary to exploit all available types of evidence. Votive deposits are among the most significant early sources.¹⁷ Important categories include material from cemeteries, which is valuable not least because the dead do not bury themselves, while mortuary cults and other interactions with the dead are crucial domains of religion. Changes between the Old and Middle kingdoms suggest that burial practices of the non-elite may be particularly informative.¹⁸ New Kingdom non-elite cemeteries may point to local or even “mini-traditions ... perhaps perpetuated by individual families.”¹⁹

Popular religion and the untoward

The events that precipitated much popular religious activity may best be summarized as moments of crisis provoked by life’s uncertainties. These include bouts of illness and the perilous phases of pregnancy and childbirth. Well-being might be threatened by occupational and other hazards, such as work in a rock-cut tomb or mine, or participation in construction work or nautical expeditions.²⁰ Evidence is relatively abundant for popular religious or “magical” acts performed with the goal of solving interpersonal

¹⁶ See BAINES, J./FROOD, E., Piety, change and display in the New Kingdom, in M. Collier / S. Snape, (eds), *Ramesseide studies in honour of K. A. Kitchen* (2011), 1–17; theoretical sketch: BAINES, J., Interpretations of religion: logic, discourse, rationality, in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 76, 1984, 47–9.

¹⁷ DREYER, G., *Elephantine VIII: Der Tempel der Satet, die Funde der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches* (1986); VAN HAARLEM, W. M., *Temple deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad* (2009); PINCH, G./WARAKSA, E. A., Votive practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7kp4n7rk>; BUSSMANN, R., *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie: Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz*, 2 vols (2010).

¹⁸ See notably SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Die Ikonographie des Todes, in: *Social aspects of funerary culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: proceedings of the symposium held at Leiden, 6-7 June, 1996*, ed. H. Willems (2001), 205–53; RICHARDS, J. E., *Society and death in ancient Egypt: mortuary landscapes of the Middle Kingdom* (2005); DUBIEL, U., *Amulette, Siegel und Perlen: Studien zu Typologie und Tragsitte im Alten und Mittleren Reich* (2008).

¹⁹ KEMP, B. J., The orientation of burials at Tell el-Amarna, in: *The archaeology and art of ancient Egypt: studies in honor of David B O’Connor*, ed. Z. Hawass/J. E. Richards (2007), II, 21–31; KEMP, B. J., Tell el-Amarna, 2008–9, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 95, 2009, 1–34; Kemp, B. J. *The city of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and its people* (2012), 256–263.

²⁰ BAINES, J., Society, morality, and religious practice, in: *Religion in ancient Egypt: gods, myths, and personal practice*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1991), 126, 136.

conflicts among the living,²¹ up to the level of royalty,²² and between the living and the dead.²³ Sleeplessness, nightmares, and possession by malevolent forces are documented occasions for popular religious acts.²⁴ Forestalling undesirable events or afflictions was a major motivator of religious activity.

Contexts

Most categories of Egyptian sources relate at least in part to religion. Of primary importance among physical contexts for popular religion are architectural spaces such as houses, community chapels, tombs, and some areas of state temples. Landmarks associated with supernatural beings or remarkable events, as well as the edges of processional routes, are relevant,²⁵ as are emplacements of altars, shrines, or offering tables constructed in and around these contexts. Natural features, either in the desert, near the river, or within the floodplain and delta, could all be foci of religious activity but may be very difficult to identify.²⁶

Houses

For the New Kingdom in particular, there is significant evidence for popular religious activity in houses in the few excavated settlement sites. The social and organizational

²¹ RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 183-190; BORGHOUTS, J. F., Magical practices among the villagers, in: *Pharaoh's workers: the villagers of Deir el Medina*, ed. L. H. Lesko (1994), 119-130; KOENIG, Y., *Magie et magiciens dans l'Égypte ancienne* (1994); MCDOWELL, A. G., *Village life in ancient Egypt: laundry lists and love songs* (1999), 115-117; FRANKFURTER, D. T., Fetus magic and sorcery fears in Roman Egypt, in: *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 46, 2006, 37-62.

²² Notably the "harim conspiracy" against Ramesses III: e.g., KITCHEN, K. A., *Ramesside inscriptions, historical and biographical* V (1983), 360-366; GRANDET, P., *Ramsès III: histoire d'un règne* (1993), 107-127; RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 192-214.

²³ E.g., several letters to the dead: WENTE, E. F., *Letters from ancient Egypt* (1990), 210-219; see also n. 111, 142.

²⁴ SZPAKOWSKA, K., *Behind closed eyes: dreams and nightmares in ancient Egypt* (2003); SZPAKOWSKA, K., Playing with fire: initial observations on the religious uses of clay cobras from Amarna, in: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 40, 2003, 113-122; SZPAKOWSKA, K., Demons in ancient Egypt, in: *Religion Compass* 3, 2009, 799-805.

²⁵ BAINES, J., Public ceremonial performance in ancient Egypt: exclusion and integration, in: *Archaeology of performance: theaters of power, community, and politics*, ed. T. Inomata/L. Coben (2006), 262, 290.

²⁶ E.g., ALLAM, S., *Beiträge zum Hathorkult (bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches)* (1963), 90-98; LEITZ, C. et al., *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*, 8 vols (2002), IV, 86; SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Landschaft und Religion – die Region von Aswân, in: *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 2006: 1, 2006, 223-235; compare BRADLEY, R., *An archaeology of natural places* (2000), for prehistoric Europe.

structure of settlements, their geographic locations and the length of their occupation,²⁷ are vital to understanding the context. The Middle Kingdom pyramid town of Lahun,²⁸ the royal city and workmen's village of Amarna,²⁹ and the workmen's village of Deir el-Medina³⁰ were purpose-built, state-sponsored communities whose populations included highly trained, largely literate administrators and artisans. Especially at the latter two sites, these people produced a plethora of artifactual and written material relating to popular religious practices, and because the locations are in the desert, much has survived. Although there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants held beliefs significantly different from those of the wider population, practices attested there might not have been shared by the predominantly non-literate peasants living outside prosperous, state-sponsored communities. Other complications to studying the domestic religious sphere include: the paucity of relevant evidence from third millennium habitation sites such as Giza and Elephantine;³¹ the possibility of cultural exchange and blended practices in areas such as the delta and Nubia;³² and the evidence for popular religious practices in the desert, oases, and other peripheral regions that may, but do not always, correlate with those attested in the Nile valley.³³

Evidence for Middle and New Kingdom domestic religious practices has received much attention, notably for physical features that may have been sites of religious activity, such as hearths, platforms, and niches. Features like these have been detected in domestic

²⁷ Including any evidence of abandonment; on this, see WEISS, L., Personal religious practice: house altars at Deir el-Medina, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 95, 2009, 193-196.

²⁸ PETRIE, W. M. F., *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (1890); PETRIE, W. M. F./SAYCE, A. H., *Illahun, Kahun and Gurob* (1891); SZPAKOWSKA, K. M., *Daily life in ancient Egypt: recreating Lahun* (2008).

²⁹ KEMP, B. J. (ed.), *Amarna reports*, 6 vols (1984-95); KEMP, B. J., *Ancient Egypt: anatomy of a civilization*, 2nd ed. (2006).

³⁰ Sequence of reports: BRUYÈRE, B., *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh* (1926-53); LESKO, L. H. (ed.), *Pharaoh's workers: the villagers of Deir el Medina* (1994); McDOWELL, A. G., *Village life in ancient Egypt: laundry lists and love songs* (1999); MESKELL, L., *Private life in New Kingdom Egypt* (2002).

³¹ KAISER, W. et al., Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 25./26./27. Grabungsbericht, in: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 55, 1999, 63-236; LEHNER, M. E., The pyramid age settlement of the Southern Mount at Giza, in: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 39, 2002, 27-74; LEHNER, M. E./WETTERSTROM, W. (eds), *Giza reports volume 1: Project history, survey, ceramics, and Main Street and Gallery III.4 operations* (2007); STEVENS, A., Domestic religious practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009); <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>. See also BAINES, J., How can we approach Egyptian personal religion of the third millennium?, in Zivie-Coche, C. (ed.), *L'individu dans la religion égyptienne* (2016).

³² e.g., at Tell ed-Dab'a: MÜLLER, V., Offering deposits at Tell el-Dab'a, in: *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995*, ed. C. Eyre (1998), 793-803.

³³ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993); BLOXAM, E., Miners and mistresses: Middle Kingdom mining on the margins, in: *Journal of Social Archaeology* 6, 2006, 277-303; STEVENS, A., Domestic religious practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009); <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>, 3, 15.

structures at Early Dynastic, Old Kingdom, and First Intermediate Period Abydos,³⁴ and in Middle Kingdom houses at Tell el-Dab'a,³⁵ Lahun (see n. 28), Lisht,³⁶ and the Nubian fort of Askut.³⁷ Comparable New Kingdom and first millennium features are known at Memphis (Kom Rabi'a),³⁸ Malqata (western Thebes),³⁹ Amarna, Deir el-Medina,⁴⁰ Tell el-Muqdam in the Delta,⁴¹ Medinet Habu,⁴² and Thebes (Karnak).⁴³ The Roman period town of Karanis in the Fayyum, the best preserved site of its period, yielded domestic wall paintings and probable cult niches, in many cases with associated small finds of religious character.⁴⁴

³⁴ PETRIE, W. M. F., *Abydos I*, 1902 (1902), 9-26; ADAMS, M. D., The Abydos settlement site project: investigation of a major provincial town in the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate period, in: *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995*, ed. C. Eyre (1998), 19-30; ADAMS, M. D., 'Community and society in Egypt in the First Intermediate Period: an archaeological investigation of the Abydos settlement site' (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2005); WEGNER, J., Excavations at the town of Enduring-are-the-Places-of-Khakaure-Maa-Kheru-in-Abydos: a preliminary report on the 1994 and 1997 Seasons, in: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 35, 1998, 1-44; WEGNER, J., The town of Wah-Sut at South Abydos: 1999 excavations, in: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 57, 2001, 281-308; WEGNER, J., A decorated birth-brick from South Abydos: new evidence on childbirth and birth magic in the Middle Kingdom, in: *Archaism and innovation: studies in the culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt*, ed. D. P. Silverman/W. K. Simpson/J. Wegner (2009), 447-96.

³⁵ BIETAK, M., *Tell el-Dab'a V: Ein Friedhofsbezirk der Mittleren Bronzezeitkultur mit Totentempel und Siedlungsschichten*, vol. I (1991); MÜLLER, V., Offering deposits at Tell el-Dab'a, in: *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995*, ed. C. Eyre (1998), 793-803.

³⁶ MACE, A. C., The Egyptian expedition 1920-1921 I: Excavations at Lisht, in: *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 16, no. 11, Part 2, 1921, 5-19.

³⁷ SMITH, S. T., *Askut in Nubia: the economics and ideology of Egyptian imperialism in the second millennium B.C.* (1995).

³⁸ GIDDY, L. L., *The survey of Memphis II: Kom Rabia: the New Kingdom and post-New Kingdom objects* (1999); JEFFREYS, D., *The Survey of Memphis V: Kom Rabia: the New Kingdom settlement (levels II-V)* (2006).

³⁹ LACOVARA, P., *The New Kingdom royal city* (1997).

⁴⁰ BRUYÈRE, B., *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el-Médineh* (1929) (1930); BRUYÈRE, B., *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el-Médineh (1934-1935)* (1939); MESKELL, L., An archaeology of social relations in an Egyptian village, in: *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5, 1998, 209-43; MESKELL, L., *Archaeologies of social life: age, sex, class etc. in ancient Egypt* (1999).

⁴¹ REDMOUNT, C. A./FRIEDMAN, R., The 1993 field season of the Berkeley Tell el-Muqdam Project: preliminary report, in: *Newsletter of the American Research Center in Egypt* 164, 1994, 1-10; REDMOUNT, C. A./FRIEDMAN, R., Tales of a Delta site: the 1995 field season at Tell el-Muqdam, in: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 34, 1994, 57-83.

⁴² HÖLSCHER, U., *The excavation of Medinet Habu II: The temple of the Eighteenth Dynasty* (1939); HÖLSCHER, U., *Post-Ramessid remains*, trans. E. B. Hauser (1954).

⁴³ ANUS, P./SA'AD, R., Habitations de prêtres dans le temple d'Amon de Karnak, in: *Kêmi* 21, 1971, 217-38.

⁴⁴ BOAK, A. E. R./PETERSON, E. E., *Karanis: topographical and architectural report of excavations during the seasons 1924-28* (1931); HUSSELMAN, E. M./PETERSON, E. E., *Karanis excavations of the University of Michigan in Egypt, 1928-1935: topography and architecture, a summary of the reports of the director, Enoch E. Peterson* (1979); FRANKFURTER, D. T., *Religion in Roman Egypt: assimilation and resistance* (1998); GAZDA, E. K./WILFONG, T. G., *Karanis, an Egyptian town in Roman times: discoveries of the University of Michigan expedition to Egypt (1924-1935)*,

A significant domestic religious practice was intramural burial, particularly of fetuses and infants.⁴⁵ Relevant early evidence comes from Abydos, where excavations of Matthew D. Adams have uncovered infant burials within houses of the First Intermediate Period.⁴⁶ Middle Kingdom attestations occur at Abu Ghalib,⁴⁷ Lahun,⁴⁸ South Abydos,⁴⁹ and Elephantine, where intramural burial of adults were also found, continuing into the New Kingdom.⁵⁰ Tell el-Dab'a provides evidence for intramural burials of people of all ages, typically in contexts more culturally Levantine than Egyptian.⁵¹ New Kingdom examples of intramural infant burial come from Amarna⁵² and Deir el-Medina.⁵³ A probable infant burial with associated beads was uncovered south of the Sacred Lake at the Precinct of Mut at Karnak.⁵⁴ Infant burials were typically deposited in or under ceramic vessels, or in wooden boxes beneath the floor of a house; they occasionally had some grave goods. Even though the rate of infant mortality was high, these burials would be occasions of crisis for the family. It is not known what religious actions accompanied interments.⁵⁵

A focus on the family is visible in the domestic wall paintings at Amarna and Deir el-Medina, and this can be linked to a repertory of images and texts centring on the well-

2nd ed. (2004). WILFONG, T. G. (ed.), *Karanis revealed: discovering the past and present of a Michigan excavation in Egypt* (2014).

⁴⁵ BAINES, J./LACOVARA, P., Burial and the dead in ancient Egyptian society: respect, formalism, neglect, in: *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2, 2002, 14; STEVENS, A., Domestic religious practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>, 11-12.

⁴⁶ ADAMS, M. D., Community and society in Egypt in the First Intermediate Period: an archaeological investigation of the Abydos settlement site (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2005), 159-160, 242-243, 257-258, 340-341, 562-563 (figs. 4.18-4.19); STEVENS, A., Domestic religious practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>, 12-13.

⁴⁷ LARSEN, H., Vorbericht über die schwedischen Grabungen in Abu Ghâlib 1936/1937, in: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Instituts für Ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo* 10, 1941, 13-14.

⁴⁸ SZPAKOWSKA, K. M., *Daily life in ancient Egypt: recreating Lahun* (2008), 33-34, 76.

⁴⁹ WEGNER, J., The town of Wah-sut at South Abydos: 1999 excavations, in: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 57, 2001, 303.

⁵⁰ PILGRIM, C. V., *Elephantine XVIII: Untersuchungen in der Stadt des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit* (1996), 81-83.

⁵¹ BIETAK, M., *Tell el-Dab'a V: ein Friedhofsbezirk der Mittleren Bronzezeitkultur mit Totentempel und Siedlungsschichten*, vol. I (1991); BAINES, J./LACOVARA, P., Burial and the dead in ancient Egyptian society: respect, formalism, neglect, in: *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2, 2002, 14.

⁵² STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 209-210.

⁵³ BRUYÈRE, B., *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el-Médineh (1934-1935)* (1939), 271; MESKELL, L., *Archaeologies of social life: age, sex, class etc. in ancient Egypt* (1999), 171.

⁵⁴ See <http://www.jhu.edu/egypttoday/2006/pages/12906.html>; accessed 30 November 2017.

⁵⁵ STEVENS, A., Domestic religious practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>, 12; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 210, 313.

being of women and children that seems to have permeated New Kingdom elite culture.⁵⁶ At Deir el-Medina, traces of such paintings have been found on walls and architectural emplacements such as raised platforms (formerly termed “lits clos”). Some scholars have argued from finds on and around these platforms that they were utilized for religious activities relating to mature women, including ancestors.⁵⁷ Two studies focusing on the platforms’ architectural and decorative features conclude that they were multifunctional domestic altars.⁵⁸ Cupboards nearby might have contained ritual objects such as figurines, while niches could have been emplacements for stelae.⁵⁹

Likely near-precursors of the Deir el-Medina platforms are rectangular platforms of stone or mud brick found in elite houses in Amarna’s main city, central city, and north suburb. These were occasionally fashioned as elaborate shrines, but more typically whitewashed or left plain. It has been suggested that the platforms supported statues, stelae, or other objects of devotion, but direct evidence is lacking; any stone elements they supported must have been small (see below for garden chapels with altars).⁶⁰ Similar emplacements have been noted in the north village and west villas at Malqata,⁶¹ in New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period houses at Medinet Habu,⁶² and in Ramessid structures at Memphis (Kom Rabi’a).⁶³

⁵⁶ For children, see LUISELLI, M. M., Tracing the religion of the voiceless: on children’s religion in pharaonic Egypt, in: Amstutz, H. /Dorn, A./Ronsdorf, M./Müller, M./Uljas, S. (eds), *Fuzzy boundaries: Festschrift für Antonio Loprieno* (2015), II: 641-654; LUISELLI, M. M., The lived religion of children in Ramesside Egypt, in Assmann, J. /Kubisch, S./Rummel, U. (eds), *The Ramesside period in Egypt* (2016), 000-000.

⁵⁷ E.g., FRIEDMAN, F. D., Aspects of domestic life and religion, in: *Pharaoh’s workers: the villagers of Deir el Medina*, ed. L. H. Lesko (1994), 97-111; MESKELL, L., *Archaeologies of social life: age, sex, class etc. in ancient Egypt* (1999), 99-102.

⁵⁸ KOLTSIDA, A., Birth-bed, sitting place, erotic corner or domestic altar? A study of the so-called “elevated bed” in Deir el-Medina houses, in: *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 35, 2006, 165-74; WEISS, L., Personal religious practice: house altars at Deir el-Medina, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 95, 2009, 193-208. See also KLEINKE, N. *Female spaces: Untersuchungen zu Gender und Archäologie im pharaonischen Ägypten* (2007).

⁵⁹ STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 235-248. See already BRUYERE, B., *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el-Médineh (1934-1935)* (1939), 291

⁶⁰ STEVENS, A., The material evidence for domestic religion at Amarna and preliminary remarks on its interpretation, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 89, 2003, 147; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 219-234.

⁶¹ LACOVARA, P., *The New Kingdom royal city* (1997), 49; ENDO, T., Amarna-type houses at the Malqata palace-city, in: *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 25, 1998, 23-37; KOLTSIDA, A., Malkata revisited: defining domestic space at the palace city of Amenhotep III, in: *Proceedings of the ninth International Congress of Egyptologists = Actes du neuvième Congrès international des égyptologues, Grenoble 6-12 September 2004*, ed. Goyon, J. C./Cardin, C. (2007), I: 1013; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 233.

⁶² HÖLSCHER, U., *The excavation of Medinet Habu II: The temple of the Eighteenth Dynasty* (1939), 68-69; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 234.

⁶³ JEFFREYS, D./MALEK, J./SMITH, H. S., Memphis 1984, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 72, 1986, 1-14, fig. 3; JEFFREYS, D., *The Survey of Memphis 5: Kom Rabi’a, the New Kingdom settlement (levels II–V)* (2006).

In settlements, temporary or limited-use structures and locations, perhaps including the birth/nursing pavilions (“Wochenlaube”⁶⁴) depicted on ostraca and wall paintings at Amarna and Deir el-Medina, may have been erected on roofs or in extramural spaces and would not be archaeologically detectable. The same applies to the “place of women” for menstruation mentioned on a Deir el-Medina ostrakon,⁶⁵ which could have been a natural feature, such as a cave, or in the lost upper storeys and roof areas of houses. Much material evidence of popular religious activity is recovered in secondary contexts, re-used in later constructions, or found in debris, caches, or rubbish pits.

Open religious spaces

It remains unknown whether open spaces for communal activities were common in Egyptian towns. The living quarters in planned communities such as Lahun and Deir el-Medina were rather cramped, but some tightly enclosed spaces had plenty of open areas nearby, and locations for popular and private religious activities near towns are attested archaeologically as well as in images and texts. These include: freestanding extramural chapels; natural or built shrines dedicated to local deities, heroes, or “saints” (von Lieven, this volume); tombs of royals and non-royals; and the edges of land- and river-based processional routes.⁶⁶ Travel to near and distant sacred places, which is attested through images, graffiti, and votive offerings, appears to have been relatively common.⁶⁷ Numerous areas in wadis near the Nile valley in Upper Egypt were foci of popular

⁶⁴ BRUNNER-TRAUT, E., Die Wochenlaube, in: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* 3, 1955, 11-30; this term is exclusive to Egyptology. The real existence of a practice of birth arbours is questioned by GRÄZER, A., *Le confort domestique et ses implications sociales et idéologiques dans l'Égypte du second millénaire avant J.-C.*, doctoral dissertation, Université de Strasbourg (2011); see also BUDIN, S. L. *Images of woman and child from the Bronze Age: reconsidering fertility, maternity, and gender in the ancient world* (2011).

⁶⁵ WILFONG, T. G., Menstrual synchrony and the “Place of Women” in ancient Egypt (Oriental Institute Museum Hieratic Ostrakon 13512), in: *Gold of Praise: studies on ancient Egypt in honor of Edward F. Wente*, ed. E. Teeter/J. A. Larson (1999), 419-434, citing a range of other evidence for practices relating to menstruation.

⁶⁶ CABROL, A., *Les voies processionnelles de Thèbes* (2001); BAINES, J., Public ceremonial performance in ancient Egypt: exclusion and integration, in: *Archaeology of performance: theaters of power, community, and politics*, ed. T. Inomata/L. Coben (2006), 261-302; SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Landschaft und Religion – die Region von Aswân, in: *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1, 2006, 223-35.

⁶⁷ YOYOTTE, J., Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne, in: *Les pèlerinages* (1960), 19-74; VOLOKHINE, Y., Les déplacements pieux en Égypte pharaonique: sites et pratiques cultuelles, in: *Pilgrimage and holy space in late antique Egypt*, ed. D. Frankfurter (1998), 51-97; MESKELL, L., *Archaeologies of social life: age, sex, class etc. in ancient Egypt* (1999), 47-52; ZIVIE-COCHE, C., *Sphinx: history of a monument*, trans. D. Lorton (2002); PINCH, G./WARAKSA, E. A., Votive practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7kp4n7rk>.

religion. Comparable places are not known for the delta, but later parallels suggest that the desert or the northern lagoon regions could have contained religious sites.

A notable complex that served as a locus for personal—if elite—religious practices in a community is the sanctuary of Pepinakht called Heqaib at Elephantine.⁶⁸ A cult for Heqaib, a local expedition leader of the 6th Dynasty, was established shortly after his death, first by his tomb at Qubbet el-Hawa and then in a complex in the town and separate from the necropolis, west of the Satet Temple on Elephantine Island, where evidence for shrines to Heqaib and other expedition leaders has been uncovered in First Intermediate Period/11th Dynasty strata.⁶⁹ In the 12th Dynasty, the nomarch Sarenput I received royal permission to erect a cult area with a group of chapels to Heqaib. The cult became popular, and the complex served as a repository for offerings and small monuments such as stelae and offering tables by rulers, elites, and others. An annual festival for Heqaib, coinciding with that of Sokar, provided an expansive occasion for worship and dedications.⁷⁰ The cult at the sanctuary, which persisted until the Second Intermediate Period, transferred responsibility for his memorialization to the community at large while attributing to him the role of acting as intermediary between the living and the world of the gods (von Lieven, this volume).

The majority of archaeological evidence for chapels and shrines utilized as sites of popular worship stems from the New Kingdom. Significant examples exist from later periods, but they are less studied, and because the main centres of population were then in the north, relevant areas are largely inaccessible.⁷¹ At Amarna and Deir el-Medina, there is archaeological evidence for community chapels to which individuals or groups

⁶⁸ HABACHI, L., *Elephantine IV: the sanctuary of Heqaib*, 2 vols (1985); FRANKE, D., *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine: Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich* (1994); PILGRIM, C. von, *Elephantine XVIII: Untersuchungen in der Stadt des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit* (1996); PILGRIM, C. von, *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine 25./26./27. Grabungsbericht: Palast und früheste Kultstätte des Heqaib im Siedlungsbereich südlich des späten Chnumtempels*, in: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 55, 1999, 85-90.

⁶⁹ RAUE, D., Who was who in Elephantine of the third millennium BC?, in: *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 9, 2008, 2, 6-7.

⁷⁰ SADEK, A. I., *Popular religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom* (1987), 9-10.

⁷¹ VERCOUTTER, J., *Textes biographiques du Sérapéum de Memphis: contribution à l'étude des stèles votives du Sérapéum* (1962); MALININE, M./POSENER, G./VERCOUTTER, J., *Catalogue des stèles du Sérapéum de Memphis I*, 2 vols (1968); WILDUNG, D., *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt I: Posthume Quellen über die Könige der ersten vier Dynastien* (1969); DUNAND, F./ZIVIE-COCHE, C., *Dieux et hommes en Égypte, 3 000 av. J.-C. – 395 apr. J.-C.: anthropologie religieuse* (1991); DUNAND, F., La consultation oraculaire en Égypte tardive: l'oracle de Bès à Abydos, in: *Oracles et prophéties dans l'antiquité Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 15-17 juin 1995*, ed. J.-G. Heintz (1997), 65-84; DUNAND, F., La guérison dans les temples (Égypte, époque tardive), in: *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 8, 2006, 4-24; ŁAJTAR, A., *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman periods: a study of an Egyptian temple based on Greek sources* (2006).

could bring offerings and in which they could make their devotions, the modalities of which—spoken, performed, or silent—are little known. At Amarna, garden chapels associated with elite houses seem to have held stelae featuring the royal family, yet they are proportioned and elaborated as personal, not state, places of worship.⁷² Outside the Amarna workmen's village, a cluster of freestanding chapels was probably dedicated to worship of immediate ancestors, together with deities—such as Amun, Aten, Isis, and Shed—who were not necessarily accepted in the new state cult of the period.⁷³ At Deir el-Medina, chapels were constructed both within and outside the walled village, as well as beside the paths leading away and toward the Valleys of the Queens and Kings.⁷⁴ The rock-cut shrines dedicated to Meretseger and “Ptah of the Valley of the Queens (*st-nfrw*)” near Deir el-Medina exemplify a location for worship that was inspired by topography. Perhaps selected due to a rock overhang reminiscent of a cobra, and in any case an appropriate locale for the worship of a goddess identified with the western escarpment,⁷⁵ this group of shrines featured stelae embedded in the rock walls that were dedicated in the name of kings as well as of private individuals. Meretseger was also worshipped in shrines higher up, toward the pyramid-shaped peak of the Theban mountain (the Qurn). A related site of popular religion near Deir el-Medina is the grotto at the west end of the Valley of the Queens, which occasional rains would turn into a virtual waterfall. Graffiti indicate that Hathor was the local goddess. An engaged basin and deliberately broken vessels found in the interior confirm that it was used for popular religion.⁷⁶

More than a millennium after the Great Sphinx at Giza was created, it became a focal point of royal and popular religious devotion in the New Kingdom, for which its dominating presence at the edge of the low desert made it an apt setting. Successive kings cleared the monument of drift sand and erected and patronized mudbrick shrines between its forepaws and nearby. Although access to the royal shrines may have been restricted,

⁷² IKRAM, S., Domestic shrines and the cult of the royal family at el-'Amarna, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 75, 1989, 89-101; KRAUSS, R., Die amarnazeitliche Familienstele Berlin 14145, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Massordnung und Komposition, in: *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 33, 1991, 7-36; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 253-254.

⁷³ BOMANN, A. H., *The private chapel in ancient Egypt: a study of the chapels in the workmen's village at el Amarna with special reference to Deir el Medina and other sites* (1991); STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 251-253.

⁷⁴ MESKELL, L., *Archaeologies of social life: age, sex, class etc. in ancient Egypt* (1999), 110-113.

⁷⁵ Classic study: BRUYÈRE, B. *Mert seger à Deir el Médineh* (1930); See also ADROM, F., Der Gipfel der Frömmigkeit: Überlegungen zur Semantik und religiösen Semiotik von *t3-dhn.t*, in: *Lingua Aegyptia* 12, 2004, 1-20; ADROM, F., Der Gipfel der Frömmigkeit (soziale und funktionale Überlegungen zu Kultstelen am Beispiel der Stele Turin CG 50058 des *Nfr-ḥw*), in: *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 33, 2005, 1-28.

⁷⁶ VERNUS, P., La grotte de la Vallée des Reines dans la piété personnelle des ouvriers de la Tombe (BM 278), in: *Deir el-Medina in the third millennium AD: a tribute to Jac J Janssen*, ed. R. J. Demarée/A. Egberts (2000), 331-36.

concurrent popular religious activity is evidenced by niches in the mudbrick temenos, stelae, statuettes, offering tables, and votive ears, some deposited next to and inside Old Kingdom tombs. These objects range in date from the New Kingdom to the Roman Period and appear to have been locally made.⁷⁷ Titles inscribed on them show that men of all ranks were religiously active in the area; women appear on some of the votive stelae but are not named as donors.⁷⁸ The stelae are addressed to Horemakhet-Hauron, as the Sphinx was identified in the New Kingdom, as well as to Atum, Horus, Shed, and Sokar. Comparable revivals of ancient sacred sites for popular devotion can be observed at the chapel of Isis that abuts a subsidiary pyramid east of the nearby Great Pyramid, at the Sakhmet chapel in the ruined funerary temple of Sahure at Abusir, and at the Serapeum in Saqqara.⁷⁹

Additional significant locales include the bounds of processional routes, such as that of the Opet Festival procession in New Kingdom Thebes (Maderna-Sieben, this volume), along which people could gather and glimpse a cult statue's shrine while making prayers, requesting oracles (Quack, this volume), or simply benefiting from being near to a deity and his or her potential favour. Private statues, stelae, or shrines could be set up along these routes, as seen at Abydos (Kucharek, this volume). Processional routes are a context in which state and popular religion converged, personal devotion intermingled with official cult, and the decorum surrounding the temple cult statue was mitigated, at least briefly during the processions themselves, enabling those who were not temple personnel to approach major deities. Images of drink and food booths erected during processions (including funerals) suggest that large audiences were expected, whether of spectators, participants, or both.⁸⁰

Temples

While access to the innermost areas of temples was restricted to priestly staff, these complexes, many of them of monumental scale, created a religious environment in and around which personal devotions could take place. Outer areas of temples, including

⁷⁷ HASSAN, S., *The Great Sphinx and its secrets: historical studies in the light of recent excavations* (1953), 32-50; ZIVIE-COCHE, C., *Sphinx: history of a monument*, trans. D. Lorton (2002), 55, 67.

⁷⁸ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993), 123, 343.

⁷⁹ SADEK, A. I., *Popular religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom* (1987); ZIVIE-COCHE, C. M., *Giza au premier millénaire: autour du temple d'Isis, dame des pyramides* (1991); ZIVIE-COCHE, C., *Sphinx: history of a monument*, trans. D. Lorton (2002), 55.

⁸⁰ BAINES, J., Public ceremonial performance in ancient Egypt: exclusion and integration, in: *Archaeology of performance: theaters of power, community, and politics*, ed. T. Inomata/L. Coben (2006), 261-302.

enclosure walls, doorways, and processional ways, could be seen—if not necessarily approached—by all. Moreover, temples such as the Amun temple at Karnak,⁸¹ the Ramesses III mortuary temple at Medinet Habu,⁸² the Hathor temple at Dendara,⁸³ and the temple of Sobek and Haroeris at Kom Ombo⁸⁴ featured “hearing ear” chapels or divine images on their external walls to which devotees could bring prayers or offerings. In many cases these features show that areas of temples that had ceased to be used for their original purpose became sites of popular religion. Dowel holes on some temple walls demonstrate that divine images in relief were inlaid or gilded, as well as being screened or covered by canopies to protect them.⁸⁵ These holes and the images they surround were not necessarily contemporaneous with the temple’s construction, some of them being added later to accommodate new forms of worship. The “pilgrim gouges”, oval depressions (French “cupules”) found on the monuments, are additional evidence not only that many people visited temples but also that they were able to touch a wall or statue within the precinct and to acquire dust from the stone for use in personal rituals; its extraction was perhaps overseen by temple personnel or carried out by them on behalf of worshippers.⁸⁶ Many gouges are medieval or later, providing evidence for the continuing role of the temples in local religious life, but they can be seen on monuments as ancient as the late Predynastic Koptos colossi.⁸⁷ Graffiti found in many areas of temple complexes facilitate understanding of varying levels of personal access, from places where only priests could go, such as the roof of the Khonsu temple at Karnak,⁸⁸ to more

⁸¹ BARGUET, P., *Le temple d'Amon-Re à Karnak* (1962).

⁸² EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, T., *Medinet Habu III: The calendar, the “slaughterhouse”, and minor records of Ramses III* (1934), pl. 181A.

⁸³ DAUMAS, F., *Dendara et le temple d'Hathor: notice sommaire* (1969), 70-71; FRANKFURTER, D. T., *Religion in Roman Egypt: assimilation and resistance* (1998), 51-52 and pl. 3.

⁸⁴ GUTBUB, A., *Eléments préfigurant le relief cultuel de Kom Ombo*, in: *Das ptolemäische Ägypten: Akten des internationalen Symposions, 27-29 September 1976 in Berlin*, ed. H. Maehler/V. M. Strocka (1978), 165-76; BAGNALL, R. S./RATHBONE, D. (eds), *Egypt from Alexander to the Copts: an archaeological and historical guide* (2004), 234.

⁸⁵ TEETER, E., *Popular worship in ancient Egypt: commoners could approach their deities*, in: *KMT* 4:2, 1993, 31-33 (the author’s view that ordinary people could enter temples is problematic); DILS, P., “Ptah-de-la-Grande-Porte”: un aspect du fonctionnement du temple de Medinet Habou, in: *Scriba* 4, 1995, 65-80; BRAND, P. J., *Veils, votives, and marginalia: the use of sacred space at Karnak and Luxor*, in: *Sacred space and sacred function in ancient Thebes*, ed. P. Dorman/B. M. Bryan (2007), 51-83.

⁸⁶ DAUMAS, F., *Dendara et le temple d'Hathor: notice sommaire* (1969), 71-72; TRAUNECKER, C., *Une pratique magique populaire dans les temples de Karnak*, in: *La magia in Egitto ai tempi dei faraoni*, ed. A. Roccati/A. Siliotti (1987), 221-242; FRANKFURTER, D. T., *Religion in Roman Egypt: assimilation and resistance* (1998), 51.

⁸⁷ KEMP, B. J./BOYCE, A./HARRELL, J., *The colossi from the early shrine at Coptos in Egypt*, in: *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 10, 2000, 211-242. The gouges on the colossi are different in shape from those on temple walls and were probably made by a different technique. Their distribution shows that they date after the statues had fallen to the ground.

⁸⁸ JACQUET-GORDON, H., *The graffiti on the Khonsu Temple roof at Karnak: a manifestation of personal piety* (2003).

widely accessible exterior walls.⁸⁹ Visitors' graffiti could themselves engender a popular following.⁹⁰

Outer courts of temples may have been open to non-temple personnel on some festival days, as has been argued based on the inclusion of the *dw3 rhjt nbt* ("adoration by all the people") in some decorative schemes.⁹¹ This interpretation remains open to question, not least because one characteristic of images is that they can depict something that is not present or occurs elsewhere. Iconographic evidence in favour of access of this sort can be found in the depiction of the Temple of Mut at Karnak in the 19th Dynasty tomb of Khabekhnet at Deir el-Medina (TT 2).⁹² This scene shows seemingly ordinary people—non-priestly members of the village—clambering over the temple pylon, singing, playing musical instruments, making offerings, and in general making merry inside the temple complex itself, suggesting that it could have been open to many on occasions such as the barque procession depicted.⁹³ The scene also includes refreshment booths filled with beer jars inside the temple complex, presumably not just for the priests.⁹⁴ That cultic revelry and intoxication were a major part of the annual activities at the Mut Precinct and other temples dedicated to manifestations of the "distant goddess" is confirmed by columns from a "Porch of Drunkenness" erected at the Mut Temple under Hatshepsut.⁹⁵ Here one

⁸⁹ MARCINIĄK, M., *Les inscriptions hiératiques du temple de Thoutmosis III* (1974); THISSEN, H.-J., *Die demotischen Graffiti von Medinet Habu: Zeugnisse zu Tempel und Kult im ptolemäischen Ägypten* (1989); PEDEN, A. J., *The graffiti of pharaonic Egypt: scope and roles of informal writings (c. 3100-332 B.C.)* (2001); ŁAJTAR, A., *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman periods: a study of an Egyptian temple based on Greek sources* (2006); NAVRÁTILOVÁ, H., *The visitors' graffiti of dynasties XVIII and XIX in Abusir and Northern Saqqara* (2007).

⁹⁰ E.g., BRAND, P. J., Veils, votives, and marginalia: the use of sacred space at Karnak and Luxor, in: *Sacred space and sacred function in ancient Thebes*, ed. P. Dorman/B. M. Bryan (2007), 63-65. Frood, E., Egyptian temple graffiti and the gods: appropriation and ritualization in Karnak and Luxor, in D. Ragavan, (ed.) *Heaven on earth: temples, ritual, and cosmic symbolism in the ancient world* (2013), 285–318.

⁹¹ TEETER, E., Popular worship in ancient Egypt: commoners could approach their deities, in: *KMT* 4:2, 1993, 28-37; BELL, L., The New Kingdom "divine" temple: the example of Luxor, in: *Temples of ancient Egypt*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1997), 127-84.

⁹² CABROL, A., Une représentation de la tombe de Khâbekhenet et les dromos de Karnak-sud: nouvelles hypothèses. Les béliers du dromos du temple de Khonsou et l'intérieur de l'enceinte du temple de Mout, in: *Cahiers de Karnak* 10, 1995, 51-55, pl. Va.

⁹³ See WEISS, L. *Religious practice at Deir el-Medina* (2015), 92-93, for possible connections between the family of the tomb owner and the goddess Mut.

⁹⁴ MONTERRAT, D., *Sex and society in Græco-Roman Egypt* (1996), 163-179; LIEVEN, A. v., Wein, Weib und Gesang: Rituale für die Gefährliche Göttin, in: *Rituale in der Vorgeschichte, Antike und Gegenwart: Studien zur Vorderasiatischen, Prähistorischen und Klassischen Archäologie, Ägyptologie, Alten Geschichte, Theologie und Religionswissenschaft; interdisziplinäre Tagung vom 1-2 Februar 2002 an der Freien Universität Berlin*, ed. C. Metzner-Nebelsick (2003), 47-55; DEPAUW, M./SMITH, M., Visions of ecstasy: cultic revelry before the goddess Ai / Nehemanim, Ostraca Faculteit Letteren (K.U.Leuven) dem. 1-2, in: *Res severa verum gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65 Geburtstag am 8 Juni 2004*, ed. F. Hoffmann/H.-J. Thissen (2004), 67-93.

⁹⁵ BRYAN, B. M., The temple of Mut: new evidence on Hatshepsut's building activity, in: *Hatshepsut: from queen to pharaoh*, ed. C. H. Roehrig/R. Dreyfus/C. A. Keller (2005), 181-183.

can compare Herodotus' account that "700,000"—a generic number—men, women, and children congregated at the temple of Bubastis for a celebration. Demotic "drinking songs" seem to relate to such festivals.⁹⁶

Another area of temple complexes that may have been accessible to non-temple staff was the healing chapel, a type of structure attested from later periods. These typically small buildings could be richly inscribed with magical incantations and may have held stelae or statues with apotropaic or healing powers, such as *cippi*. Individuals might have approached them, or priests could have charged amulets or created magical infusions there.⁹⁷ One such chapel is the 26th Dynasty healing chapel of Horwedja, Chief Seer of Re at Heliopolis, now re-erected at the Mut Precinct at Karnak (original location unknown).⁹⁸ Other foci for popular worship in temples include intermediary and healing statues of individuals or deities to which people might bring their personal concerns. Intermediary examples include the late 18th dynasty seated scribe statues of Amenhotep son of Hapu from Karnak⁹⁹ and of his namesake the High Steward Amenhotep of Memphis.¹⁰⁰ The prominent healing statue of Djedhor the Saviour from Athribis in the delta dates to the 4th century BCE. The Metternich stela, which is of the same general date and presumably from Heliopolis, is a monument covered in magical texts that was in principle for the benefit of all who would visit the temple; however, its perfect preservation suggests that it may never have been used.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Herodotus *Histories* II, 60; DEPAUW, M./SMITH, M., Visions of ecstasy: cultic revelry before the goddess Ai/Nehemanim, Ostraca Faculteit Letteren (K.U.Leuven) dem. 1-2, in: *Res severa verum gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65 Geburtstag am 8 Juni 2004*, ed. F. Hoffmann/H.-J. Thissen (2004), 67-93; HOFFMANN, F./QUACK, J. F., *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 305-311.

⁹⁷ TRAUNECKER, C., Une chapelle de magie guérissante sur le parvis du temple de Mout à Karnak (with an Introduction by Richard A. Fazzini and William H. Peck), in: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 20, 1985, 65-92; KÁKOSY, L., *Egyptian healing statues in three museums in Italy (Turin, Florence, Naples)* (1999).

⁹⁸ Fazzini, R., in BARD, K. A./SHUBERT, S. B., *Encyclopedia of the archaeology of ancient Egypt* (1999), 399; Fazzini and Peck in TRAUNECKER, C., Une chapelle de magie guérissante sur le parvis du temple de Mout à Karnak (with an Introduction by Richard A. Fazzini and William H. Peck), in: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 20, 1985, 65-92.

⁹⁹ GALÁN, J. M., Amenhotep Son of Hapu as intermediary between people and god, in Z. A. Hawass, Z. A. /Brock, L. P. (ed.), *Egyptology at the dawn of the twenty-first century: proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists, Cairo, 2000* (2003), 2, 221-29.

¹⁰⁰ PETRIE, W. M. F. *Tarkhan I and Memphis V* (1913), pl. 79-80.

¹⁰¹ KLASSENS, A., *A magical statue base (Socle Béhague) in the Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* (1952); JELÍNKOVÁ-REYMOND, E., *Les inscriptions de la statue guérissante de Djed-her-le-sauveur* (1956); KÁKOSY, L., Heilstatuen in den Tempeln, in: *3 Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Systeme und Programme der ägyptischen Tempeldekoration*, ed. D. Kurth (1995), 91-98; STERNBERG-EL HOTABI, H., *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Horusstelen: ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte Ägyptens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, 2 vols (1999); ALLEN, J. P. *The art of medicine in ancient Egypt* (2005), no. 52, p. 49-63 (Metternich stela).

Incubation in temples—the practice of spending a night there in order to receive a healing or oracular dream—is attested from the Graeco-Roman period,¹⁰² but only one New Kingdom example is known,¹⁰³ and it is uncertain how widespread the procedure was or where in a temple complex people would have been accommodated.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, the idea that a deity could communicate with someone through their presence in a sacred complex in the altered consciousness of sleep is suggestive for other modes of access to deities.¹⁰⁵

The personnel of New Kingdom and later temple complexes received, set up, and periodically cleared out donors' votive statues of individuals and of deities,¹⁰⁶ and probably performed devotions both to the statues and on their own account, thanks to their privileged access to sacred space. People whose titles might not at first appear to be religious—such as doorkeepers and sculptors—seem to have been involved in magical rituals on site; this role is expounded in the Graeco-Roman period *Book of the Temple*, a composition that may incorporate earlier sources.¹⁰⁷ That ordinary Egyptians sought access to deities for oracles and other matters both in person and through friends and colleagues is known from letters among other sources.¹⁰⁸ Punishment for misuse of temple property, such as sacrificial animals, is attested, showing both that employees had access to temple resources and that it was closely regulated.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² RAY, J. D., *The archive of Hor* (1976); RAY, J. D., Dreams before a wise man: a demotic ostrakon in the Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney (inv. R. 98), in: *Studies on ancient Egypt in honour of H S Smith*, ed. A. Leahy/J. Tait (1999), 241-247; SZPAKOWSKA, K., *Behind closed eyes: dreams and nightmares in ancient Egypt* (2003).

¹⁰³ McDOWELL, A. G., *Village life in ancient Egypt: laundry lists and love songs* (1999), 100-101.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. CAUVILLE, S., Dendara: du sanatorium au tinctorium, in: *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie* 161, 2004, 28-40, who argues that the supposed sanatorium at Dendara with locations for incubation had a different function.

¹⁰⁵ Compare ASSMANN, J., Eine Traumoffenbarung der Göttin Hathor, in: *Revue d'Égyptologie* 30, 1978, 22-50.

¹⁰⁶ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993); DAVIES, S., Bronzes from the sacred animal necropolis at North Saqqara, in: *Gifts for the gods: images from ancient Egyptian temples*, ed. M. Hill/D. Schorsch (2007), 174-187; WUTTMANN, M./COULON, L./GOMBERT, F., An assemblage of bronze statuettes in a cult context: the temple of 'Ayn Manâwir, in: *Gifts for the gods: images from ancient Egyptian temples*, ed. M. Hill/D. Schorsch (2007), 167-173.

¹⁰⁷ QUACK, J. F., La magie au temple, in: *La magie en Égypte: à la recherche d'une définition*, ed. Y. Koenig (2002), 41-68.

¹⁰⁸ WENTE, E. F., *Letters from ancient Egypt* (1990); TEETER, E., Popular worship in ancient Egypt: commoners could approach their deities, in: *KMT* 4:2, 1993, 28-31; McDOWELL, A. G., *Village life in ancient Egypt: laundry lists and love songs* (1999); BAINES, J., Egyptian letters of the New Kingdom as evidence for religious practice, in: *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 1, 2001, 18-20; BICKEL, S., "Ich spreche ständig zu Aton": zur Mensch-Gott-Beziehung in der Amarna Religion, in: *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 3, 2003, 23-45.

¹⁰⁹ PEET, T. E., A historical document of Ramesside age, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 10, 1924, 116-27; GOEBS, K., *hftj ntr* as euphemism – the case of the Antef decree, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 89, 2003, 27-37.

For the Graeco-Roman period, temple precincts are attested as sites of a wide array of services for ordinary people.¹¹⁰ The temple entrance acted as a setting for official proclamations, display of royal and priestly decrees, swearing of oaths, and delivery of judicial verdicts. Notaries and bankers had offices along the processional way (Egyptian *ḥft-ḥr*), where chapels, tax offices, food stalls, and other gathering places were erected. Comparable judicial uses of temples are attested from earlier and from other civilizations, but it is not known how many of the other activities were recent additions.

Small mudbrick shrines in towns and rural areas thrived during the Graeco-Roman period, serving local people by making gods accessible. Numerous deities of the official pantheon developed popular forms, including Isis and Mestasytmis (*msḏr-sḏm* “the hearing ear”).¹¹¹ Animal cults (Fitzenreiter, this volume) and cults of deified humans (von Lieven, this volume) were other expressions of popular religion.¹¹² The existence of comparable practices in earlier periods is suggested by the large and varying numbers of attested names of deities¹¹³ and of smaller temples that are referred to, for example on the Theban West Bank; relevant archaeological sites are rare and are unknown from the countryside. The proliferation of animal cults seems to be distinctive of the first millennium.

Tombs

There was no clear-cut distinction between spaces for religious practices relating to the everyday concerns of the living and those designed for commemorating or communicating with the dead.¹¹⁴ Such spaces included houses, shrines, and tombs in necropoleis, so that it may not be meaningful to label a location as representative of “domestic” or “funerary” religion.¹¹⁵ Ritual actions in these contexts belonged to a single encompassing religious domain.

¹¹⁰ See e.g. GALLAZZI, P./HADJI-MINAGLOU, G., *Tebtynis I: La reprise des fouilles et le quartier de la chapelle d'Isis-Thermouthis* (2000), 39.

¹¹¹ WAGNER, G./QUAEGEBEUR, J., Une dédicace grecque au dieu égyptien Mestasytmis de la part de son synode (Fayoum – époque romaine), in: *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 73, 1973, 41-60.

¹¹² CLARYSSE, W., Egyptian temples and priests: Graeco-Roman, in: *A companion to ancient Egypt*, ed. A. B. Lloyd (2010), I: 277-278.

¹¹³ BEGELSBACHER-FISCHER, B., *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie* (1981).

¹¹⁴ PINCH, G., Redefining funerary objects, in: *Egyptology at the dawn of the twenty-first century: proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists, Cairo, 2000*, ed. Z. A. Hawass/L. P. Brock (2003), II: 443-447; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006), 11-12.

¹¹⁵ Weiss, L. *Religious practice at Deir el-Medina* (2015), 53-55, 107.

Burial places, whether separate from settlement areas or sited within them, were not merely repositories for the bodies of the deceased and for grave goods but also environments that remained in use for a significant period after death, if only ideally in perpetuity (Verhoeven/Budde, this volume). A few individuals were deified, with their tombs becoming shrines for popular worship. The architecture and decoration of the most elaborate tombs, from forecourt through superstructure to interior chapel, indicated where and how commemorative activities should be performed. The deceased could be worshipped away from the tomb, as with Heqaib's sanctuary at Elephantine, while there might be little distinction between house and tomb, as when infants were interred within homes. Although in some periods individuals' tombs were constructed with royal permission and material assistance from the state, actions around and within the tomb during and after the funeral were individual or family-oriented. Cult on behalf of deceased family members—including children—is one of the best documented and most important aspects of popular religion,¹¹⁶ and the tomb was a favored location for diverse religious activities. Material evidence of funeral celebrations and related rituals, including slaughter of animals, destruction of pottery, and use of fire has been found in and around tombs of various periods.¹¹⁷

Several scholars have shown how individual burials, and even entire cemeteries, could serve as tableaux conveying an image of the deceased and their social group. The dead could be presented as they had been in life, or as they were—or they or their families hoped them to be—seen in death. They could also be perceived as a threat to the living,¹¹⁸ a concern that is particularly evident in letters to the dead.¹¹⁹ The living equipped and

¹¹⁶ HARRINGTON, N., Children and the dead in New Kingdom Egypt, in: *Current research in Egyptology 2005: proceedings of the sixth annual symposium which took place at the University of Cambridge, 6-8 January 2005*, ed. R. Mairs/A. Stevenson (2007), 52-65; EXELL, K., Ancestor bust (eScholarship, University of California, 2008): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/59k7832w>.

¹¹⁷ ALEXANIAN, N., Ritualrelikte an Mastabagräbern des Alten Reiches, in: *Stationen: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens, Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet*, ed. H. Guksch/D. Polz (1998), 3-22; MÜLLER, V., Bestand und Deutung der Opferdepots bei Tempeln, in Wohnhausbereichen und Gräbern der Zweiten Zwischenzeit in Tell el-Dab'a, in: *Social aspects of funerary culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: proceedings of the symposium held at Leiden, 6-7 June, 1996*, ed. H. Willems (2001), 175-204; MÜLLER, V., Archäologische Relikte kultischer Aktivitäten in Umm el-Qa'ab/Abydos, in: *Archäologie und Ritual: auf der Suche nach der rituellen Handlung in den antiken Kulturen Ägyptens und Griechenlands*, ed. J. Mylonopoulos/H. Roeder (2006), 37-52; BAINES, J., Public ceremonial performance in ancient Egypt: exclusion and integration, in: *Archaeology of performance: theaters of power, community, and politics*, ed. T. Inomata/L. Coben (2006), 269-270.

¹¹⁸ See e.g. SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Die Ikonographie des Todes, in: *Social aspects of funerary culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: proceedings of the symposium held at Leiden, 6-7 June, 1996*, ed. H. Willems (2001), 205-253.

¹¹⁹ WENTE, E. F., *Letters from ancient Egypt* (1990), 210-219; VERHOEVEN, U., Post ins Jenseits – Formular und Funktion altägyptischer Briefe an Tote, in: *Bote und Brief: Sprachliche Systeme der Informationsübermittlung im Spannungsfeld von Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit*, ed. A. Wagner (2003), 31-51; HAFEMANN, I., Feinde und Ahnen – Briefe an Tote als Mittel der Feindbekämpfung, in: *Feinde und Aufrührer: Konzepte von Gegnerschaft in ägyptischen*

carried out burials, the preparation and enactment of which should be understood as popular religious activity. Burials could comprise all of a separation ritual, an opportunity for mourning, a commemoration of a life, and a wish for positive (or at least harmless) interaction in the future.

As with the Great Sphinx,¹²⁰ royal and non-royal tombs could later become religiously charged environments for private devotions, whether or not they were addressed to the tomb owner. The tomb of the late Old Kingdom vizier Izi at Edfu served as a cult place for popular donations into the late Middle Kingdom (von Lieven, this volume).

“Extrasepulchral” deposits of inscribed shabtis and related objects are known from Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom, and Late Period royal burial areas.¹²¹ Individuals, especially workmen, deposited shabtis and votive ostraca in and around royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings.¹²² Evidence for these practices and related ones, such as letters to the dead and execration rituals (Quack, this volume),¹²³ shows that elite and royal tombs were conduits to the supernatural realm where popular religious actions could be performed, despite the danger that the dead could pose to the living. The living might, for example, address appeals to the dead for help with difficulties or consult them for advice.

The decoration of non-royal tombs offers evidence for popular religious practices. Old Kingdom tombs, though largely lacking in explicit religious iconography, provide some relevant evidence, including scenes of offering bearers carrying goods to the tomb and a few scenes of family members attending funeral or commemorative banquets (von Lieven, this volume), as well as depictions of magical objects that may not be attested archaeologically, such as the chest-pouch amulet.¹²⁴ Tombs also feature songs with refrains in the captions to agricultural scenes that call upon deities for a successful outcome. The Herdsman’s Song and Song of the Palanquin may have formed part of magical performances, as presumably did a spell against crocodiles.¹²⁵ Old Kingdom

Texten besonders des Mittleren Reiches, ed. H. Felber (2005), 162-172; DONNAT BEAUQUIER, S. *Ecrire à ses morts: enquête sur un usage rituel de l’écrit dans l’Égypte pharaonique* (2014). See e.g. SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Die Ikonographie des Todes, in: *Social aspects of funerary culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: proceedings of the symposium held at Leiden, 6-7 June, 1996*, ed. H. Willems (2001), 205-253.

¹²⁰ Zivie-Coche, C. *Sphinx: history of a monument*. Transl. D. Lorton (2002).

¹²¹ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993), 218.

¹²² KELLER, C. A., Private votives in royal cemeteries: The case of KV 9, in: *Varia Aegyptiaca* 10, 1995, 139-156.

¹²³ See also VAN DIJK, J., Zerbrechen der roten Töpfe, in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. W. Helck/W.

Westendorf (1986), VI: 1389-1396; RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993).

¹²⁴ BAINES, J., Display of magic in Old Kingdom Egypt, in: *Through a glass darkly: magic, dreams, and prophecy in ancient Egypt*, ed. K. Szpakowska (2006), 1-32.

¹²⁵ ALTENMÜLLER, H., Das “Sänftenlied” des Alten Reiches, in: *Bulletin de la Société d’Égyptologie de Genève* 9/10, 1984-85, 15-30; MEYER, G., Das Hirtenlied in den Privatgräbern des Alten Reiches, in: *Studien zur Altägyptischen*

tomb inscriptions include numerous references to personal knowledge of magic,¹²⁶ often accompanied by curse formulae.¹²⁷

New Kingdom tomb chapel decoration, a significant amount of it designed for communication between the living and the dead, provides additional evidence for popular religion, such as depictions of the pilgrimage to Abydos and shrines to Renenutet erected in fields and next to granaries.¹²⁸ Agricultural songs, too, are shown in New Kingdom tombs.¹²⁹

Burial goods can be linked to popular religion, as when signs of wear are present on the objects deposited.¹³⁰ It is valuable but difficult to identify items that were offered at tombs as part of continuing religious activities, as distinct from those interred with the original burial.¹³¹

A different case is where a tomb became a repository for votive objects removed from their initial place of use. More than 600 votive stelae and figurines dating from the New Kingdom to the Late Period were found in the 12th Dynasty tomb of Djefaihapi III at Asyut, a find known as the Salakhana Trove.¹³² The majority of the stelae are dedicated

Kultur 17, 1990, 235-284; RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 48; 207 n.956; STRUDWICK, N., *Texts from the pyramid age* (2005), 47, 402, 414-415, 418; BAINES, J., *Visual and written culture in ancient Egypt* (2007), 168; crocodiles: BORGHOUTS, J. F., *Ancient Egyptian magical texts* (1978), 83 no. 122.

¹²⁶ STRUDWICK, N., *Texts from the pyramid age* (2005), 221-224, 228-229, 234, 236; SMITH, M., Democratization of the afterlife, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009); <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj>. See also e.g. BAINES, J., On the Old Kingdom inscriptions of Hezy: purity of person and mind; court hierarchy, in: Amstutz, H./Dom, A./Ronsdorf, M./Müller, M./Uljas, S., (eds), *Fuzzy boundaries: Festschrift für Antonio Loprieno* (2015), II, 519-536.

¹²⁷ MORSCHAUSER, S., *Threat-formulae in ancient Egypt: a study of the history, structure and use of threats and curses in ancient Egypt* (1991); STRUDWICK, N., *Texts from the pyramid age* (2005), 217-238; study of context: NORDH, K., *Aspects of ancient Egyptian curses and blessings: conceptual background and transmission* (1996)

¹²⁸ DAVIES, N. M./DAVIES, N. de G., Harvest rites in a Theban tomb, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 25, 1939, 154-56; BROEKHUIS, J., *De godin Renenwetet* (1971), 13-16.

¹²⁹ MANNICHE, L., *Music and musicians in ancient Egypt* (1991), 18-19.

¹³⁰ E.g., HAYES, W. C., *The scepter of Egypt I, From the earliest times to the end of the Middle Kingdom* (1953), 248-249, fig. 159; PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993), 218; RITNER, R. K., 'And each staff transformed into a snake': the serpent wand in ancient Egypt, in: *Through a glass darkly: magic, dreams, and prophecy in ancient Egypt*, ed. K. Szpakowska (2006), 205-26; SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Die Ikonographie des Todes, in: *Social aspects of funerary culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: proceedings of the symposium held at Leiden, 6-7 June, 1996*, ed. H. Willems (2001), 205-253; WARAKSA, E. A., Female figurines (Pharaonic period), in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2008): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4dg0d57b>; WARAKSA, E. A., *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009).

¹³¹ PINCH, G., Redefining funerary objects, in: *Egyptology at the dawn of the twenty-first century: proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists, Cairo, 2000*, ed. Z. A. Hawass/L. P. Brock (2003), II: 443-447.

¹³² DUQUESNE, T., Votive stelae for Upwawet from the Salakhana Trove, in: *Discussions in Egyptology* 48, 2000, 5-47; DUQUESNE, T., The Salakhana stelae: a unique trove of votive objects from Asyut, in: *Proceedings of the ninth International Congress of Egyptologists = Actes du neuvième Congrès international des égyptologues, Grenoble 6-12*

to Wepwawet. It is unlikely that Djefahapi was the recipient of these offerings: several centuries separate his death in the 12th Dynasty and the earliest dated stelae from the 18th Dynasty. Perhaps the tomb had been consecrated in some way for the deposit. This tomb is one of a number utilized in this manner, tombs which later had a range of religious meanings. Another example is the 6th Dynasty tomb of Weni the Elder at Abydos, together with the nearby tomb of Idy.¹³³ These tombs seem to have possessed a long-lasting efficacy that could have stemmed in part from their age, being later exploited by people from the region as portals between the realms of the living and the dead. Their meaning could also have changed gradually over the long term.

Practitioners and beneficiaries

Those who practiced popular religion and benefited from popular religious acts belonged to all ranks of society. For some activities, including rites of healing and execration, temple personnel such as lector priests, scribes of the divine book, scorpion conjurers, Sakhmet priests, and “wise women” (see below) were the prime practitioners.¹³⁴ These literate priests and magicians had access to the inner areas of temples and to the texts housed there. They could utilize *heka* “magic” for good (healing) or evil (destruction), and they possessed the ritual authority necessary to ward off bodily threats or heal ailments.¹³⁵

Ritualists trained in temple magic were active in the wider community. The most plausible example of such a person is the owner of a box of magical equipment, including amulets, figurines, and ivory magical wands, as well as magico-medical and literary papyri, found in a late Middle Kingdom tomb beneath the Ramesseum in western Thebes.¹³⁶ It is, however, impossible to specify the social contexts in which he was

September 2004, ed. J. C. Goyon/C. Cardin (2007), I: 461-474; DUQUESNE, T., *The Salakhana trove: votive stelae and other objects from Asyut* (2010).

¹³³ RICHARDS, J., A New Kingdom figurine from the Abydos Middle Cemetery, in R. Jasnow / K. M. Cooney, (eds), *Joyful in Thebes: Egyptological studies in honor of Betsy M Bryan* (2015), 383-395.

¹³⁴ VON KÄNEL, F., *Les prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet et les conjurateurs de Serket* (1984); RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 212-213, 220-233; KOENIG, Y., *Magie et magiciens dans l’Égypte ancienne* (1994); QUACK, J. F., Das Buch vom Tempel und verwandte Texte: ein Vorbericht, in: *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2, 2000, 1-20.

¹³⁵ FRANKFURTER, D. T., Curses, blessings, and ritual authority: Egyptian magic in comparative perspective, in: *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 5, 2005, 157-185; DIELEMAN, J., Cultural constructions of ambiguous or unsanctioned ritual: Egypt, in: *A guide to ancient magic*, ed. D. Frankfurter/H. Versnel (in press).

¹³⁶ QUIBELL, J. E., *The Ramesseum* (1898), 3-4, pl. III; see discussion of QUACK, J. F., Zur Lesung und Deutung des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus, in: *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 133, 2006, 72-77. For other liturgical texts from private tombs, see PARKINSON, R. B., *Reading ancient Egyptian poetry: among other histories* (2009).

active. A seer who seemingly did not possess priestly training but was regarded as a type of community magician is the wise woman (*rht*) at Deir el-Medina.¹³⁷ Individuals could also resort to magical rites when a priest was not available or would have been intrusive.

While men and women alike could perform popular religious acts such as dedicating votive offerings,¹³⁸ for some classes of objects and at some sites it seems that either men or women were the primary actors. We have seen that the votive zone at the Great Sphinx at Giza was patronized by men more than women. Similarly, expeditions were staffed by men, and evidence from mining sites primarily reflects their concerns. By contrast, women were the donors of many of the votive objects attested at sites dedicated to the goddess Hathor,¹³⁹ who was most connected with women's fertility and health. The correspondence of image to donor or intention, however, is not simple, and where possible interpretations must take into account factors such as context, access, symbolism, and any documentary evidence.¹⁴⁰

The range of supernatural beings

A wide range of supernatural beings is attested in popular religious sources, from major state gods who seem to have become more accessible to individuals in the New Kingdom and later, to minor deities and those charged with particular positive or negative associations. These supernatural beings could be helpers, enemies, or both, as with the dead, who could either cause or assist with conflicts among the living.

Local deities and groupings of deities were very significant for their communities,¹⁴¹ while the role of national figures such as Hathor varied in different regions where they had cults. This variability, which was partly in tension with central configurations established in early periods,¹⁴² means that there was no single pattern of worship and recourse to deities. Within local areas there were small sacred places where accessible

¹³⁷ See e.g. McDOWELL, A. G., *Village life in ancient Egypt: laundry lists and love songs* (1999), 114-115.

¹³⁸ PINCH, G./WARAKSA, E. A., Votive practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7kp4n7rk>.

¹³⁹ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993).

¹⁴⁰ BUSSMANN, R., *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie: Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz* (2010), xci; WARAKSA, E. A., *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009).

¹⁴¹ E.g., Satet in the Aswan region: SEIDLMAYER, S. J., *Landschaft und Religion – die Region von Aswân*, in: *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 2006: 1, 2006, 226.

¹⁴² Hornung, E. *Conceptions of god in ancient Egypt: the one and the many* (1982 [1971]), 69-74, 223-227.

manifestations of major deities could be addressed. Thus, deities of many statuses and characters could be involved in popular religion in many different ways.

The supernatural beings most often associated with popular religion include deities appearing in domestic decoration and material culture who not possess major temples, such as Bes and Taweret,¹⁴³ as well as deities who were important at particular sites, such as Meretseger in western Thebes and Wepwawet at Asyut. Hathor was a favored goddess for popular devotion throughout Egypt. The deities named on inscribed cult equipment and votive statuettes, such as the thousands of Late Period bronzes from temple contexts, were also targets of personal devotion.¹⁴⁴ Many bronzes represent gods or goddesses who were not the principal deity of the temple in which the piece was offered; temples could thus serve people's religious needs through many deities and in many ways.

Further evidence for deities connected to popular religion comes from magico-medical spells, in which gods such as Horus and Isis are prominent because of their mythical roles as patient and healer.¹⁴⁵ In origin many theophoric personal names suggest a personal relationship between whoever named the child (normally parents) and the deity—although repeated usage would often render the meaning of names irrelevant.¹⁴⁶ Letters that mention individuals visiting shrines to make an invocation or present offerings on behalf of absent kin further attest to the deities worshipped.¹⁴⁷ Deified kings and humans were among those deemed particularly suited to many people's concerns (Maderna-Sieben, von Lieven, this volume).

Divine “messengers” could include any deity who acted as an intermediary between the divine and human realms; they were not necessarily subordinate figures or “demons”. In religious literature, major deities such as Hathor or Thoth could serve other deities and could manifest protective or destructive powers. Similarly, beings known as *šmzyw*, *wꜣwtyw*, *ḥꜣtyw*, and the group known as *šdmw* were messengers who could protect deities from disease and harm as well as endanger people's health. Their threatening

¹⁴³ FRIEDMAN, F. D., Aspects of domestic life and religion, in: *Pharaoh's workers: the villagers of Deir el Medina*, ed. L. H. Lesko (1994), 95-117.

¹⁴⁴ PINCH, G./WARAKSA, E. A., Votive practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7kp4n7rk>.

¹⁴⁵ KLASSENS, A., *A magical statue base (Socle Béhague) in the Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* (1952); BORGHOUTS, J. F., *Ancient Egyptian magical texts* (1978); BORGHOUTS, J. F., in: *Pharaoh's workers: the villagers of Deir el Medina*, ed. L. H. Lesko (1994), 119-30; LEITZ, C., *Magical and medical papyri of the New Kingdom* (1999), passim.

¹⁴⁶ E.g. BAINES, J., Society, morality, and religious practice, in: *Religion in ancient Egypt: gods, myths, and personal practice*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1991), 176-178; KELLER, C. A., Some thoughts on religious change at Deir el-Medina, in: *Servant of Mut: studies in honor of Richard A Fazzini*, ed. S. D'Auria (2008), 149-154.

¹⁴⁷ BAINES, J., Egyptian letters of the New Kingdom as evidence for religious practice, in: *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 1, 2001, 1-31.

manifestations—often characterized as subordinates of Sakhmet—were neutralized through ritual action, including the preparation of linen amulets, of which a set is known.¹⁴⁸

The dead—variously referred to as *ꜣḥ* “transfigured spirit”, *ꜣḥ ikr* “effective transfigured spirit”, or *mwt* “dead person”—were believed to be active, often maleficent members of the community who needed to be propitiated, and they feature prominently in texts and artifacts relating to popular religion.¹⁴⁹ Individuals were charged with provisioning their ancestors with food, drink, linen, oil, and “all good and pure things” in order to maintain a continuing and positive relationship with them. New Kingdom ancestor busts attest to direct worship of deceased kin.¹⁵⁰ Family stelae enabled the dead to be commemorated and to participate perpetually in festivals.¹⁵¹ Theban elite families celebrated meals in the tomb chapels of their ancestors during the Perfect Feast of the Wadi.¹⁵² Magico-medical texts attribute blame for diseases and nightmares to the dead,¹⁵³ while in the Third Intermediate Period “oracular amuletic decrees”, strips of papyrus inscribed with declarations of divine protection, were worn to ward off a host of troubles, including those caused by the dead.¹⁵⁴ The survival of a number of these papyri suggests that they were ultimately deposited with their owners in the tomb, perhaps in order to assist them in the next world.

¹⁴⁸ SCHIPPER, B. U., Angels or demons? Divine messengers in ancient Egypt, in: *Angels: the concept of celestial beings: origins, development and reception*, ed. F. V. Reiterer/T. Nicklas/K. Schöpflin (2007), 1-19; LUCARELLI, R., Demons (benevolent and malevolent), in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2010): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r72q9vv>; linen amulets: RAVEN, M., Charms for protection during the epagomenal days, in: *Essays on ancient Egypt in honour of Herman te Velde*, ed. Dijk, J. van (1997), 275-291; KOCKELMANN, H., Vier späte Leinenamulette für Mumien im Kunsthistorischen Museum Wien und im Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, in: *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 31, 2003, 231-250.

¹⁴⁹ POSENER, G., Découverte de l’ancienne Egypte, in: *Bulletin de la Société Française d’Égyptologie* 112, 1988, 11-18. BAINES, J., Society, morality, and religious practice, in: *Religion in ancient Egypt: gods, myths, and personal practice*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1991), 147-148, 152-153; BORGHOUTS, J. F., Magical practices among the villagers, in: *Pharaoh’s workers: the villagers of Deir el Medina*, ed. L. H. Lesko (1994), 124.

¹⁵⁰ DEMARÉE, R. J., *The ꜣḥ ikr n Rꜥ-stelae: on ancestor worship in ancient Egypt* (1983); HARRINGTON, N., Anthropoid busts and ancestor cults at Deir el Medina, in: *Current Research in Egyptology 2003*, ed. K. E. Piquette/S. Love (2004), 71-88; EXELL, K., Ancestor bust, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2008); <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/59k7832w>.

¹⁵¹ BAINES, J., Society, morality, and religious practice, in: *Religion in ancient Egypt: gods, myths, and personal practice*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1991), 156-158.

¹⁵² GRAEFE, E., Talfest, in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. W. Helck/W. Westendorf (1986), 187-189.

¹⁵³ BORGHOUTS, J. F., *Ancient Egyptian magical texts* (1978), passim; LEITZ, C., *Magical and medical papyri of the New Kingdom* (1999), 64-65, 70; SZPAKOWSKA, K., *Behind closed eyes: dreams and nightmares in ancient Egypt* (2003).

¹⁵⁴ EDWARDS, I. E. S., *Oracular amuletic decrees of the late New Kingdom*, 2 vols (1960); BOHLEKE, B., An oracular amuletic decree of Khonsu in the Cleveland Museum of Art, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 83, 1997, 155-167.

Material culture

Material evidence for popular religion provides the core of current understanding of its practice. Context, while essential, is not always directly revealing, and many finds derive from secondary deposition. Thus, objects such as female figurines are found in domestic, temple, and tomb environs, but this spread of occurrence is not in itself informative about what they signified, which is likely to have varied in different contexts.¹⁵⁵ To identify artifacts securely as remnants of popular religious activity requires analysis of all available relevant evidence, from context, through material culture and signs of wear, to image and text.

We are also faced with the disjunction between texts and artifacts. Objects detailed for use in texts relating to popular religion, such as magico-medical handbooks, often do not match those recovered in excavations, or such connections have seldom been recognized.¹⁵⁶ The handbooks may have become elements in transmitted high culture and lost any practical application. Differences between text and artifact relate further to material—notably common prescriptions in texts to employ objects in perishable materials in archaeologically inaccessible contexts—form, and elaboration, while some object types known in one type of source are absent in the other. The large majority of objects recovered from what appear to have been locations of popular religion are uninscribed. Connections can, however, be established: words have been identified for objects of popular religious activity such as execration figures¹⁵⁷ and female figurines of clay,¹⁵⁸ and more such parallels may be found in the future.

Objects of everyday use were multifunctional and religious vocabulary often multivalent; an artifact or a term may not relate only to a popular religious practice. Decorum can hide the intention behind religious texts or images. It might have been deemed too direct and presumptuous to declare why an offering was made, and most votive objects are silent about the concerns of donors. Where a motivation is given, as with wishes for life and health inscribed on many Late Period bronze statuettes, it is too general to be informative,

¹⁵⁵ WARAKSA, E. A., *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009).

¹⁵⁶ See DIELEMAN, J., Review of Szpakowska, K. (ed.), *Through a glass darkly: magic, dreams & prophecy in ancient Egypt* (2006), in: *Aestimatio* 5, 2008, 19-21. For cases where identifications have been made, see e.g. WARAKSA, E. A. *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009); WILFONG, T. G./FERRARA, A. W. S., *Karanis revealed: discovering the past and present of a Michigan excavation in Egypt* (2014); WILBURN, D., Inscribed ostrich eggs at Berenike and materiality in ritual performance, in: *Religion in the Roman Empire* 1, no. 2, 2015, 263–85.

¹⁵⁷ RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 185-190.

¹⁵⁸ WARAKSA, E. A., Waraksa, E. A., Female figurines (Pharaonic period), in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4dg0d57b>.

probably for reasons of decorum. Batch production of generic artifacts such as anthropomorphic and animal figurines and faience amulets suggests that many categories of ritual goods were not commissioned for specific needs but made in advance for uses including popular religious acts and deposition in graves.

Lastly, much material that may illuminate popular religious activity—including many written sources—is unprovenanced, so that the locus of activity is often unclear. Below we review a few categories of deposited objects before concluding with a brief discussion of their possible relation to core contexts.

Frequently combining image and text, stelae of stone, wood, clay, and faience are a major category of evidence for popular religion. Small-scale and miniature stelae were often mass-produced and therefore available for people of average means. The crudest stone stelae could be mistaken for ostraca, yet they had the same function as elaborate counterparts. Those relating to popular religion were set up in temples, tombs, and domestic environments as well as locales such as rock-carved shrines and remote expedition sites.

Many categories of stelae are relevant to popular religion. Examples include the *ḥ-ikr-n-R^c* stelae (see n. 150) and others from Deir el-Medina,¹⁵⁹ the Horbeit stelae from the delta,¹⁶⁰ the Salakhana trove from Asyut (see n. 132), ear stelae,¹⁶¹ magical *cippi* or Horus-on-the-crocodiles stelae,¹⁶² and stelae featuring individual or family dedications to primarily non-state deities such as Renenutet,¹⁶³ or to deified humans, such as Amenhotep I and/or his mother Ahmose-Nefertari (Maderna-Sieben, this volume). Some of these stelae combine images of the donors in gestures of worship or praise with texts referring to individual concerns, such as illnesses inflicted by the deities who should cure them, or more rarely transgressions committed by the donors for which they desire forgiveness. Such concerns may also underlie stelae with undistinctive texts or those that might appear to be primarily economic, such as donation stelae.¹⁶⁴ Stelae offered by non-

¹⁵⁹ See e.g. collection in : EXELL, K. *Soldiers, sailors and sandalmakers: a social reading of Ramesside period votive stelae* (2009).

¹⁶⁰ HABACHI, L., Khatâ'na-Qantir: importance, in: *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 52, 1954, 443-562.

¹⁶¹ SADEK, A. I., *Popular religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom* (1987); MORGAN, E. E., *Untersuchungen zu den Ohrenstelen aus Deir el Medine* (2004).

¹⁶² STERNBERG-EL HOTABI, H., *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Horusstelen: ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte Ägyptens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, 2 vols (1999).

¹⁶³ BROEKHUIS, J., *De godin Renenwetet* (1971).

¹⁶⁴ Classic collection of examples: MEEKS, D., Les donations aux temples dans l'Égypte du 1er millénaire avant J.C., in E. Lipiński (ed.) *State and temple economy in the Ancient Near East* (1979), II, 605–87; for problems of establishing

royal individuals to major state deities, which seldom indicate the occasion for their dedication, may often have been created for purposes of popular religion.

Figurines in all materials could be employed in popular religion. Faience figurines of humans and animals are known from Early Dynastic times onward. As small, portable, and gradually more affordable goods, they could be donated at temples by many people. Female figurines of the Middle Kingdom and later were used a range of healing and apotropaic rites, as well as perhaps being present in appropriate non-ritual situations.¹⁶⁵ Three female figurines inscribed with wishes for a child were likely deposited as votive offerings next to graves.¹⁶⁶ Objects belonging to the related category of execration figures (Quack, this volume) were associated with state-sanctioned violence but were also used in popular religion. These could be images of men, more rarely women, some inscribed with names of traditional enemies, some uninscribed.¹⁶⁷ Like ceramic and stone female figurines of the New Kingdom and later, these were often destroyed deliberately.¹⁶⁸ Clay and wax figurines of the Roman period were utilized in magical binding rituals.¹⁶⁹ Graeco-Roman period terracotta figurines, mostly of deities, are well-known components of domestic religion of the Graeco-Roman Period.¹⁷⁰ They are culturally hybrid: while the deities represented are generally Egyptian, this use of terracotta has rather little precedent in earlier periods in Egypt but was common in the wider Mediterranean.

In addition to manufactured figurines, small objects of enigmatic but suggestive form that were likely components of religious action include beads, pebbles, fossils, shells and

the motivations underlying the dedication of stelae, see also BAINES, J./FROOD, E., Piety, change and display in the New Kingdom, in Collier, M./Snape, S. (eds), *Ramesside studies in honour of K. A. Kitchen* (2011), 1-17.

¹⁶⁵ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993); WARAKSA, E. A., Female figurines (Pharaonic period), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2008): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4dg0d57b>; WARAKSA, E. A., *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009).

¹⁶⁶ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993), 217-218.

¹⁶⁷ See e.g. BAINES, J., Society, morality, and religious practice, in: *Religion in ancient Egypt: gods, myths, and personal practice*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1991), 166; RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 183-190; WARAKSA, E. A., *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009), 100-113, 167. Female figures: MUNRO, P., Zu einigen ägyptischen Terrakotta-Figuren, in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 2, 1972, 27-32; RITNER, R. K., So-called “pre-dynastic hamster-headed” figurines in London and Hanover, in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 111, 1989, 85-95.

¹⁶⁸ VAN DIJK, J., Zerburchen der roten Töpfe, in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. W. Helck/W. Westendorf (1986), VI: 1389-1396; WARAKSA, E. A., *Female figurines from the Mut Precinct: context and ritual function* (2009).

¹⁶⁹ RITNER, R. K., *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (1993), 112 fig. 2, 113, 136, 144, 166, 181-183; GAGER, J. G., *Curse tablets and binding spells from the ancient world* (1992), 97-106, figs. 13-14.

¹⁷⁰ DUNAND, F., *Religion populaire en Egypte romaine: les terres cuites isiaques du Musée du Caire* (1979); DUNAND, F., *Catalogue des terres cuites gréco-romaines d’Egypte* (1990); MYSLIWIEC, K., *The twilight of ancient Egypt: first millennium B.C.E.*, trans. D. Lorton (2000); FRANKFURTER, D. T., *Religion in Roman Egypt: assimilation and resistance* (1998); PINCH, G./WARAKSA, E. A., Votive practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7kp4n7rk>.

corals, flint nodules, copper miscastings, hand-fashioned pottery pieces, and pottery wasters.¹⁷¹ Such informal and repurposed pieces, as well as those made of perishable materials that cannot be recovered, no doubt widened the range of religious activity at all social levels and in all contexts.

Amulets—small, generally protective objects mostly worn about the human body—are another major category of evidence, both in surviving examples and in depictions. Attested from Predynastic times onward, they were made in forms that both intersect with and deviate from the iconography of state religion.¹⁷² Many amulets were made of symbolically significant and costly materials, including imported and synthetic ones such as silver, electrum, lapis lazuli, shell, and faience. They occur in nearly all archaeological contexts, and in many periods they seem to have been accessible to most, perhaps all levels of society. Precise interpretation is difficult, but owners presumably believed that they benefited from wearing and being associated with amulets. Magico-medical spells include directions for producing and manipulating amulets in apotropaic and healing rituals.¹⁷³

Amulets that can be connected to popular worship include figurines of deities such as Bes and Taweret, amulets in the shape of body parts, Horus stela amulets, some of which show evidence of rubbing,¹⁷⁴ and miniature headrests from the Third Intermediate and Late periods. Amulets inscribed with prayers or other invocations are also significant.¹⁷⁵

While all classes of personal adornment could possess amuletic value,¹⁷⁶ some types of jewellery appear to have served explicitly magical purposes. Linen bracelets featuring knots, for example, may be potent residues of magical utterances and actions.¹⁷⁷ Menit

¹⁷¹ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993), 46, 65, 209-210; 235, 267-269; GIDDY, L. L., *The survey of Memphis II: Kom Rabia: the New Kingdom and post-New Kingdom objects* (1999), 10, 330-343; GRAVES-BROWN, C., Emergent flints, in: *Through a glass darkly: magic, dreams, and prophecy in ancient Egypt*, ed. K. Szpakowska (2006), 47-62; SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Landschaft und Religion – die Region von Aswân, in: *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1, 2006, 226; STEVENS, A., *Private religion at Amarna: the material evidence* (2006); Xia Nai, *Ancient Egyptian beads* (2014)..

¹⁷² See e.g., DUBIEL, U., *Amulette, Siegel und Perlen: Studien zu Typologie und Tragsitte im Alten und Mittleren Reich* (2008).

¹⁷³ See e.g., BORGHOUTS, J. F., *Ancient Egyptian magical texts* (1978); LEITZ, C., *Magical and medical papyri of the New Kingdom* (1999).

¹⁷⁴ STERNBERG-EL HOTABI, H., *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Horusstelen: ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte Ägyptens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, 2 vols (1999); GASSE, A. (ed.), *Les stèles d'Horus sur les crocodiles* (2004).

¹⁷⁵ ANDREWS, C., *Amulets of ancient Egypt* (1994).

¹⁷⁶ GIDDY, L. L., *The survey of Memphis II: Kom Rabia: the New Kingdom and post-New Kingdom objects* (1999), 53.

¹⁷⁷ WENDRICH, W., Entangled, connected or protected? The power of knots and knotting in ancient Egypt, in: *Through a glass darkly: magic, dreams, and prophecy in ancient Egypt*, ed. K. Szpakowska (2006), 243-269.

necklaces and counterpoises, as well as types of jewellery used in daily life, could be dedicated as votive offerings to Hathor.¹⁷⁸

Artifacts, functions, and social groups

How far do contexts of deposition inform understanding of the categories of material reviewed above? Objects dedicated as votives are attested from all periods and materials, and they can take almost any form. Flint animals appear to have been favored votive offerings at Predynastic Hierakonpolis.¹⁷⁹ Among the most popular types of offering found at religious sites of the Dynastic period, especially the New Kingdom, are figurines in anthropomorphic and animal form, ear figurines and ear stela, and textiles, as well as wooden and stone phalli and natural objects of suggestive shape.¹⁸⁰ In the Late and Ptolemaic periods the dedication of bronze statuettes and ritual equipment was especially widespread. Such objects range from the extremely costly to the rough and barely recognizable, and the latter would have been affordable to many people.¹⁸¹ In all periods the majority of objects deposited may have been made of organic materials that would not survive in representative numbers.

Mummified animals were extremely common dedications in the first millennium, as is shown by the vast number and diversity of mummies, many from purpose-bred stock. An embalmed animal would have accompanied—or served as—an individual's petition to a deity, perhaps often as dedicated during a visit to a sacred site.¹⁸² Some whole or partial animal mummies were placed inside bronze statuettes or their bases.¹⁸³ These would have been relatively costly, but their higher prestige and compact dimensions had advantages as spaces became crowded. The vast majority, however, were interred in ceramic and

¹⁷⁸ PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993).

¹⁷⁹ HIKADE, T., Stone tool production, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2010) <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7pb3h0h1>, with references.

¹⁸⁰ SADEK, A. I., *Popular religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom* (1987); PINCH, G., *Votive offerings to Hathor* (1993).

¹⁸¹ SADEK, A. I., *Popular religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom* (1987); DAVIES, S., Bronzes from the sacred animal necropolis at North Saqqara, in: *Gifts for the gods: images from ancient Egyptian temples*, ed. M. Hill, M./Schorsch, D. (ed.) (2007), 174-187; PINCH, G./WARAKSA, E. A., Votive practices, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7kp4n7rk>.

¹⁸² See IKRAM, S., ed. *Divine creatures: animal mummies in ancient Egypt*, 2nd ed. (2015); MORENZ, S., Ein neues Dokument der Tierbestattung, in: *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 88, 1962, 42-47.

¹⁸³ E.g. JETT, P./STURMAN, S./WEISSER, T. D., A study of the Egyptian bronze falcon figures in the Walters Art Gallery, in: *Studies in Conservation* 30, 1985, 112-18.

other containers in catacombs.¹⁸⁴ Perhaps the best known site of this type is Saqqara, where the catacombs and associated cult installations which served the city of Memphis overlaid and intersected with the necropolis of earlier periods.¹⁸⁵ Other places include Bubastis in the delta,¹⁸⁶ Tebtunis in the Fayyum,¹⁸⁷ and Tuna el-Gebel, the necropolis of Hermopolis in Middle Egypt.¹⁸⁸ Among elite objects relating to popular religion that have been found typically in cemeteries are the ivory wands used in protective rites for women and children. These are first attested from the Early Dynastic Period and continued into the Second Intermediate Period.¹⁸⁹ Further categories that relate to divine protection include decorated and/or inscribed headrests,¹⁹⁰ “figure vases” typical of the New Kingdom,¹⁹¹ and a plastered and painted birthing brick excavated from the Middle Kingdom mayoral residence at South Abydos, a find which confirms the existence of, and symbolism surrounding, a type of magical object that had been known only from

¹⁸⁴ IKRAM, S. (ed.), *Divine creatures: animal mummies in ancient Egypt* (2015); DODSON, A., Rituals related to animal cults, in: Wendrich, W./Dieleman, J./Frood, E. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>.

¹⁸⁵ E.g., DAVIES, S./SMITH, H. S./FRAZER, K. J., *The sacred animal necropolis at North Saqqara: the falcon complex and catacomb, the archaeological report* (2005), SMITH, H. S./DAVIES, S./FRAZER, K. J., *The sacred animal necropolis at North Saqqara: the main temple complex, the archaeological report* (2006), DAVIES, S./SMITH, H. S./FRAZER, K. J., *The sacred animal necropolis at North Saqqara: Mother of Apis and baboon catacombs* (2006).

¹⁸⁶ KESSLER, D., *Die heiligen Tiere und der König I: Beiträge zu Organisation, Kult und Theologie der spätzeitlichen Tierfriedhöfe* (1989).

¹⁸⁷ BAGNANI, G., The great Egyptian crocodile mystery, in: *Archaeology* 5, 1952, 76-78.

¹⁸⁸ BOESSNECK, J./KESSLER, D./DRIESCH, A. v. D., *Tuna el-Gebel I: Die Tiergalerien* (1987); KESSLER, D., *Die heiligen Tiere und der König I: Beiträge zu Organisation, Kult und Theologie der spätzeitlichen Tierfriedhöfe* (1989).

¹⁸⁹ ALTENMÜLLER, H., *Die Apotropaia und die Götter Mittelägyptens*, 2 vols (1965); PINCH, G., *Magic in ancient Egypt* (1994), 40-42; RITNER, R. K., Household religion in ancient Egypt, in: *Household and family religion in antiquity*, ed. J. P. Bodel/S. M. Olyan (2008), 171-196; FREED, R. E. (ed.), *The secrets of Tomb 10A: Egypt 2000 BC* (2009), 122 and fig. 74; WEGNER, J., A decorated birth-brick from South Abydos: new evidence on childbirth and birth magic in the Middle Kingdom, in: *Archaism and innovation: studies in the culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt*, ed. D. P. Silverman/W. K. Simpson/J. Wegner (2009), 447-496; BUSSMANN, R., *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie: Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz* (2010).

¹⁹⁰ D'AURIA, S./LACOVARA, P./ROEHRIG, C., *Mummies and magic: the funerary arts of ancient Egypt* (1988), 78; SEIDLMAYER, S. J., Die Ikonographie des Todes, in: *Social aspects of funerary culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: proceedings of the symposium held at Leiden, 6-7 June, 1996*, ed. H. Willems (2001), 224-230; PERRAUD, M., Appuis-tête à inscription magique et apotropaia, in: *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 102, 2002, 309-326; MESKELL, L., *Private life in New Kingdom Egypt* (2002), 114.

¹⁹¹ BOURRIAU, J., Pottery figure vases of the New Kingdom, in: *Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne* 1, 1987, 81-96; BAINES, J., Society, morality, and religious practice, in: *Religion in ancient Egypt: gods, myths, and personal practice*, ed. B. E. Shafer (1991), 176 and fig. 63.

images and in texts.¹⁹² Undecorated, non-elite objects of these types would possess similar religious value.

Most of the textual sources noted above derive from elite contexts: magico-medical spells, oracular amuletic decrees, funerary inscriptions and biographies, letters, graffiti, and inscribed artifacts. To these should be added calendars of lucky and unlucky days¹⁹³ and the New Kingdom Dream Book,¹⁹⁴ a genre that had successors in Demotic.¹⁹⁵ These compositions attest to domains of action and belief that were part and parcel of religion. Literary evidence provides fictional examples of popular religious behaviours of the elite that could have had analogies in real life, such as magicians working for the royal court¹⁹⁶ and the magical use of wax figurines for personal gain,¹⁹⁷ a ritual also known from magico-medical and temple texts.¹⁹⁸

It is necessary to bear in mind domains that cannot be recovered directly but surely formed part of the religious life and experience of individuals of all social strata. These include lost material culture as well as actions and performances, such as songs, dances, gestures, and oral histories.¹⁹⁹ Another gap in evidence that warrants caution is in rituals

¹⁹² WEGNER, J., A decorated birth-brick from South Abydos: new evidence on childbirth and birth magic in the Middle Kingdom, in: *Archaism and innovation: studies in the culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt*, ed. D. P. Silverman/W. K. Simpson/J. Wegner (2009), 447-496.

¹⁹³ LEITZ, C., *Tagewählerei: das Buch ḥꜣt nḥḥ ꜥḥwy ḏt und verwandte Texte*, 2 vols (1994); COLLIER, M./QUIRKE, S., *The UCL Lahun papyri: religious, literary, legal, mathematical and medical* (2004); STEVENS, A., *Domestic religious practices* (2009): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>.

¹⁹⁴ GARDINER, A. H., *Chester Beatty Gift* (1935), I, 9-23; SZPAKOWSKA, K., *Behind closed eyes: dreams and nightmares in ancient Egypt* (2003).

¹⁹⁵ Prada, L., *Oneirocritica Aegyptiaca*: Artemidorus of Daldis, Egypt, and the contemporary oneirocritic literature in Egyptian, in G. Weber, (ed.) *Artemidor von Daldis und die antike Traumdeutung: Texte – Kontexte – Lektüren* (2015), 263-277.

¹⁹⁶ P. Westcar: BLACKMAN, A. M./DAVIES, W. V., *The Story of King Kheops and the magicians transcribed from Papyrus Westcar (Berlin Papyrus 3033)* (1988); PARKINSON, R. B., *The Tale of Sinuhe and other ancient Egyptian poems, 1940-1640 BC* (1997), 102-130; P. Vandier: POSENER, G., *Le Papyrus Vandier* (1985); HOFFMANN, F./QUACK, J. F., *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 153-160. See also DIELEMAN, J., *Priests, tongues, and rites: the London–Leiden magical manuscripts and translation in Egyptian ritual (100-300 CE)* (2005), 221-238; LLOYD, A. B., Heka, dreams, and prophecy in ancient Egyptian stories, in: *Through a glass darkly: magic, dreams, and prophecy in ancient Egypt*, ed. K. Szpakowska (2006), 71-94.

¹⁹⁷ P. Westcar: see previous note; Setne I and II: HOFFMANN, F./QUACK, J. F., *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 118-152; RITNER, R. K. in SIMPSON, W. K. (ed.), *The literature of ancient Egypt: an anthology of stories, instructions, stelae, autobiographies, and poetry*, 3rd ed. (2003), 453-489.

¹⁹⁸ RAVEN, M. J., Wax in Egyptian magic and symbolism, in: *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden* 64, 1983, 7-47.

¹⁹⁹ On gestures, see e.g. DOMINICUS, B. *Gesten und Gebärden in Darstellungen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches* (1994); LUISELLI, M. M., Das Bild des Betens: Versuch einer bildtheoretischen Analyse der altägyptischen Anbetungsgestik, in: *Imago Aegypti* 2, 2007, 87-96.

that are not securely attested for Dynastic times, such as marriage ceremonies.²⁰⁰ Sensory experiences formed a core component of popular religion, as can be seen from the decoration of tombs and harpers' songs.²⁰¹ The taste of food, wine, and other drinks at a festival, the aroma of incense, the sound of musical performances, and the touch of kin surely constituted essential and enhancing elements in personal religious experience.²⁰² Identifying likely contexts for such sensory experiences—such as temples on festival days and funeral banquets on the one hand, or vigils with the sick and dying on the other hand—is easier than uncovering what they meant to participants. Some aspects of popular religion are too private, or too ephemeral, to be recovered.

Conclusion: variability; ancient and modern expectations

More broadly, much or most of popular religion remains inaccessible to study, an issue that we address briefly in concluding. The level of attestation of popular religion from predynastic, dynastic, and Graeco-Roman periods varies greatly. The relative sparseness of evidence from the third millennium, in particular, has sparked discussion, including the suggestion of Barry Kemp that, unlike communities such as Ramessid Deir el-Medina, for most of the third millennium and much of the second Egyptian society “was, in practice, largely secular”.²⁰³ Ordinary graves and houses of the Old Kingdom indeed contain few materials of clear religious character, and religious display in even the most elaborate monumental tombs of the period is limited. Yet any formal burial had religious meaning and involved the participation of many people, while the relative scarcity of visible religious elements in an assemblage may relate to constraints of decorum, not to the understanding of those creating it. As indicated above, a very high proportion of religious action and display, particularly among those lower down the social scale, was probably oral, expressed in ephemeral media, and enacted in performances that could not be recovered archaeologically, as well as taking place in locations that did not become archaeological sites. In thinking about popular religion it is necessary to make allowance

²⁰⁰ But see BAINES, J., *Visual and written culture in ancient Egypt* (2007), 163.

²⁰¹ WENTE, E. F., Egyptian “make merry” songs reconsidered, in: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 21, 1962, 118-128; ASSMANN, J., Fest des Augenblicks – Verheissung der Dauer: die Kontroverse der ägyptischen Harfnerlieder, in: *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur: Studien zum Gedenken an Eberhard Otto*, ed. J. Assmann/E. Feucht/R. Grieshammer (1977), 55-84.

²⁰² FINNESTAD, R. B., Enjoying the pleasures of sensation: reflections on a significant feature of Egyptian religion, in: *Gold of praise: studies in ancient Egypt in honor of Edward F Wente*, ed. Teeter, E./Larson, J. A. (1999), 111-119.

²⁰³ E.g. Kemp, B. J., How religious were the ancient Egyptians? in: *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 5, 1995, 25-54 (citation p. 50); BUSSMANN, R., *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie: Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz*, 2 vols (2010); BAINES, J., How can we approach Egyptian personal religion of the third millennium?, in Zivie-Coche, C. (ed.), *L'individu dans la religion égyptienne* (2016).

for these probabilities, as well as for the lack of attestation of the large majority of the ancient population who lived in small settlements, worked on the land and in the waterways, and are attested at best through pictorial and textual sources created for the elite. Furthermore, the “secular” may not stand in sharp contradiction with the “religious”: in many respects they are more likely to be points along a continuum.

From no later than the Early Dynastic Period many names of deities are attested, direct and indirect evidence for small-scale temples and practices relating to them can be identified, as can pointers to the prevalence of magic. It is therefore difficult to see popular and state religion as having a small presence in the society of early times. The more overt evidence for religion of all types and levels from later periods suggests, rather, that religious modes of thought and action had a positive value throughout society and that changes in decorum and display rendered that value more accessible and visible. As a positive good, popular religion was probably more prevalent in the higher reaches of society where people had more resources to practise it. The balance between religious activities relating to temples, to the domestic sphere, to the realm of the dead, and to the wider landscape varied over time. Those domains were complementary, not distinct from one another. Although popular religion may be difficult to identify for some periods, it was fundamental to the phenomenon as a whole. Before relatively modern times, few people envisaged a world largely free from dimensions beyond pragmatic action and direct sensory experience, that is, a world lacking religion on a broad definition. The evidence just cited and, more contentiously, the pattern of gaps in evidence suggests that earlier Egypt was no exception in this respect. While the intensity of religious activity may vary in different periods and societies, the increase in overt religion in Egypt in later periods may thus have been not so much a “sacralization”²⁰⁴ as a realization of existing aspirations.

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²⁰⁴ Contra BAINES, J., Interpretations of religion: logic, discourse, rationality, in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 76, 1984, 47-50.

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