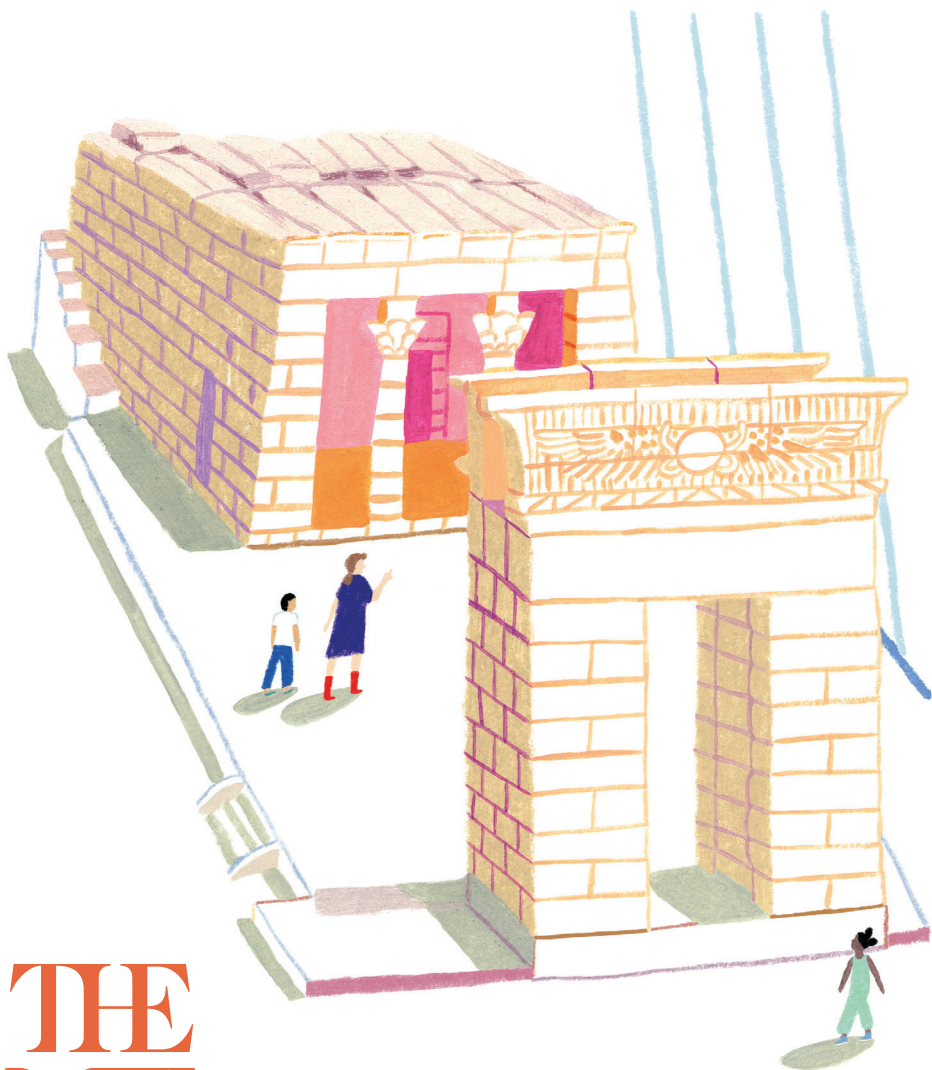


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# Family Guide

Explore Egyptian Art  
The Temple of Dendur



THE  
MET

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Welcome to the temple of Dendur—the only ancient Egyptian temple in the United States! Built about two thousand years ago along the **Nile River**, the Egyptian Government gave it to the United States in 1965. In 1967 it was decided that it should come to The Met.

Use this guide to look closely at the temple and talk about what you see, think, and imagine with your family and friends. Before you start your journey, find Egypt, and Dendur, on this map.



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# Look

The temple of Dendur was built by the Roman emperor Augustus during the time when Egypt was ruled by the Roman Empire. The temple honors the Egyptian goddess Isis and two sons of a local ruler.

Some of the carvings on the temple symbolize the natural world. **Papyrus** and lotus plants are carved to look like they are growing around the base of the temple—these plants represent the earth. The sun disk with outstretched wings over the entrance represents the sky. Other carvings show scenes of what ideally would have happened between the earth and the sky—that is, inside the temple. Look at the walls of the temple and the gate. On the temple's outer wall, Augustus is shown as a **pharaoh**. He appears several times making offerings to the gods. In exchange, the gods provide life, symbolized by the **ankh** each of them clasps in one hand.

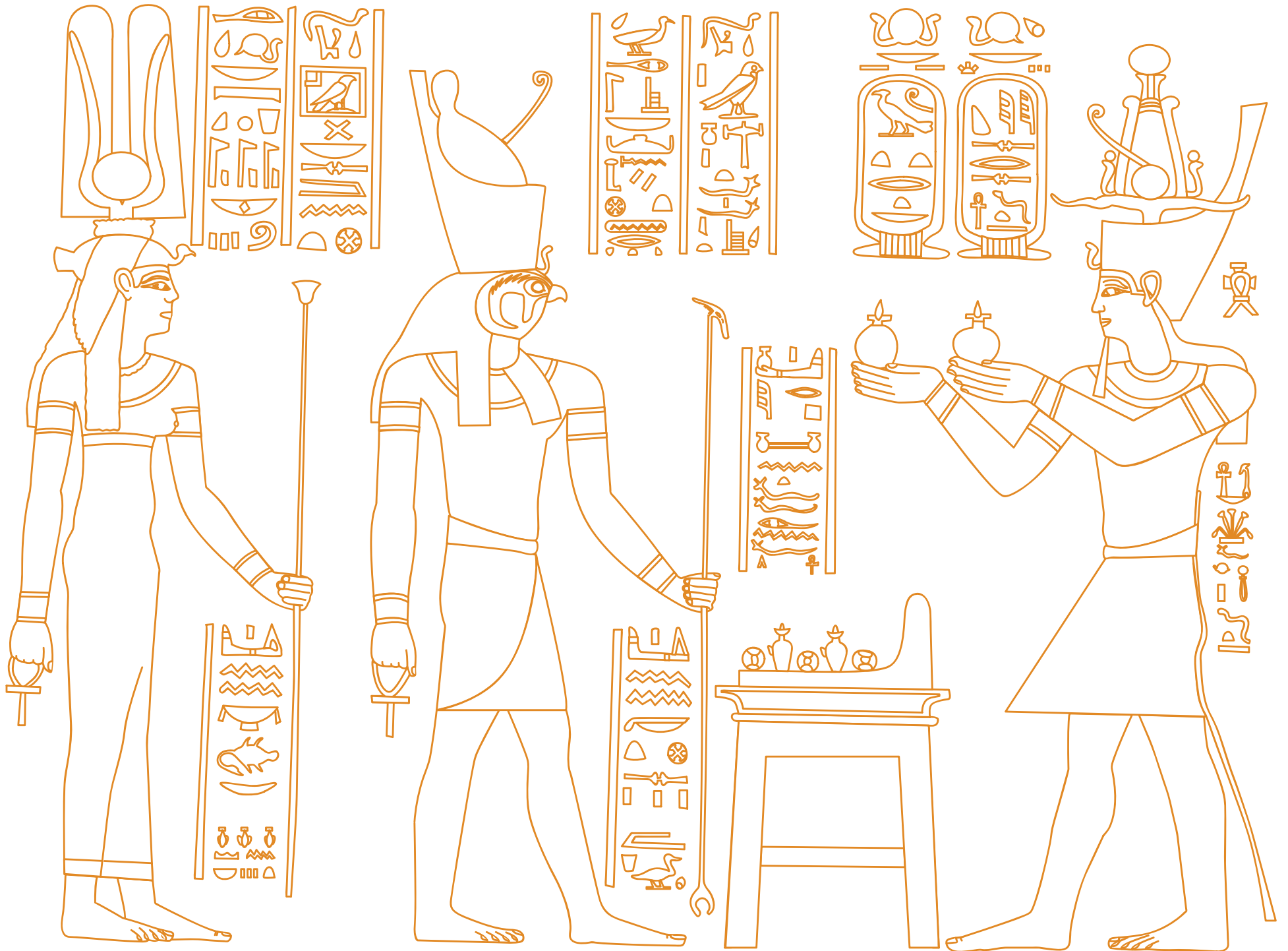
The temple is full of images of gods and has many **hieroglyphic** inscriptions. The carving on the outside of the temple is known as **sunk relief**, which means that the pictures were carved into the stone with the background left uncarved and flat. The bright Egyptian sun would have cast shadows along the outlines, bringing the images into clear view. Inside the temple, it's the opposite! There, the carving is what is known as **raised relief**, with the background carved away so that the images pop out and are visible in the dim light.

## Find the Ankh

Look closely!  
How many **ankh** signs can you find on the temple?



The Roman emperor Augustus (right) making offerings to the gods Hathor (left) and Horus (center).



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## Fun Fact

Egypt gave this temple to the United States as a gift. It was taken apart in Egypt, packed into 660 crates, transported by ship, and put back together again, block by block, at The Met.



Above: The temple blocks waiting to be packed into crates in Egypt.



Right: The crates being unloaded after the long journey to the United States.

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## Think and Discuss

Ancient Egyptian temples were houses for the gods rather than meeting places for people. How are ancient Egyptian temples similar to and different from modern places of worship?

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# Create

The carvings on the temple were once painted in color. How do you think they may have looked originally?

Sketch the temple, adding the colors of your choice. (Please use only pencil in the galleries. Thank you!)



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# Keep Exploring

After you've enjoyed exploring the temple of Dendur, continue your journey through ancient Egypt! Visit the Egyptian Art galleries nearby to uncover works of art from the past. As you explore, search for **pharaohs**, sphinxes, gods and goddesses, and animals.



Want to know more about the temple of Dendur? Check out the images and history of the temple on the walls nearby.

Find the Sphinx of Hatshepsut right near the temple in gallery 131. *Sphinx of Hatshepsut, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, (ca. 1479–1458 BCE.). From Egypt, Thebes, Deir el-Bahri. Painted granite. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1931 (31.3.166)*

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# Words to Know

**Ankh:** [AHnk] a hieroglyphic sign meaning “life” and “to live”

**Hieroglyphs:** [HI-ro-glifs] pictures that represent sounds and, sometimes, words or ideas; these pictures are part of the ancient Egyptian writing system. There are more than seven hundred signs in hieroglyphic script!

**Nile River:** one of the world’s two longest rivers, which flows north through northeastern Africa to the Mediterranean Sea

**Papyrus:** [pah-PY-rus] a tall plant that grows in marshes; a thick paperlike material made from papyrus plants, which was used in ancient times; a sheet or scroll made out of papyrus, with writing on it.

**Pharaoh:** [FEH-ro] ancient Egyptian king

**Relief:** a kind of sculpture with figures or designs carved into a flat surface so that they stand out from the background



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The Temple of Dendur, from Egypt, Nubia,  
Dendur. Roman Period, reign of Augustus,  
completed by 10 BCE. Sandstone.  
Given to the United States by Egypt  
in 1965, and awarded to The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art in 1967 (68.154)

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