

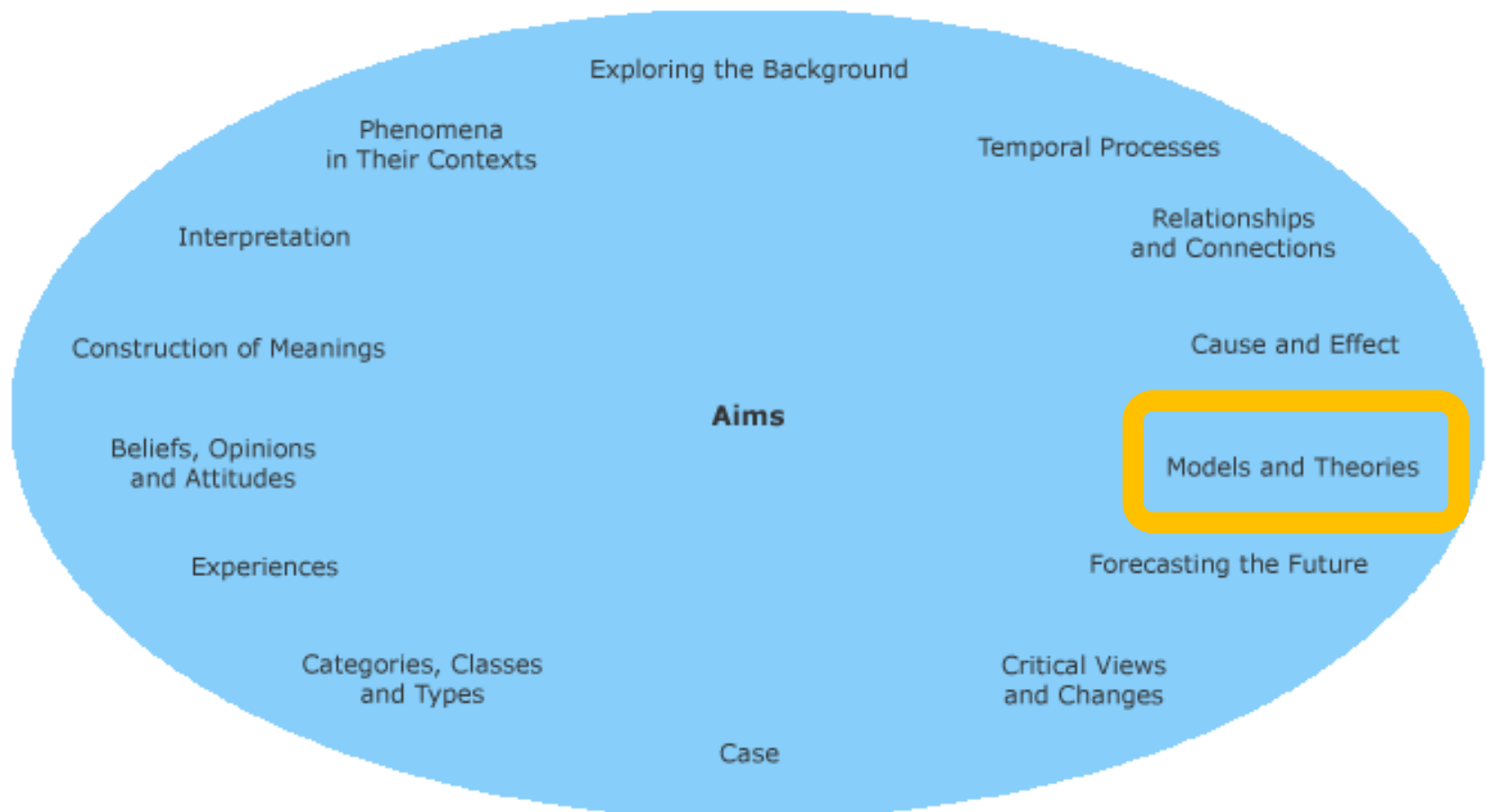
Unit 9 – Models **Religion and Magic**

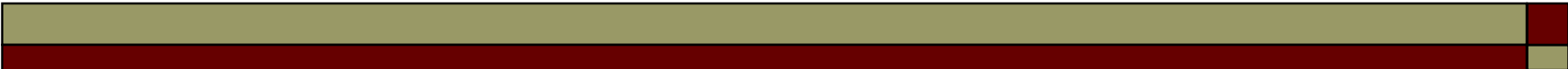
HPAH7011: Culture, Theory and Methodology
for the Study of the Ancient World

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When starting with your research project...



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- ❑ Humanities: researchers often form a theoretical model, concept hierarchy or theoretical point of view on the researched phenomena
 - ❑ Formation of a theory or a model may be based on criticism or development of existing theories or models
 - ❑ Often realisation / observation – theoretical models, concepts or points of view on the chosen subject matter do not exist OR existing models are not applicable



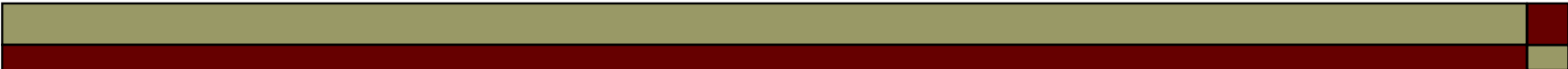
Religion:

- What is religion?
 - the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods
 - BUT controversial subject in religious studies with scholars failing to agree
- What was religion in the past?
 - Even more difficult
 - Modern interpretation only limited in their application
 - Only able to be tackled if other phenomena are taken into consideration

What is the religious model in Ancient Egypt?

□ And... in no particular order

- Religion
- Magic
- Gods
- Myth/Mythology
- Ritual
- Theology
- Cult
- Priests
- Temples/Chapels, Shrines/Sacred Landscapes
- **All dependent on time, culture, place**

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- **All dependent on time, culture, place**
 - Therefore
 - E. Teeter. 2011. Religion and Ritual in AE
 - → first chapter: The Egyptian Mind

CAREFUL

- modern mind acts depending on our theological understanding
 - magic often seen as opposite to religion or, at best, early stage of religion → describing actions or knowledge relating to the supernatural or the demonic, but not the divine
 - BUT: ancient Egyptians: never perceived magic as “black art” or “sorcery,” in conflict with “white” or “pure” religion – magic as a tool
- Egyptology: took long before acceptance interdependence of religion, magic, and sciences (medicine)
 - Book titles as “Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt,” chosen for an overview of all aspects of ancient Egyptian religions (David 2002) not possible in the early years of Egyptology

Magic

- ❑ Magic was inherent to overall Egyptian thinking and a regular part of religion at all levels of Egyptian society
- ❑ Magic played the primary role in countering ANY kind of threats from outside; various evil spirits needed to be warned off, and deities invoked to protect the vulnerable
- ❑ Described by the term *heka*

heka and *Heka*

- ❑ *heka* was a cosmic and divine power existing as a force in the universe
- ❑ personified as the male anthropomorphic god *Heka*, who represented the tenth hour of the day and, as such, accompanied the sun god in his day barque → here visualised together with *Shu* (“creative logos”) and *Shia* (“perception”)
- ❑ used throughout Pharaonic period until Roman times.
- ❑ succeeded by the Coptic word *Hik* (xik), which was equated with the Greek word *magia*

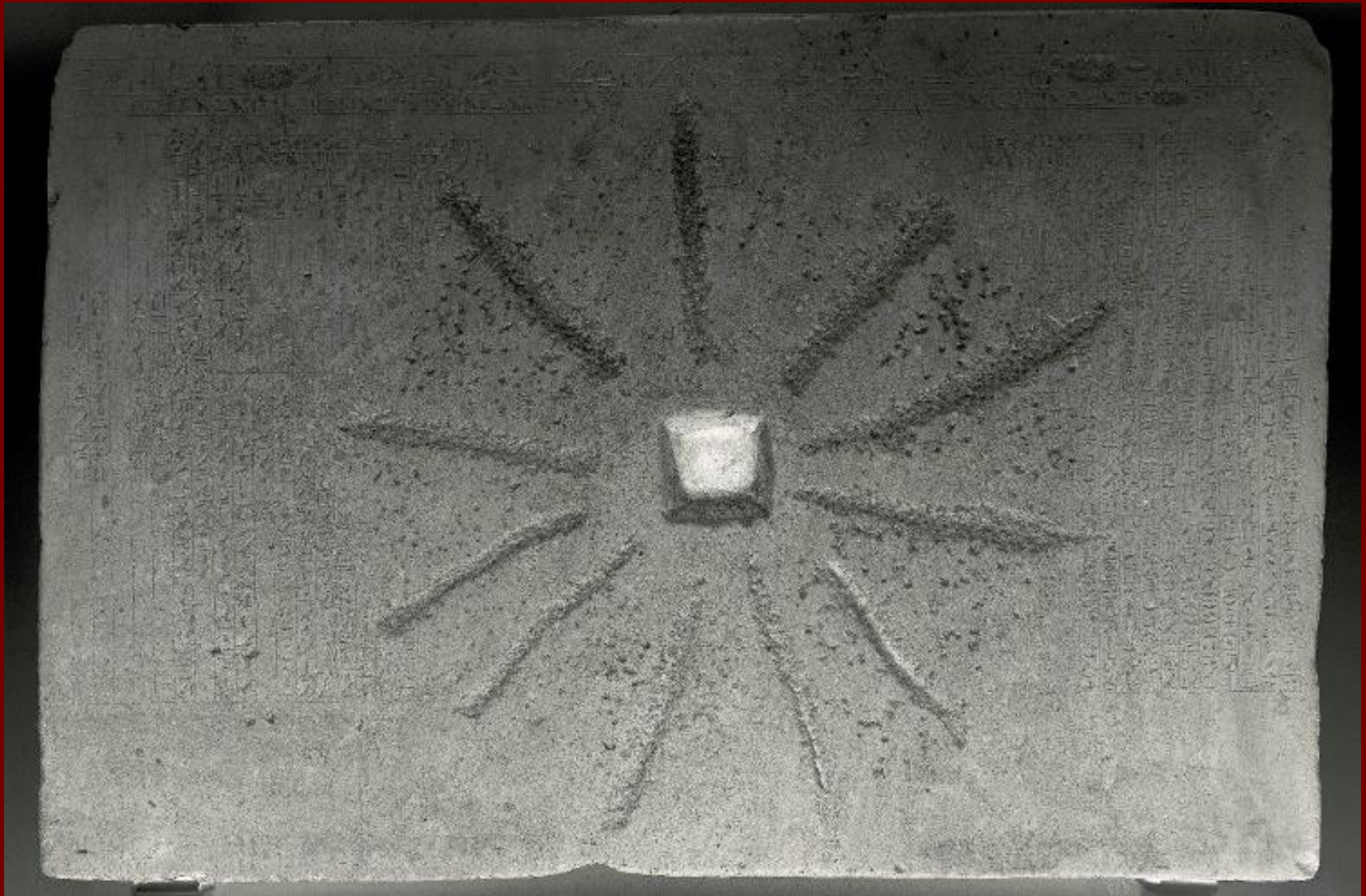
“To become the god *Heka*” (CT 261)

- ❑ best definition of *Heka* in Egyptian terms (Middle Kingdom coffin) :
- ❑ *I am he whom the Lord of all made before duality had yet come into being ... I am the son of him who gave birth to the universe ... I am the protection of that which the Lord of all has ordained ... I am he who gave life to the Ennead of gods ... I have come to take my position that I may receive my dignity. Because to me belonged the universe before you gods had come into being. You have come afterwards because I am **Heka**.*”

heka

- ❑ *heka* existed before creation of divine and mundane world, because was cause for emanation of cosmos = “life-giving energy” (conceived in mind of the creator god + expressed as “divine logos”)
- ❑ Expressed in Memphite theology, articulated in the inscriptions on a late period monument the Shabako Stone

Monument of Memphite Theology – Shabako Stone



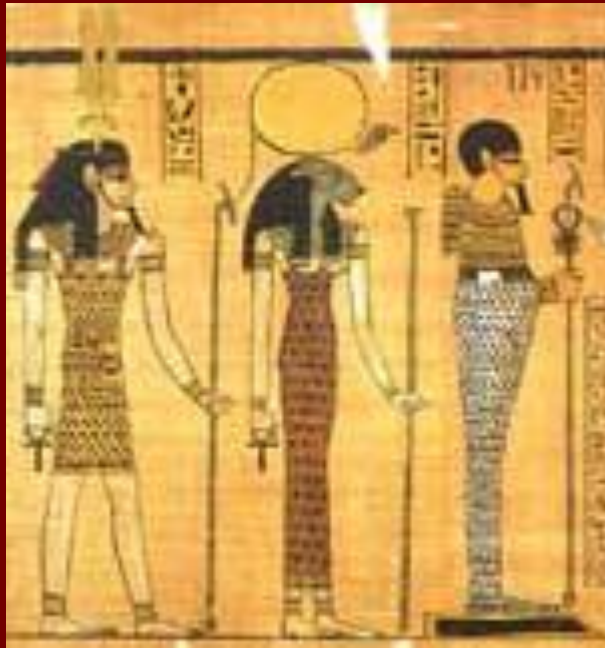
Monument of Memphite Theology

– Shabako Stone (BM 498)

- ❑ Magic at the core of theology and mythology
- ❑ two horizontal registers of hieroglyphs: names of Shabako and 'ancient fiction' (he preserved ancient text, dated OK)
- ❑ below 60 vertical registers of hieroglyphs (some substantially damaged): record the 'Memphite Theology' or creation myth
 - text perhaps originally composed during the New Kingdom, in which Ptah is responsible for the creation of all things by means of the spoken word

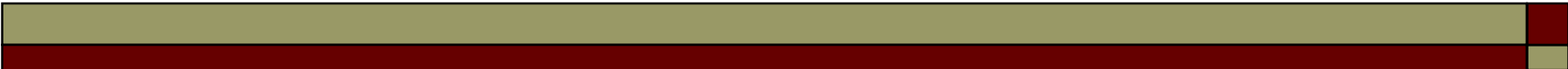
Ptah: God of Craftsmen, Rebirth and Creation

Cairo JdE 60739



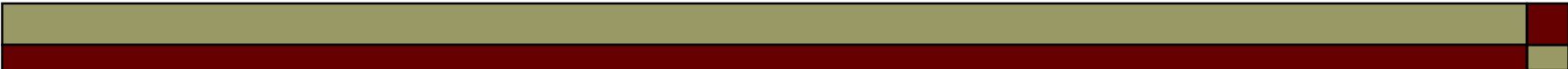
Ptah within Mennefer
(Memphis) Triad (Ptah,
Sekhmet, Nefertem)





heka – Memphite theology I

- ❑ creation of each human or divine being (in general everything that exists in the universe) by creator god Ptah
- ❑ achieved through verbal manifestation of **divine thought** and its **correct pronunciation** in recitation (speaking out ALOUD) as “logos,” (*Hw*), or “word, command” (*medet*)
- ❑ divine “logos” refers to encrypted abstract, symbolic notion of “name” (*ren*)



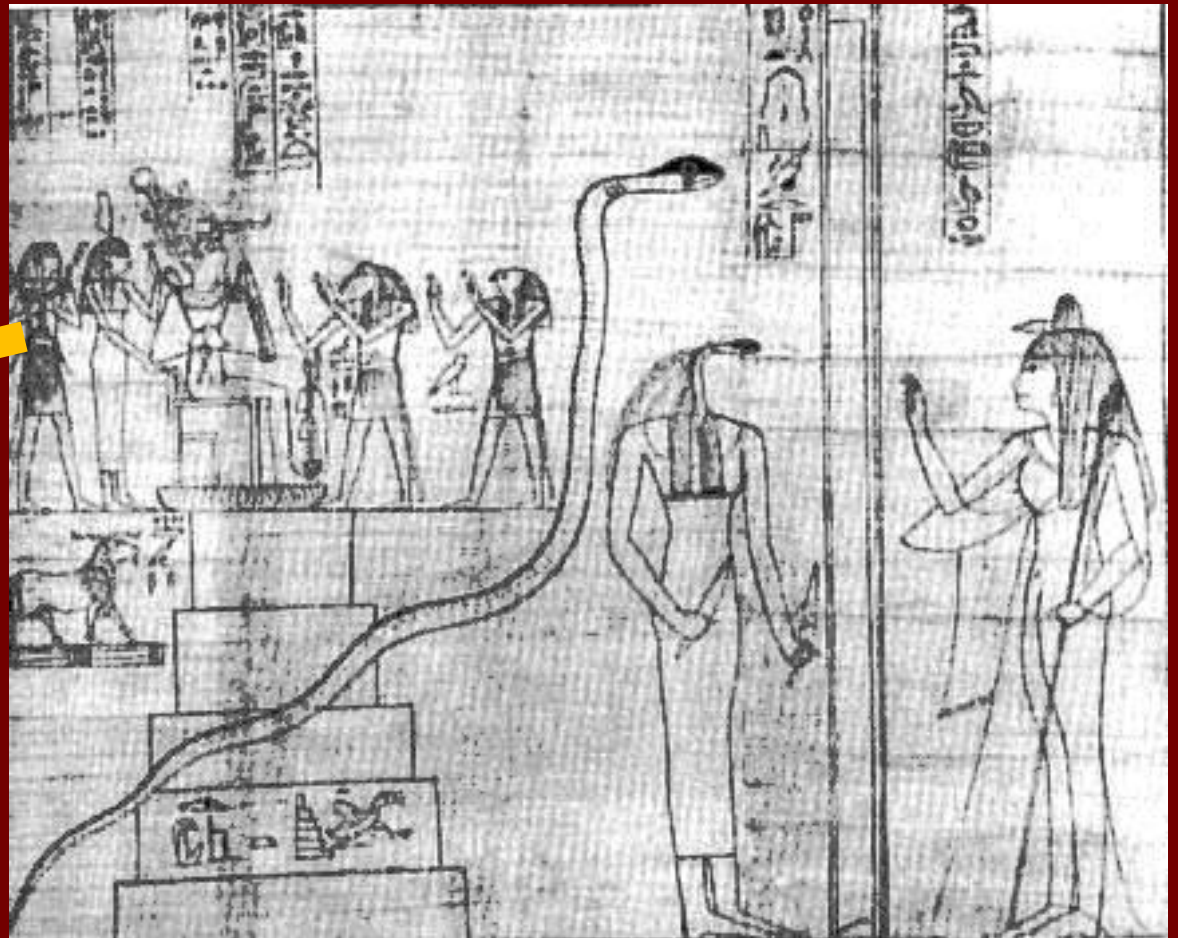
heka – Memphite theology II

- By “proclaiming the name of everything” Ptah gave birth,
 - initially, to Shu and Tefnut and
 - consequently to the whole Ennead (group of nine gods).
- Not possible without notion of *Heka* as power who brought proclamation to life
- All the gods and human beings came afterwards as result of this divine creativity caused by *Heka*, made manifest by the spoken words of Ptah

God *Heka* and Ka

- ❑ Another epithet for *Heka*: “the one who consecrates imagery” (HkA-kA)
- ❑ Refers to primeval generative attribute of *heka* to empower creator’s divine thoughts and actions; translate them into their substantial equivalent in the visual and material world
- ❑ *heka* was the animation force behind every ritual act, state or private, beneficent or hostile. Since the creation of the “first time” was re-enacted in the daily temple ritual, “the ritual of the opening of the mouth,” every morning, the power of *heka* was present in *every* ritual activity

**Heka, God of magic (far left), stands with the goddess Maat behind the throne of Osiris.
Funerary papyrus of the priestess
Nesitanebetisheru, c. 950 BC. BM EA 10554/88**



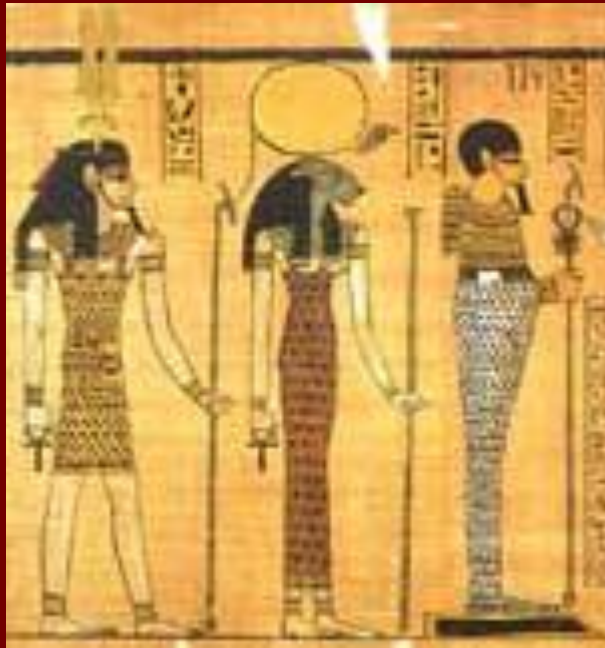
Materiality of the religious aspects of *magic*

BM EA52831



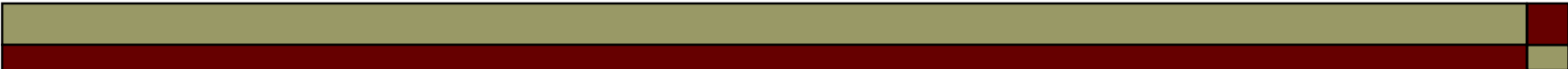
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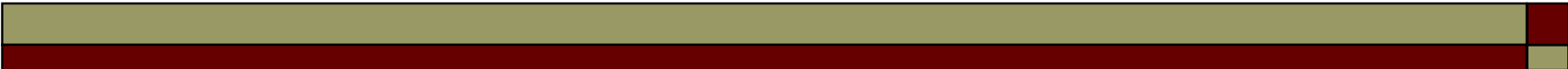
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Opening of the Mouth ritual



Models of offerings (from a 6th dyn. mastaba in Giza) – magical provision for the afterlife

Meat (MMA 64.66.6)



Beer (MMA 64.66.4b)



