



Ancient Egypt

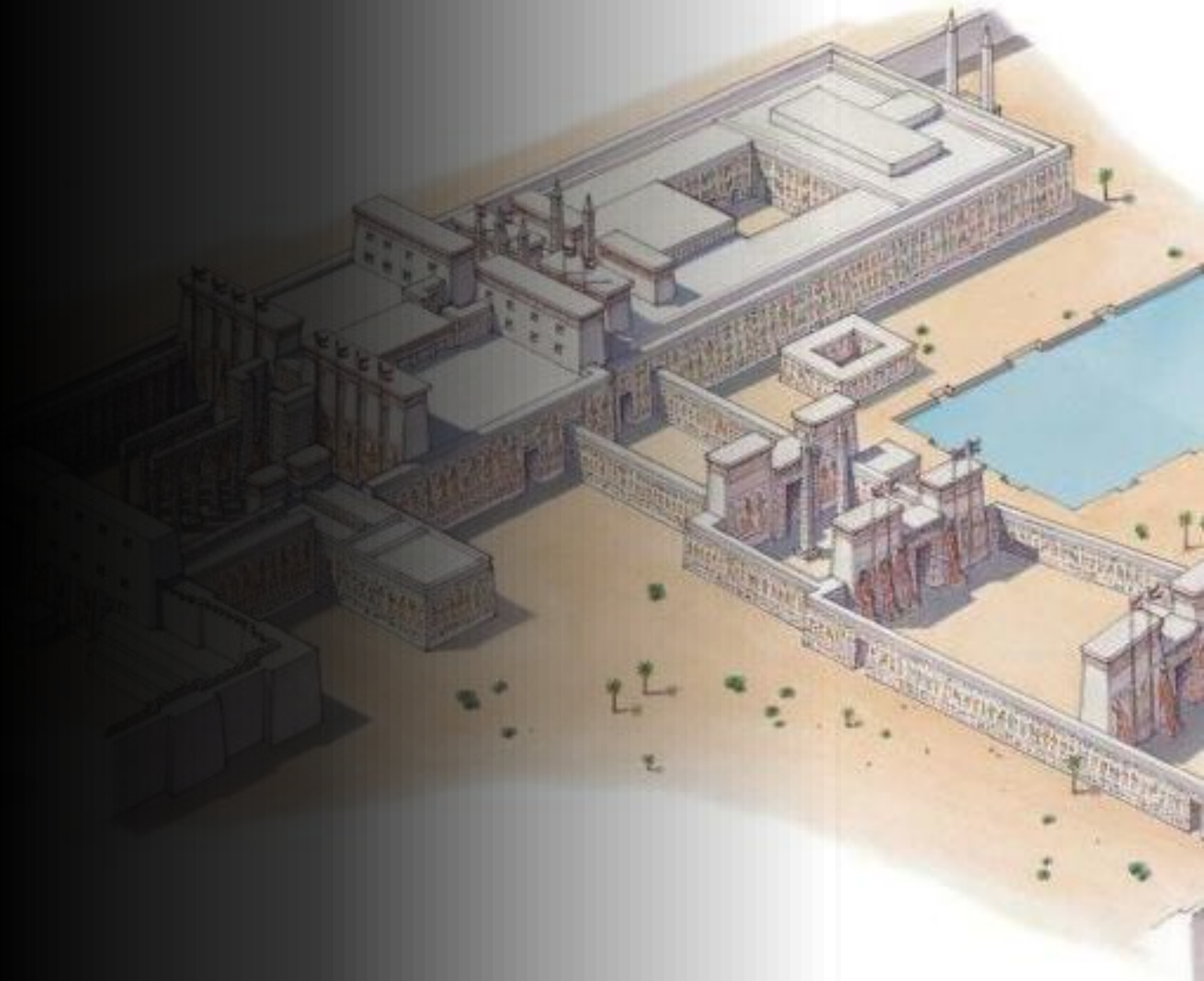
A culture with a long and
complex history covering
3000 BCE to 400 CE



The Temple of Amun, Karnak Egypt

Theological Skyscapes

Dr Bernadette Brady
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

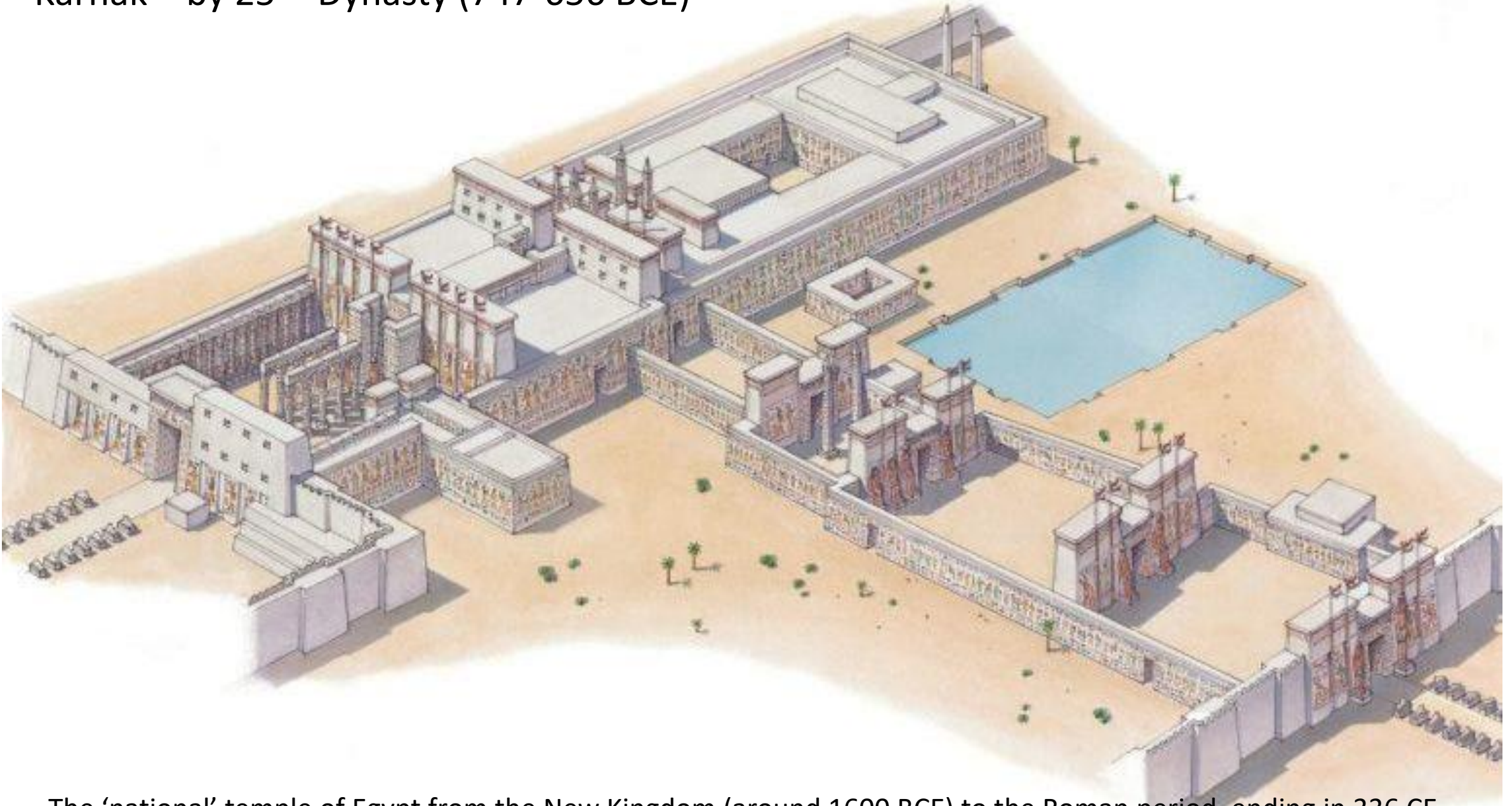


Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



Karnak – the Temple of Amun Re at Luxor, Egypt

Karnak – by 25th Dynasty (747-656 BCE)



The 'national' temple of Egypt from the New Kingdom (around 1600 BCE) to the Roman period ending in 336 CE



Image © 2019 DigitalGlobe

Karnak Temple -
Google Earth

It is the largest
religious structure
in the world.





The Solar Theology of Karnak – the Temple of Amun.

- Amun is the divine darkness that is all knowing. He gives the sun and thus sunlight which orders and creates the world, and he provides the king to rule the earth.
- His temple, like other Egyptian temples, reflects the entire cosmos.



Karnak – by 25th Dynasty

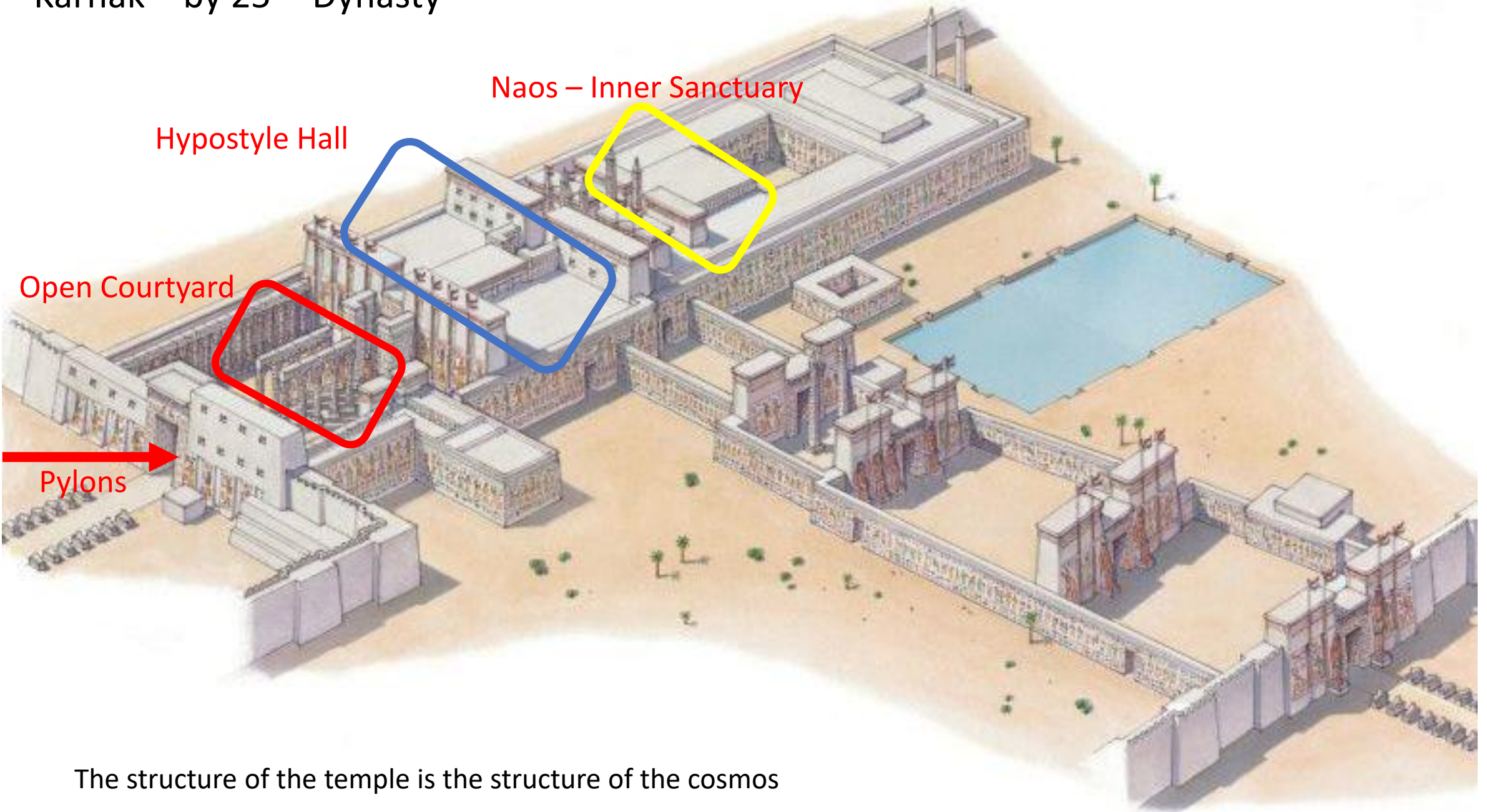
Hypostyle Hall

Naos – Inner Sanctuary

Open Courtyard

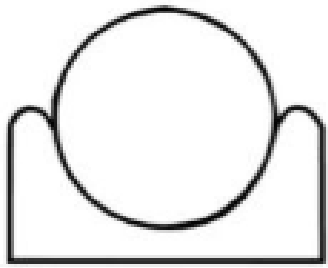
Pylons

The structure of the temple is the structure of the cosmos



Karnak – the Temple of Amun.

- The pylons represent the eastern hills that the sun rises over



As the sun rises at the winter solstice it 'writes' the hieroglyph, *3ht* 'horizon, to be active'

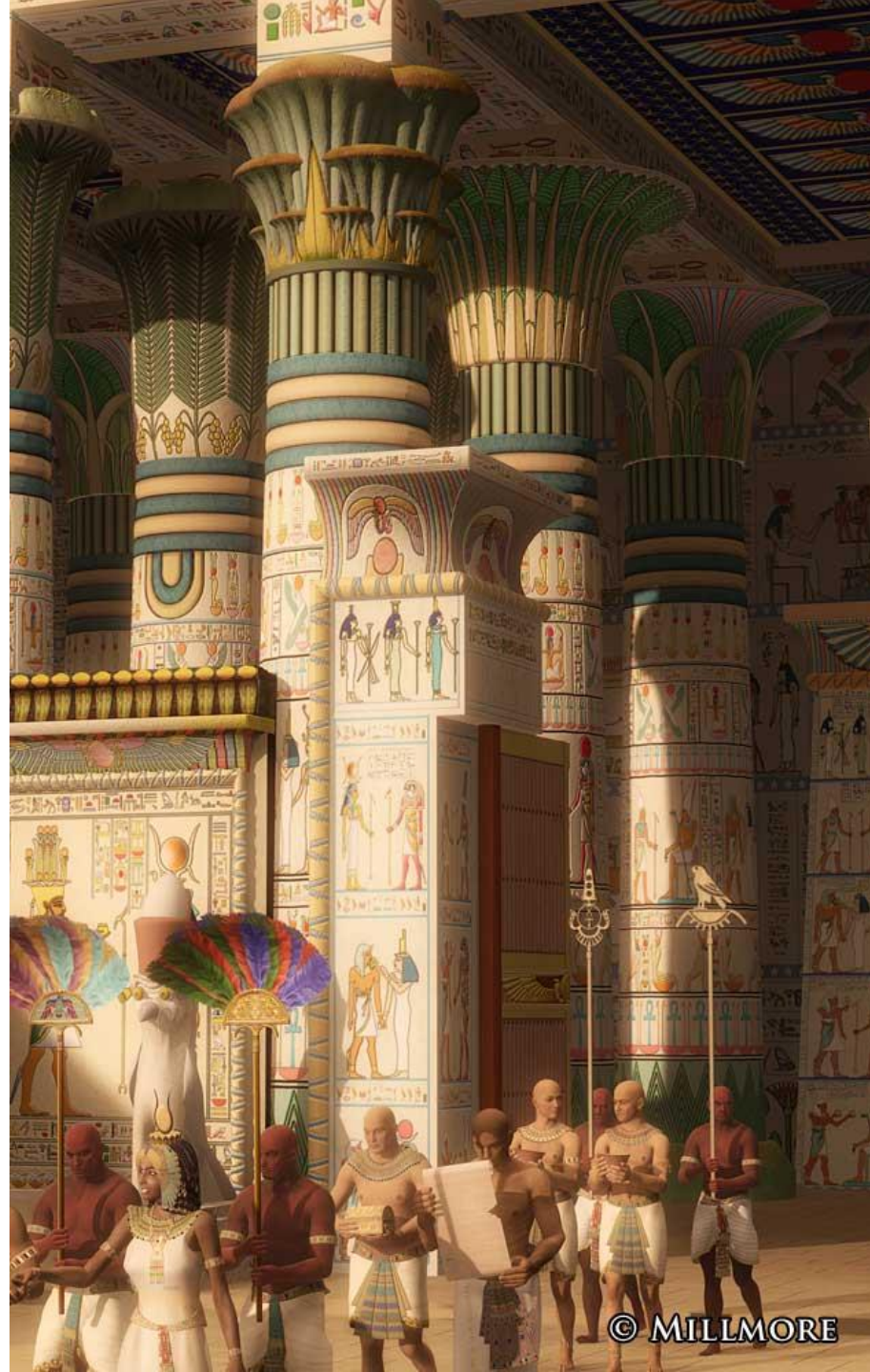




The open court yard, filled with statues of the king, is where the sun shone on earth and bestowed its power on the king – who then transferred this to Egypt.



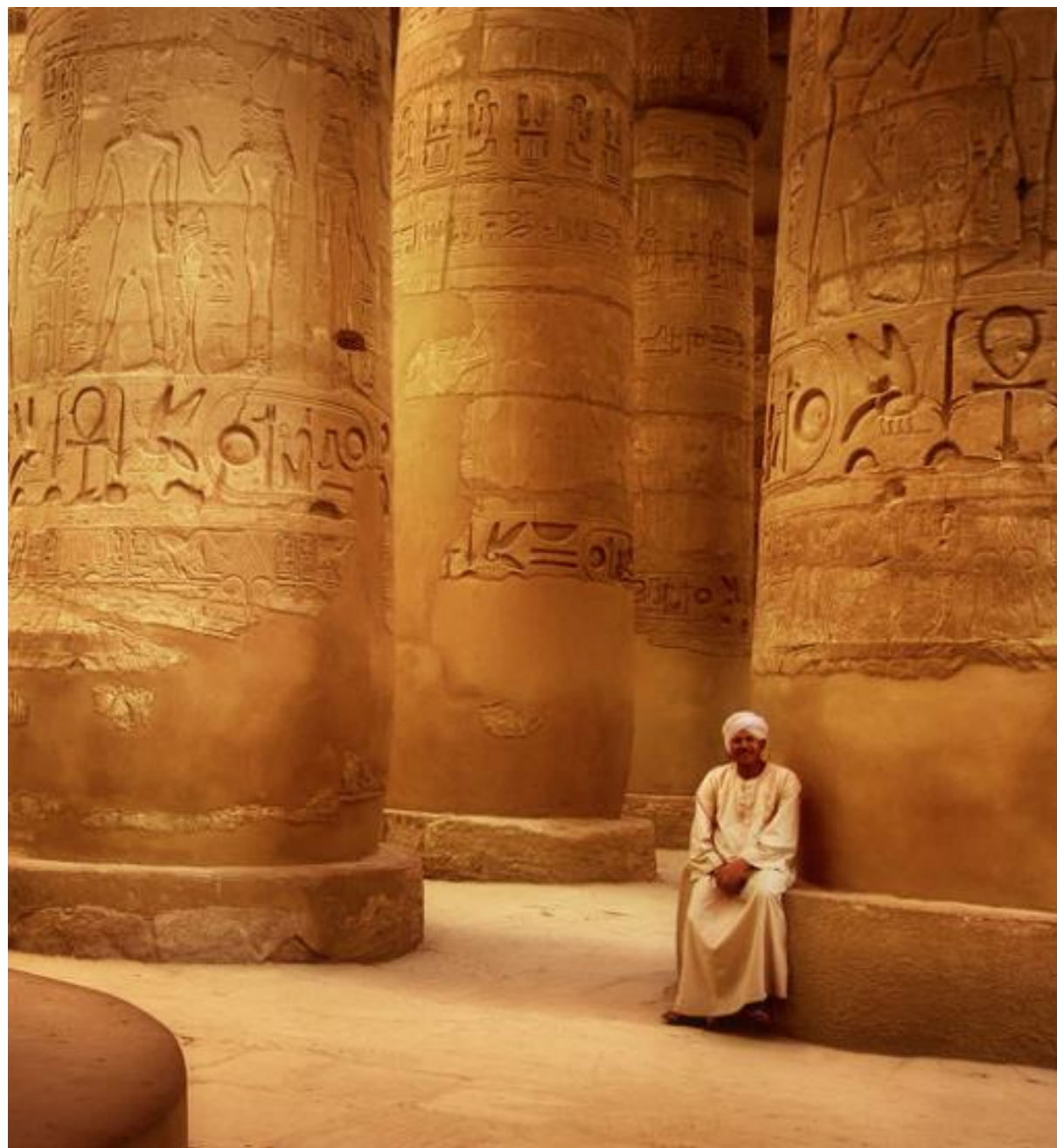
The hypostyle hall – represent the papyrus swamps that lead to the place of the ‘first occasion’ – the sacred mound that was in the Naos.

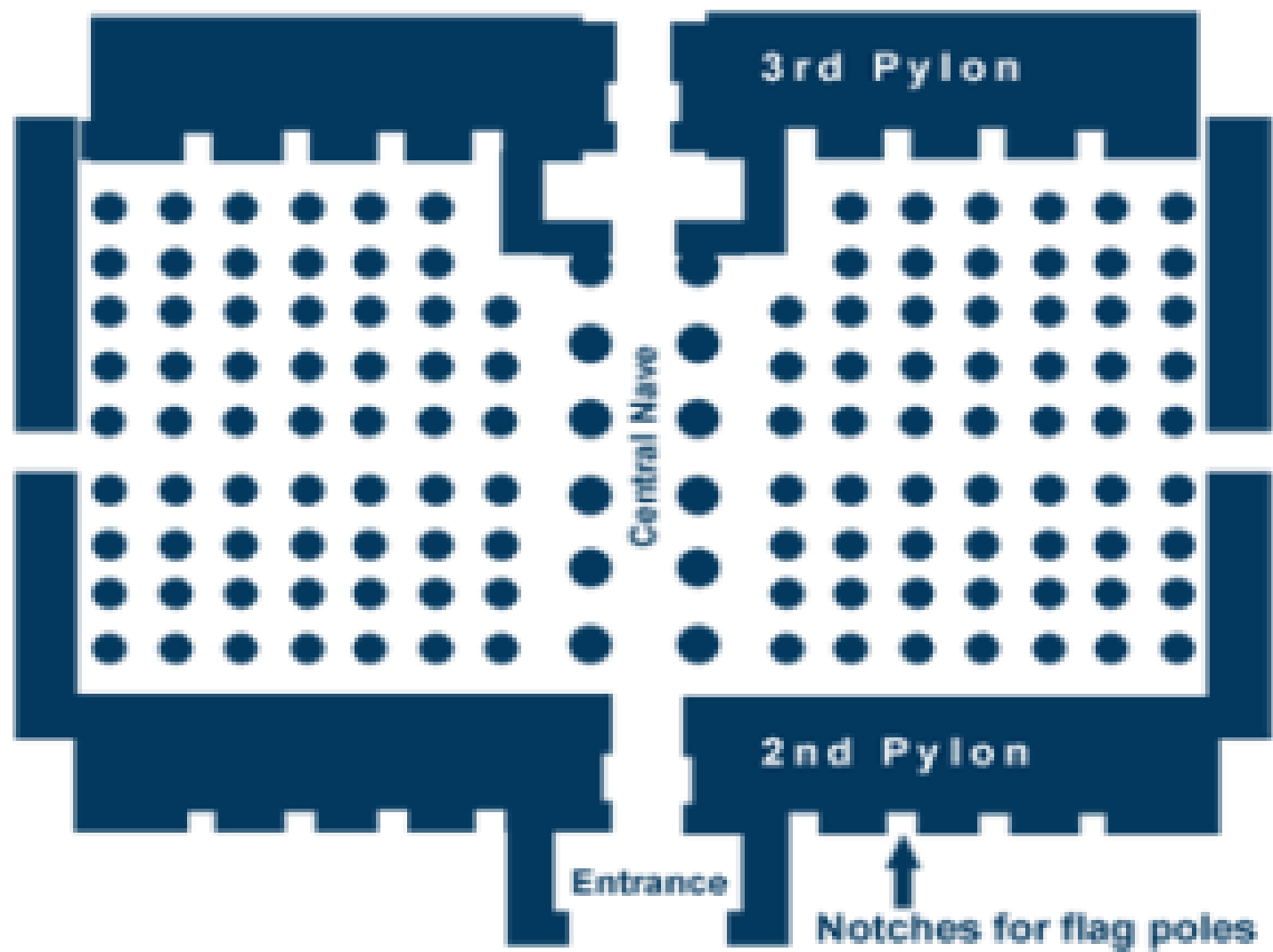


The twelve huge columns in the centre are 21 meters (70 ft) high, and it is said that the tops of each of their open papyrus flower capitals, 5.4 meters (18 ft) in diameter, could each support 100 men. There are a total of 134 columns.

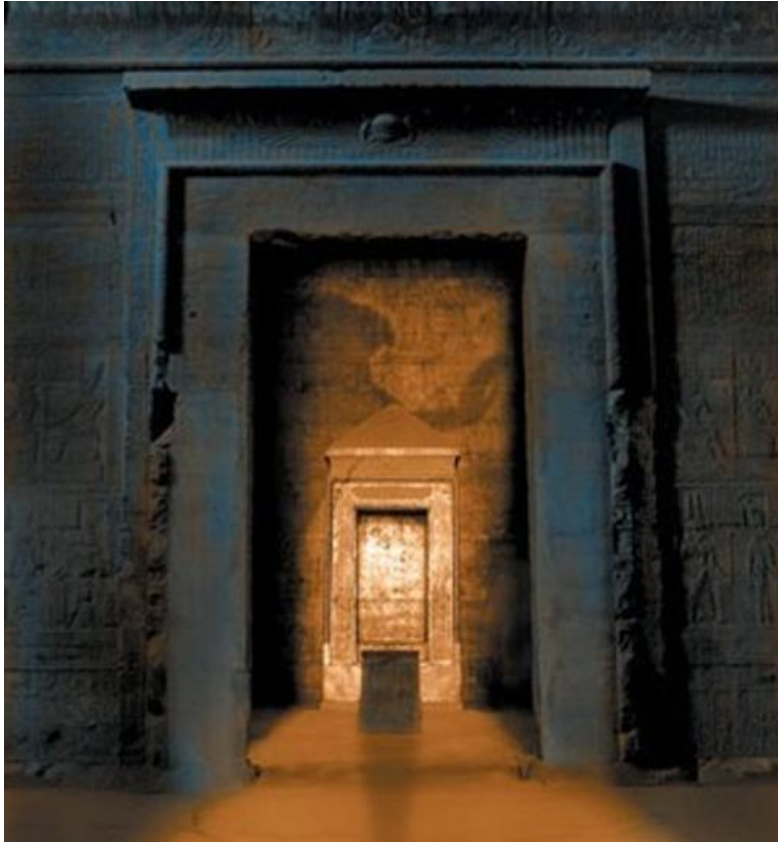








The Sanctuary of Amun-Re

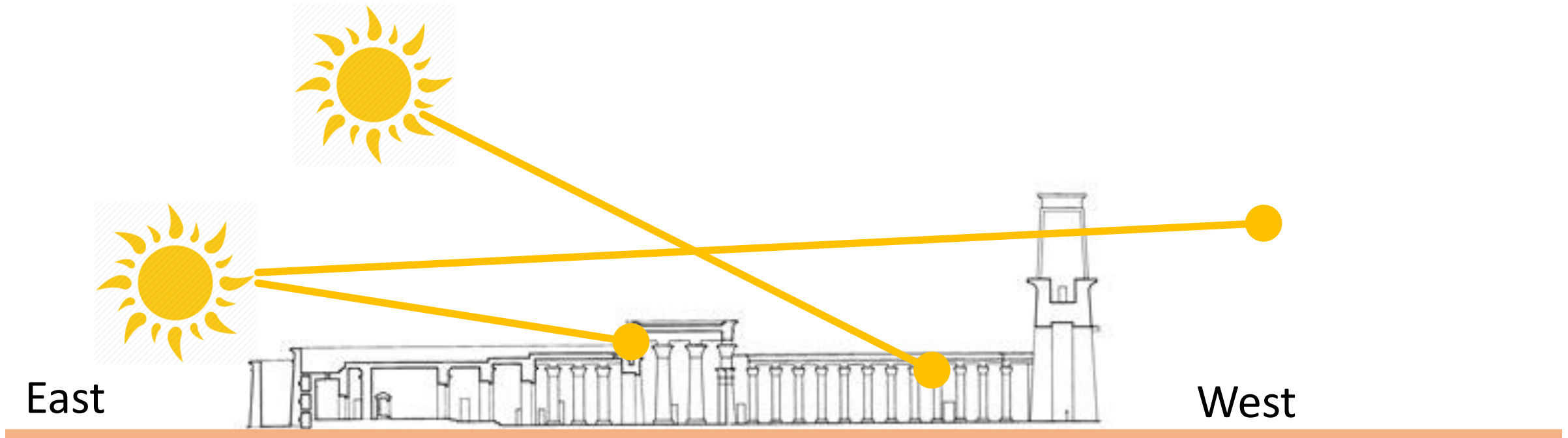


The dark sanctuary of the god held a mound of earth, representing creation.



The standard Egyptian temple – the floor level rises as the roof lowers so the back of the temple, the sanctuary, is dark and private. Only particular priests and the king could enter into the sanctuary which housed the god.

The Solar Narrative



The sun rises and is seen through the pylons on key times of the year – it is a story of dark to light.

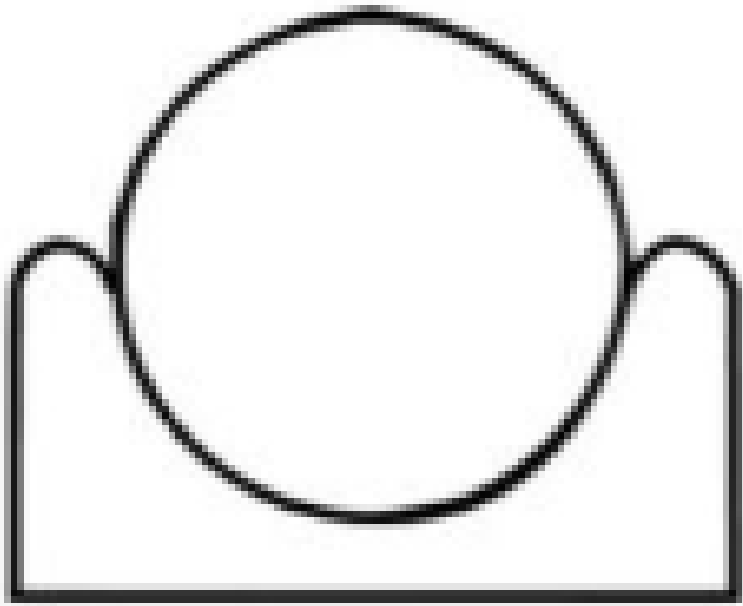


The Role of Sunlight at Karnak



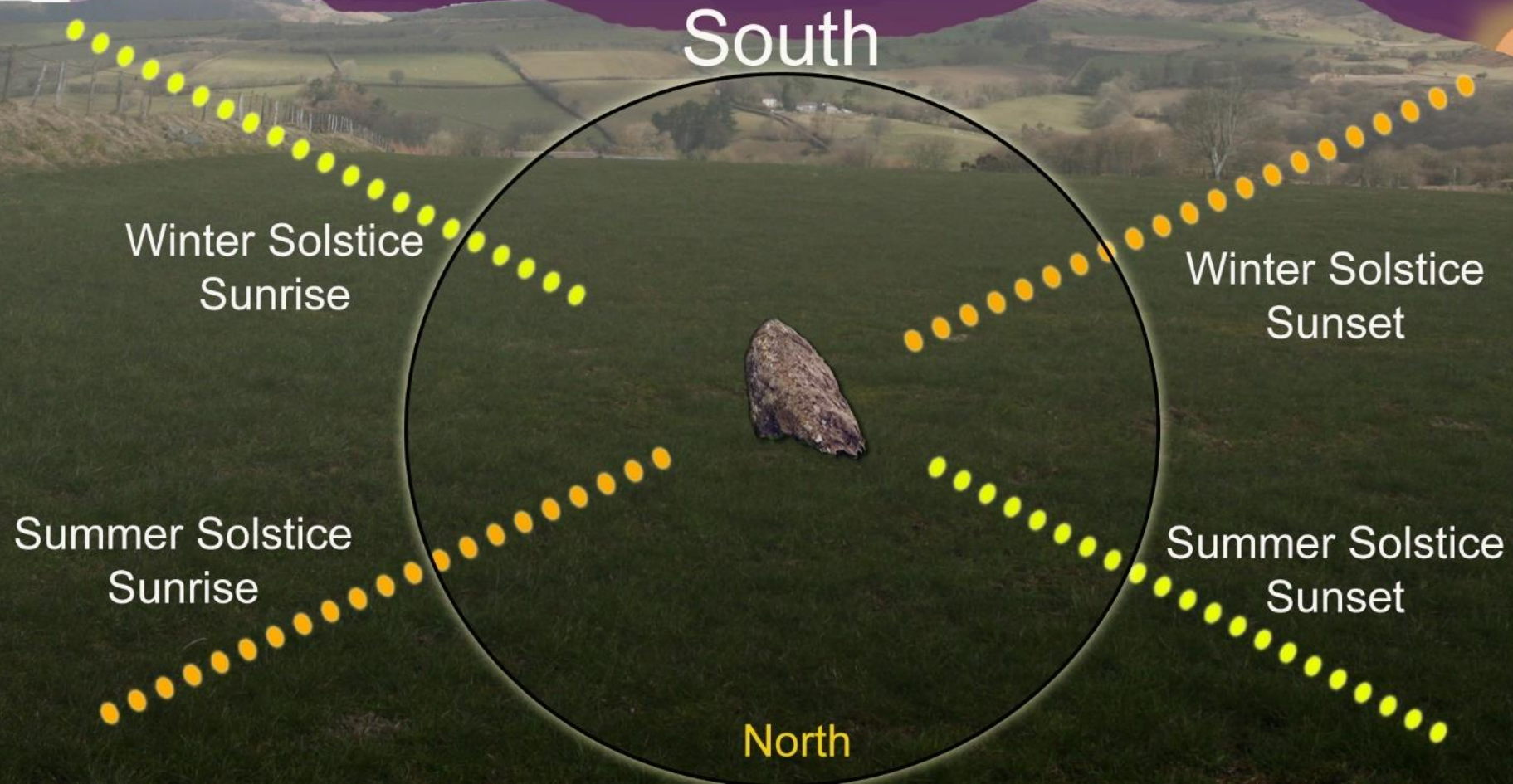
Sunrise – Winter Solstice viewed from outside the temple

The orientation of the 12th Dynasty temple was maintained by all other building and rebuilding and is aligned to the rising winter solstice sun.



As the sun 'speaks'... the hieroglyph, *3ht*
'horizon, to be active'

There are four solstice points, two for rising and two for setting and they are exactly opposite each other.



Deir el-Bahari



116°

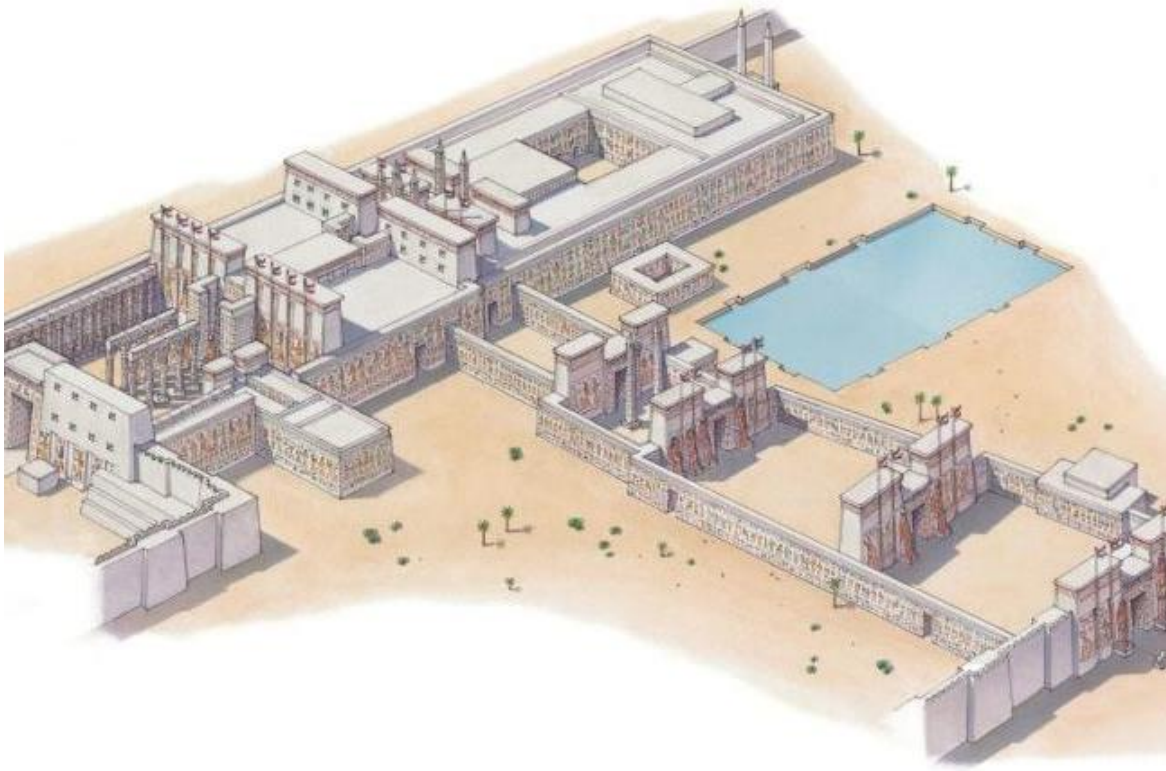
Karnak



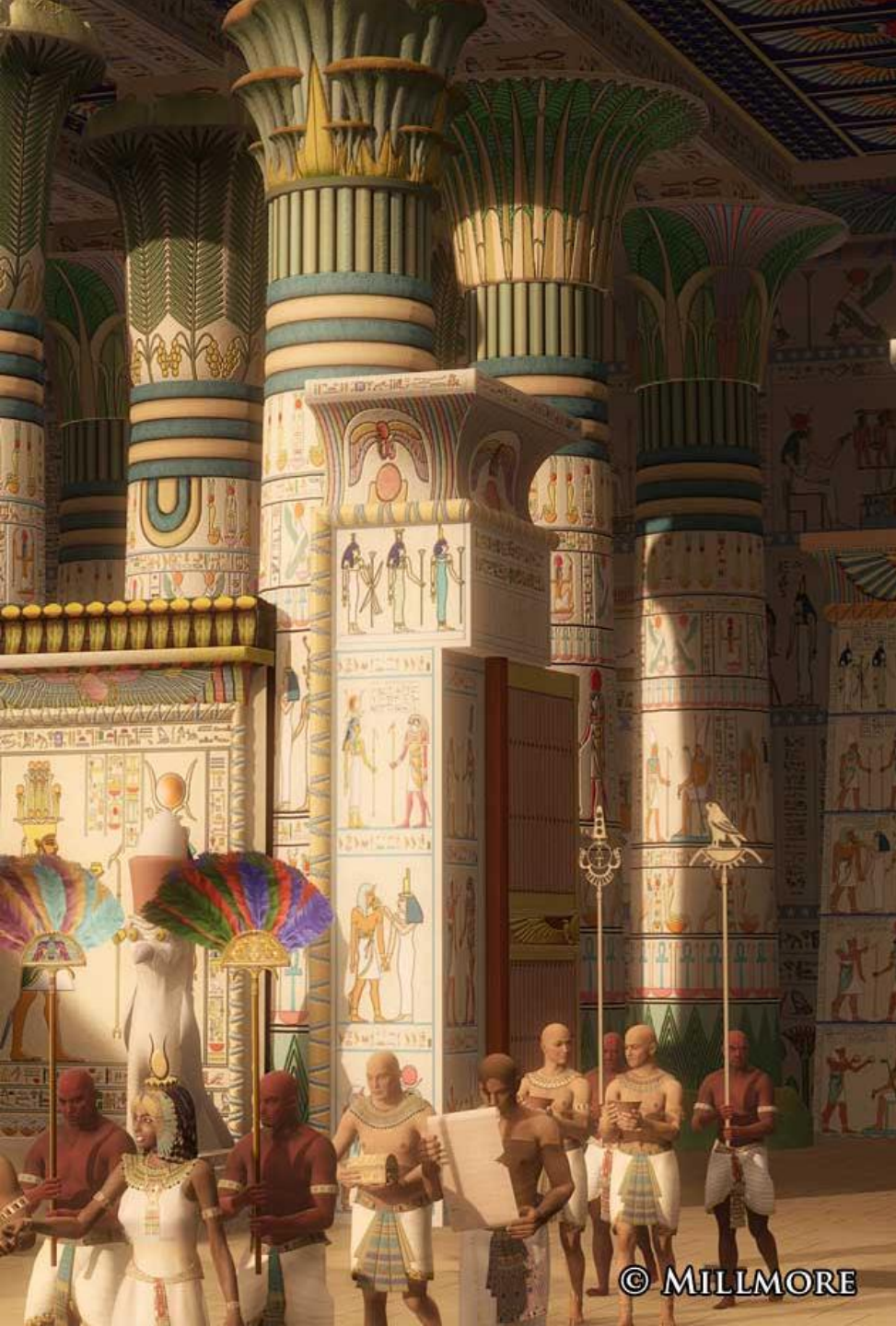
Orientation to Deir el-Bahari – Karnak and the role of Nut

Karnak
Temple points
directly at
Deir el-Bahari





The two temples are on the solstice line – Karnak looks to Deir el-Bahari and thus to the summer solstice sunset, Deir el-Bahari looks back at the Winter Solstice sunrise.



Karnak – a balance of Light to Dark

- The temple's structure emphasizes a cosmology of dualism, light and dark - and a theology embracing the concept that from the unknowable darkness (the god) comes light.
- Orientation.
- Architecture.
- Sacred writing – sky and horizon combining to form a word.
- The walls are also covered with this sacred text
- It is part of a sacred landscape, involving the sun, solstices, the flood and resurrection which extends into the Valley of the Kings.

Reading list

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