

The Theology of Hathor of Dendera

Aural and Visual Scribal Techniques in the Per-Wer Sanctuary

by **Barbara A. Richter**

DESCRIPTION:

The Ptolemaic period witnessed an enormous increase in the number of hieroglyphic signs and iconographic elements (composite crowns, scepters, and cult objects). The ancient scribes exploited this complexity when composing the reliefs used in temple decoration, selecting particular words, hieroglyphic signs, and iconographic elements in order to create interconnected multiple layers of meaning, forming a tapestry of sound and sight. The Theology of Hathor of Dendera examines these techniques on both micro- and macro-levels, from their smallest details to their broadest thematic connections, foregrounding individual techniques to determine the words and phrases singled out for emphasis. By synthesizing their use in the three-dimensional space of the most important cult chamber in the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, this new method of analysis not only reveals the most essential characteristics of the local theology, but also shows how the ancient scribes envisioned the universe and the place of humankind within it.

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Barbara A. Richter received her PhD in the Department of Near Eastern Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2012, where she is currently a lecturer in Egyptology. Her research focuses on the religion, language, and art of ancient Egypt, with an emphasis on the later periods.

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