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Newsweek

Born Again!



ers but who had clear eyes, sure hands and honest hearts. "Go Tell the Spartans" has no fake tricks of style; it uses convention as convention should be used—as a quick, sharp means of dramatizing (OK, melodramatizing) reality.

The solid presence of Lancaster anchors a cast of young, effective and appealing actors: Craig Wasson as a draftee whose idealism seems reasonable and tragically wasted, Jonathan Goldsmith as a sergeant who finally chokes on the endless horror, Marc Singer as a young officer who thinks he can end-run the horror to military stardom, Dennis Howard as a freaked-out medic, Evan Kim as a tough Vietnamese who goes after Communists like a movie gunslinger. This tough, compassionate, unpretentious film will have to fight for an audience it deserves far more than the overinflated junk movies infesting most of our theaters.

—JACK KROLL

Reefer Madness

As long as there are pills to pop and dope to smoke, the '60s will remain alive in some addled corner of the American psyche. This seems to be the subliminal message of Cheech and Chong's **UP IN SMOKE**, a high-resin comedy designed for folks who will shriek in complicity at the sight of a joint the size of a torpedo, and roll in the aisles when Tommy Chong dresses up as a Rorer 714 Quaalude. There have been head movies ever since Peter Fonda dropped acid in "The Trip," but none has come so completely out of the closet as this one, the product of the chicano-Chinese comic duo who have made a whole career spoofing the space-outs of the marijuana generation.

"Don't go straight to see this movie!" advise the ads, and they know whereof they speak. Unless you are suitably bent, you might notice that the movie has little continuity and a plot that is no more than a grab bag of familiar Cheech and Chong routines. If you're suitably prepared, probably none of this will matter. There is something irrepressibly good-natured about the peppery Cheech and the zonked-out Chong as they low-ride through East Los Angeles and Tijuana in pursuit of the eternal high.

In Tijuana, they inadvertently stumble into an upholstery shop that fronts a marijuana factory and find themselves driving across the border in a van made out of 100 per cent compressed weed. When a fender catches fire, everyone on their tail ends up with a glazed-over case of the munchies, including the farcically inept police led by bad-ass Stacy Keach. Ten years ago, a movie about dope would have been laced with paranoia and revolutionary rhetoric. In 1978 it is blithely taken for granted that getting high is the avocation of millions. In this funky, slapdash and occasionally very funny movie, dope is not an issue, it's a way of life.

—D. A.

ART

Temple Transplant

Our fastest growing religion must be the cult of Tut. Among its bizarre rites are the mortification of standing in line and the purchase of T shirts (Tut shirts?). When the "Treasures of Tutankhamun" arrives in New York in December, the Metropolitan Museum of Art expects to minister to more than 1 million converts. Lovers of the Nile, however, should not overlook a less spectacular, but no less worthy, opening. The Met has just put on permanent display a great rarity: the Temple of Dendur.

Dendur is a modest temple constructed circa 15 B.C. by the Roman Emperor Augustus in Nubia, an Egyptian-influenced culture on the Upper Nile. Built to commemorate two brothers who drowned in the Nile, it is not one of the esthetic glories of Egypt. The date of construction is very late (Tut lived 1,300 years before), and the reliefs are slacker in spirit than classical Egyptian work. It doesn't matter. Dendur is the only complete Egyptian temple in this hemisphere, and it provides the kind of rounded view of a culture that art or architecture alone rarely provides.

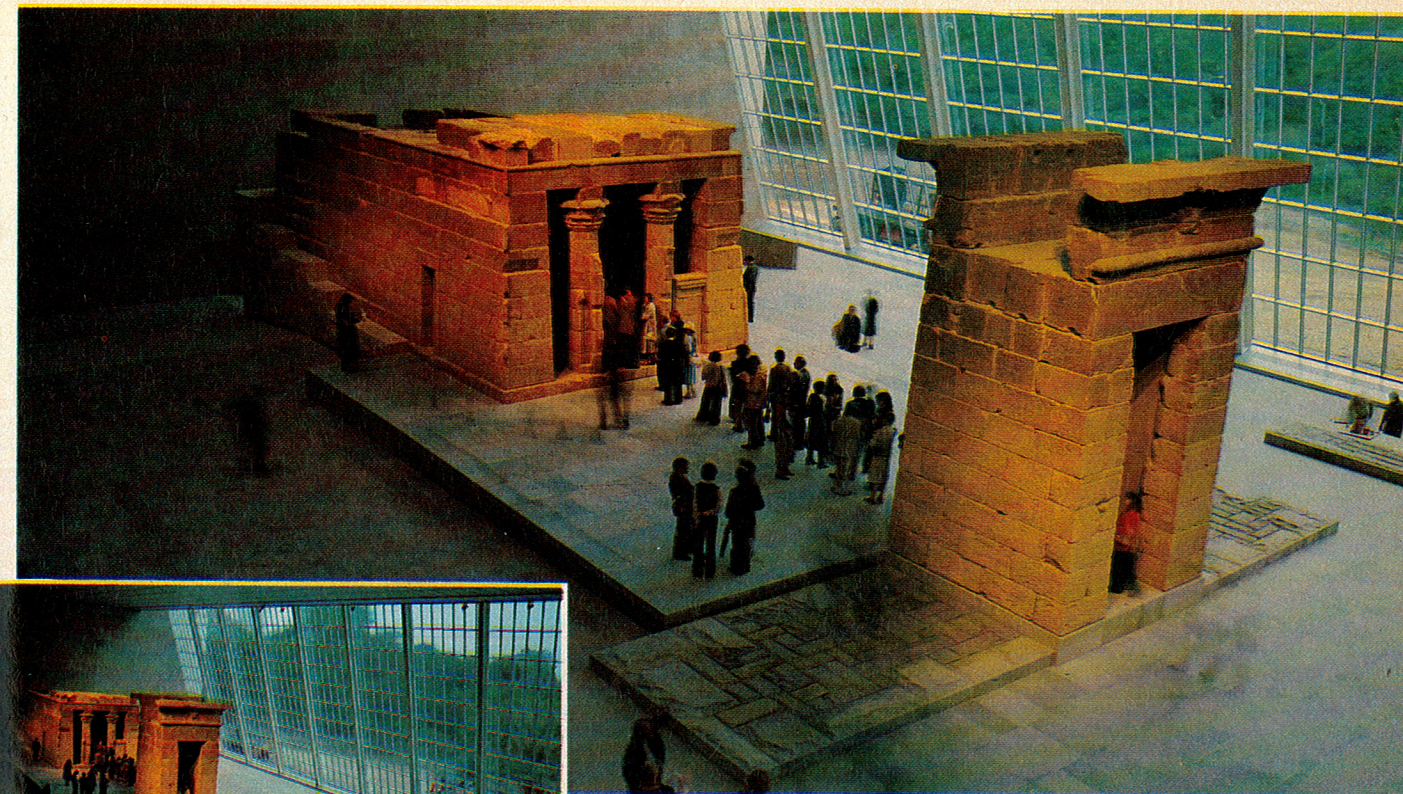
Submerged: Dendur arrives as a thank-you gift from Egypt. In the 1960s, Americans donated \$16 million to a UNESCO drive to move Nubian masterpieces to ground that would not be flooded after the construction of the new Aswan High Dam. (Earlier dams had already partially submerged Dendur for nine months a year.) When Egypt offered the temple to the U.S. in 1965, a Presidential commis-

sion selected the Met to display it. The Met, after all, already housed a superb Egyptian collection; it proposed to build a gallery in which humidity and temperature could be controlled, and—most important—it had the means to ship and install the temple.

Dendur came to New York in 1968. Since then, the museum has reassembled the pieces and constructed the new \$8.6 million Sackler Wing to house the structure. The Met has conscientiously tried to create a hospitable environment. A vast barren space, all windows and fresh light on one side, suggests the spaciousness of the Egyptian landscape; a pool of water suggests the Nile. The sandstone blocks have been beautifully aligned, so that the lines of each relief flow effortlessly from one block to another.

Light and Dust: Still, the room has a cold and antiseptic air; it lacks the hot Egyptian light and dust. The pool is too much like the goldfish pond inside a shopping mall (maybe the Met should add crocodiles), and the scale of this modern space makes a small and ancient temple look insignificant. Buildings are never happy inside other buildings: it's demeaning to them. Too old and fragile to stay outside, Dendur does not look comfortable in a nursing home.

In the Nubian village of Dendur, to be drowned—or even devoured by a crocodile—was a fate better than death. It held out the promise of sanctification. The Nile was the sacred source of life, and one



Photos by Lee Boltin

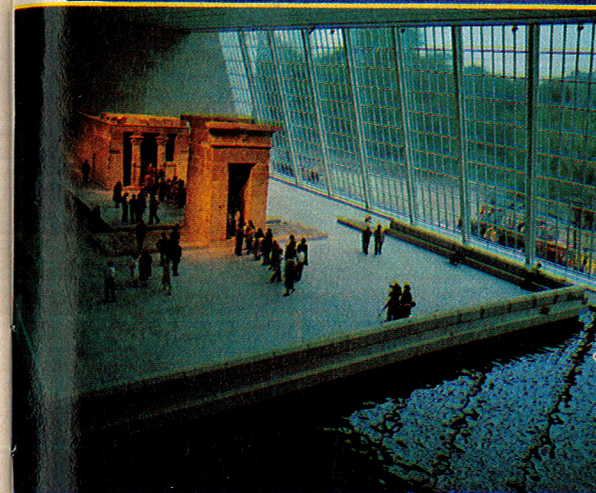
Dendur at the Met: From the springs of culture

etched drawings made the stone breathe.

At the Met, visitors will be treated like ordinary Egyptians: they will not be allowed inside. Only the priesthood (including curators) may enter—and quite rightly, since the sandstone easily crumbles.

the form of this relatively recent, modest temple, seems to speak to us from the beginning: the very springs of culture. Its art is at once majestic and simple, which is the right note for important beginnings. The impulse of some poor mortal to add his scratch to this stately procession of stone—to tag time—adds an unexpected poignancy to Dendur.

—MARK STEVENS



of the culture's most resonant myths—that of Osiris—tells of a king who drowns and is deified. The two drowned brothers, whom the temple honors as gods, were the sons of a chieftain whose tribe the Romans wished to mollify.

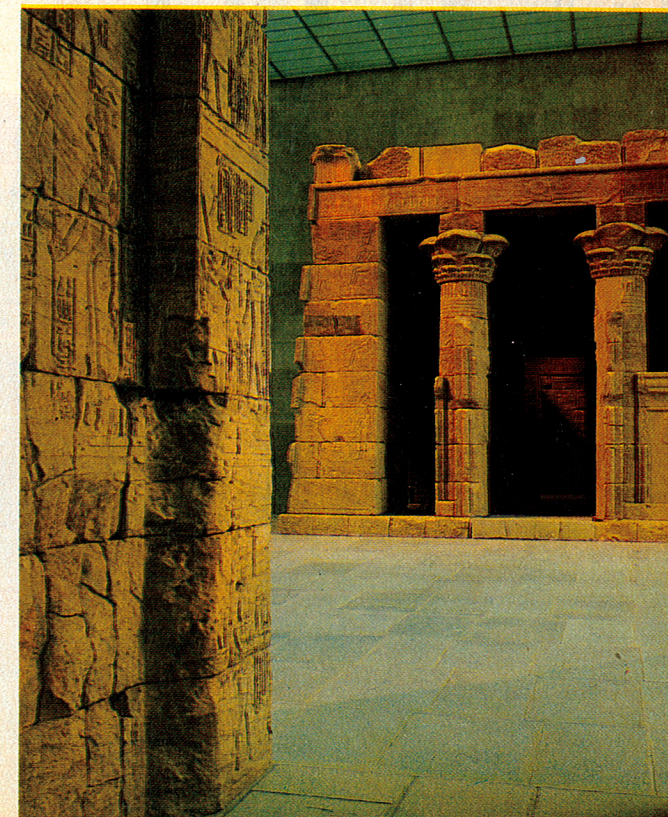
Sanctuary: Dendur does not have the trappings of a great Egyptian temple, but it does closely follow Egyptian religious architecture. A gateway facing the river leads into the temple, where a series of three rooms culminates in the sanctuary. The columns at the entrance represent papyrus reeds lashed together, which might have reminded an Egyptian of creation, when the Nile first nourished the earth. Painted stars originally decorated the ceiling.

The temple's reliefs map the Egyptians' spiritual life. Many show Emperor (and Pharaoh) Augustus making offerings to the gods, including the two brothers. The Pharaoh is seen proceeding toward the darkened sanctuary, where a damaged relief displays the two brothers making an offering to Osiris and his wife, Isis. In one lovely relief, Augustus makes an offering of linen to a god and a goddess. The cobra above the goddess's head symbolizes divinity, and the bulls' tails behind both men are a symbol of royalty that predates the temple by thousands of years. In the Egyptian sun, these

Many people will therefore miss the graffiti on the temple walls. Dendur suffered its first attack of graffiti in 10 B.C.—a demotic declaration about taxes. In A.D. 577, a presbyter named Abraham recorded the consecration of the temple as a Coptic church. Many nineteenth-century adventurers from all over the world also left their mark, such as "L. Bradish / 1821 / of N.Y. U.S."

Eloquence: The graffiti are ugly defacements, of course, childish announcements that "I was here!" But the names, with their dates, have an odd power of their own. They are an eloquent, if inelegant, symbol of the attraction Egyptian art has periodically held for our own culture. (Yet another exhibition—what promises to be an excellent and scholarly survey of Nubian art—opens this week at the Brooklyn Museum.) Ancient Egypt, even in

Through the gateway: Making the stone breathe



Lee Boltin

A temple relief: The Pharaoh makes an offering to the gods