

Temple of Kom Ombo

On land | Egypt | 180-47 BCE | Grades 3-5

Name _____

Date _____

Kom Ombo is a double temple, with two doors and two shrines for two very different gods.

Read the story

The Temple of Kom Ombo was built mostly between about 180 and 47 BCE, under the Ptolemies. Its design is unusual. The left side was for Haroeris, a falcon-headed form of Horus. The right side was for Sobek, the crocodile god of the Nile. Each god had its own entrance, its own halls and its own shrine.

Crocodiles were common along this part of the river, so people honored Sobek to stay safe and to ask for good floods. Some crocodiles were kept at the temple, and when they died, they were mummified.

The temple also seems to have been a place of healing. One wall shows tools that look like medical instruments, and visitors came hoping to get well.

How it ended

After the old religion ended in Roman times, the temple was abandoned. Floods from the Nile, earthquakes and people taking stone damaged it. Part of the front washed away, but much still stands today.

Key words

- Nilometer: a structure used to measure how high the Nile River rose
- mummify: to preserve a body by drying it and wrapping it
- twin: one of a matching pair

Wow facts

- A small museum beside the temple displays mummified crocodiles.
- A carving on the temple wall shows tools that many people think are surgical instruments.
- Part of the temple fell into the river after it was undercut by the Nile.

Talk about it

1. Why would people worship an animal they were afraid of?

2. What would be tricky about sharing a building with someone very different from you?

Try this

Draw a map of Temple of Kom Ombo as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. What animal was Sobek?

- A. A falcon
- B. A crocodile
- C. A cat
- D. A hippo

2. What makes Kom Ombo unusual?

- A. It is underwater
- B. It is a double temple for two gods
- C. It is made of wood
- D. It has no walls

3. What was a Nilometer used for?

- A. Measuring flood height
- B. Telling time
- C. Grinding grain
- D. Catching fish

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/temple-of-kom-ombo/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. B. Sobek was the crocodile god of the Nile.
2. B. It has two entrances and two shrines for two gods.
3. A. It measured how high the Nile flood rose each year.