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The Karnak Clepsydra: Votive Gift or Utilitarian Object?

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The earliest preserved clepsydra or water-clock known to us stems from the reign of pharaoh Amenhotep III (14 th century BCE). The clock itself was discovered during the excavation of the Cachette in Karnak by Georges Legrain, and this contribution considers the possible uses of the clock in the Temple of Amun in Karnak. It does so on the basis of its outer decoration, performed in the Temple of Amun, and inscriptions on later water-clocks. Finally, an attempt is made to assess whether the clock was necessary to the performance of daily cultic rituals in the temple, or whether it may simply have been a valuable votive gift (of limited practical use) donated to the temple by pharaoh Amenhotep III.

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