

The Temple of Bastet

The Temple of Bastet was erected in the ancient Egyptian city of Bubastis.

Brad Kollus

The ancient Egyptian city of Bubastis was home to the Temple of Bastet. Now in ruins, Bubastis is near the modern-day city of Zagazig, in the eastern Delta. According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, 700,000 people attended the festival of Bastet, which was held in Bubastis every April. It was the biggest celebration in Egypt and included prolific drinking, dancing and sexual bawdiness. During the celebration, the statue of Bastet would be brought out of the temple for the public to worship. Individuals paid tribute to Bastet by offering small, bronze cat statues and asking the goddess for favors. Hundreds of thousands of votive cat mummies were buried in cat cemeteries near the temple as offerings to Bastet.