

Ancient Egypt - First Intermediate Period

By Caroline Arbuckle, University of British Columbia

Entry tags: Egyptian Religions, African Religions, Religious Group

The First Intermediate Period in ancient Egypt refers to a time in Egyptian history when united rule of Egypt was broken, and there were multiple rulers vying for power. This time period covers dynasties 9, 10, and most of 11. The evidence for this period suggests that there was considerable experimentation with the creation of religious objects, which were not accessible to a larger proportion of the population than previously. Unfortunately, there are large gaps in our knowledge about this era, due in part to a lack of written texts, but also due to difficulties with dating objects to this period.



Date Range: 2168 BCE - 2010 BCE

Region: Peregrine_EarlyDynasticEgypt

Region tags: Africa, Egypt

From Peter N. Peregrine's Encyclopedia of Prehistory.

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

– Source 1: Willems, Harco 2010. "The First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom" in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, edited by Alan B. Lloyd. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 81-100.

– Source 1: Muhs, Brian 2016. *The Ancient Egyptian Economy 3000-30 BCE*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.

Reference: Brian Muhs. *The Ancient Egyptian Economy*. Cambridge University Press. isbn: 9781107113367.

– Source 1: Seidlmayer, Stephan 2000. "The First Intermediate Period (c.2160-2055 BC)" in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Ian Shaw. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 108-136.

Reference: Ian Shaw. *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*. OUP Oxford. isbn: 9780191604621.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

– Source 1 URL: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj>

– Source 1 Description: Democratization of the Afterlife by Mark Smith

– Source 1 URL: https://www.ancient.eu/First_Intermediate_Period_of_Egypt/

– Source 1 Description: Ancient History Encyclopedia - The First Intermediate Period

Relevant online primary textual corpora (original languages and/or translations):

– Source 1 URL: <http://dlib.nyu.edu/awdl/sites/dl-pa.home.nyu.edu/awdl/files/admonitionsofegy00gard/admonitionsofegy00gard.pdf>

– Source 1 Description: The Admonitions of Ipuwer

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: There is disagreement about this answer - some scholars believe that during the First Intermediate Period, Egypt was cut off from contact with foreign peoples in Nubia and the Levant; however, there is some evidence of continued trade, competition, and warfare with these individuals. A significant reason for the disagreement is a lack of secure dating methods for the period in question (see also Seidlmayer 2000: 129).

↳ Is the cultural contact competitive:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The nature of the contact between Egypt and outside regions at this time is debated and largely unknown.

↳ Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The nature of the contact between Egypt and outside regions at this time is debated and largely unknown.

↳ Is the cultural contact neutral:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The nature of the contact between Egypt and outside regions at this time is debated and largely unknown.

↳ Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– Yes

Notes: The First Intermediate Period was a time when rule of Egypt was divided. One group of rulers hailed from Herakleopolis, while the others were from Thebes. They seem to have fought for power during this era, until Thebes was ultimately successful. In addition to these main battles, there were also skirmishes occurring between local governments, as recorded in the tomb biography of Ankhtify of Moalla (Seidlmayer 2000: 118-119; Willems 2010: 82).

↳ Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The nature of the contact between Egypt and outside regions at this time is debated and largely unknown.

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– No

Notes: In ancient Egypt, if you were Egyptian, participation in the religion was considered automatic.

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– No

Does the religion have official political support

– Yes

Notes: Even when Egypt was divided, the king was seen to be semi-divine and the intermediary between gods and men. Local nomarchs also took on multiple titles. For instance, Ankhtifi of Moalla had the titles "great overlord of the nomes of Edfu and Hierakonpolis" as well as "overseer of priests" (Seidlmayer 2000: 118).

↳ Are the priests paid by polity:

– No

Notes: There was no centralized government during this period. If biographies like that of Ankhtifi of Moalla can be believed, it seems like local rulers may have provided for their people, which would have included priests.

↳ Is religious infrastructure paid for by the polity:

– I don't know

Notes: It's unclear what religious infrastructure would have been created and maintained in this period.

↳ Are the head of the polity and the head of the religion the same figure:

– No

Notes: While the king was generally seen as the head of Egyptian religion, there are multiple rulers during this period, so the mortal head of the religion would likely have been somewhat ambiguous during this period.

↳ Are political officials equivalent to religious officials:

– No

Notes: Not necessarily, but many did hold both religious and political titles - like Ankhtifi.

↳ Is religious observance enforced by the polity:

– No

↳ Polity legal code is roughly coterminous with religious code:

– No

↳ Polity provides preferential economic treatment (e.g. tax, exemption)

– I don't know

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

– No

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

– Field doesn't know

Notes: It is very difficult to estimate population during this time.

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

– Field doesn't know

Nature of religious group [please select one]:

– Large official religious group with smaller religious groups also openly allowed

Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also "oral scriptures" (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– Yes

Notes: While the term "scripture" might not quite apply, there were texts that served as funerary spells that were intended to help the deceased reach the afterlife. In this period, these were written on the interior of an individual's coffin, and have come to be known as "Coffin Texts" by Egyptologists.

↳ Are they written:

– Yes

↳ Are they oral:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: We assume that many of the spells were spoken as well as written.

- ↳ Is there a story (or a set of stories) associated with the origin of scripture:
 - I don't know

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– Yes

Notes: Although there is much less building than in earlier periods, there are a few pieces of monumental constructions. The largest is known as the Kom Dara, a tomb from Middle Egypt (Bard 2015: 177).

- ↳ In the average settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:
 - Field doesn't know

- ↳ Size of largest single religious monument, square meters:
 - Square meters: 19872
 - Notes: Kom Dara (Seidlmayer 2000: 132)

- ↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:
 - Field doesn't know
 - Notes: It does not survive.

- ↳ Size of average monument, square meters:
 - Field doesn't know

- ↳ Height of average monument, meters:
 - Field doesn't know

- ↳ In the largest settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:
 - Field doesn't know

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes

Notes: In terms of monumental architecture from the First Intermediate Period, only tombs survive;

however, it should be said that there is significant regional variation in tomb types, perhaps as local elites expressed their own identities (Seidlmayer 2000:116-7). Inscriptions from Wahankh Intef II note that he built many temples, but few have been discovered archaeologically - such as the chapels for Satet and Khnum on Elephantine (Seidlmayer 2000: 126-7).

↳ Tombs:

– Yes

↳ Cemeteries:

– Yes

↳ Temples:

– Yes

↳ Altars:

– I don't know

↳ Devotional markers:

– I don't know

↳ Mass gathering point [plazas, courtyard, square. Places permanently demarcated using visible objects or structures]:

– I don't know

Is iconography present:

– Yes

Notes: Art from the First Intermediate Period in Egypt is quite distinctive. It represents a time when individuals were able to break free from the standard forms of expression and experiment. Eyes are often over large, and limbs extended. Dogs also appear more frequently in tomb stele, particularly in those of the royal saff tombs in Thebes.

↳ Where is iconography present [select all that apply]:

– Only religious public space

Notes: None of these options, really - almost all of First Intermediate Period art comes from tombs, so most iconography is found on decorated tomb walls and funerary objects. Some of these spaces and courtyards could be visited, however, so "only religious public space" seems like the best available option.

↳ Are there distinct features in the religious group's iconography:

– Yes

Notes: During this period, the standard offering scenes become quite distinctive - the eyes are large and oblong, and limbs tend to be extended. Dogs are more commonly found depicted as pets and hunting companions as well.

↳ Eyes (stylized or not):

– Yes

Notes: Eyes in First Intermediate Period art tend to be overlarge and oblong.

↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic):

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (anthropomorphic):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings (abstract symbol):

– Yes

↳ Portrayals of afterlife:

– Yes

Notes: Scenes of the deceased man and wife, sitting before tables of offerings, remain common in this period, but in a distinctive form related to this period.

↳ Aspects of doctrine (e.g. cross, trinity, Mithraic symbols):

– I don't know

Notes: There are many symbols, like the wadjet eye, that are protective, and commonly found on objects from the First Intermediate Period. I'm not sure they should be considered "doctrine", however.

↳ Humans:

– Yes

↳ Other features of iconography:

– Yes

Notes: Dogs as pets and hunting companions are found on funerary stele.

Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer “no” only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

Notes: As with the other periods of ancient Egyptian history, an individual was considered to be made up of a number of elements, including the ba and the ka, which are most similar to the modern concept of the spirit, and the body with its intact heart.

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

– Yes

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

– Yes

↳ Other spirit-body relationship:

– Yes [specify]: An intact body was required to reach the afterlife, and different aspects of the spirit could indwell in the body at times.

Belief in afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in specified realm of space beyond this world:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined “above” space:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined “below” space:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined horizontal space:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife located in "other" space:

– Yes [specify]: Where the afterlife is located is very vague, all options, as long as they are separated from the living world, seem to be possible.

Reincarnation in this world:

– No

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes

Notes: Mummification was practiced during this period, and burials within coffins were more common and available to a largely proportion of the population than previously.

↳ Cremation:

– No

↳ Mummification:

– Yes

↳ Interment:

– Yes

↳ Corpse is flexed (legs are bent or body is crouched):

– Yes

Notes: The majority of burials included extended bodies, but occasionally there were flexed bodies as well.

↳ Corpse is extended (lying flat on front or back):

– Yes

↳ Corpse is upright (where body is interred in standing position):

– No

↳ Corpse is interred some other way:

– I don't know

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

– No

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

↳ Secondary burial:

– No

↳ Re-treatment of corpse:

– No

↳ Other intensive (in terms of time or resources expended) treatment of corpse :

– I don't know

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

↳ Personal effects:

– Yes

Notes: Object used in both daily life and those created for the burial specifically are found in burials during this period. This includes food, furniture, clothing, cosmetics, etc.

↳ Valuable items:

– Yes

↳ Other grave goods:

– Yes

Notes: During this period, "mummy masks", masks created to cover the face of mummies, became increasingly common in burials, as did models of science from daily life - wooden boats, cattle, workers, etc.

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Notes: Increasingly regional styles of tombs were found during this period. Mastaba tombs remained common, while the kings moved from pyramids to "saff" tombs (rock cut tombs with rows of pillars as a facade), at least in Thebes.

↳ As cenotaphs:

– I don't know

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– Yes

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– I don't know

↳ Other formal burial type:

– Yes [specify]: During this period in Thebes, a specific style of tomb called a "saff tomb" was established. This was characterized by a row of pillars carved into the Theban cliffs, with the tomb cut back into the rock.

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– No

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– No

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– Yes

↳ Previously human spirits have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits' knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– No

↳ Human spirits' knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

– No

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

– Yes

↳ Human spirit's can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

– Yes

↳ Human spirits know your basic character (personal essence):

– Yes

↳ Human spirits know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

– I don't know

Notes: It is a bit unclear whether spirits can see the future, but they were believed to be able to help the living achieve goals.

↳ Human spirits have other form(s) of knowledge regarding this world:
– I don't know

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:
– Yes

↳ Human spirits can reward:
– Yes

↳ Human spirits can punish:
– Yes

↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:
– Yes

↳ Human spirits have memory of life:
– Yes

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:
– Yes

↳ Human spirits exhibit negative emotion:
– Yes

↳ Human spirits possess hunger:
– Yes

Notes: Offerings should be brought to the tombs of ancestors to sustain the dead.

↳ Human spirits possess/exhibit some other feature:
– Yes [specify]: It was important during this period that spirits be able to find each other in the afterlife. Spells were written to ensure that a family could be reconnected in the afterlife.

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:
– Yes

Notes: While spirits were not believed to talk directly to people, they could visit in dreams.

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– No

↳ In dreams:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: The gods of ancient Egypt were still very much present in the First Intermediate Period. Horus remained important, while Osiris was becoming increasingly important as well. The gods are named and addressed directly in this period, and individuals seem to have direct access, as opposed to previously, when they required the king to act as intermediary. This is related to the somewhat misleading term, "democratization of the afterlife" which characterizes religion in the later Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period (see Smith 2009).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– Yes

Notes: But only in a certain sense - gods could indwell in animals, and were embodied in forces such as the heat of the sun.

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– Yes

Notes: But only in a certain sense - gods could indwell in animals, and were embodied in forces such as the heat of the sun.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– Yes

- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:
 - Yes
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):
 - Yes
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):
 - Yes
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):
 - Yes
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings knows your basic character (personal essence):
 - Yes
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):
 - I don't know
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have other knowledge of this world:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings can reward:
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings can punish:
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:
 - Yes

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:

– Yes

Notes: Offerings should be made to support the gods.

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– Yes

Notes: At least some of the gods, particularly the main nine gods, who made up the Ennead.

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– I don't know

Notes: I'm not sure that hierarchy is appropriate, but there were gods that were more popular and powerful than others.

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– Yes

Notes: Different gods were closely associated with specific domains, but this was not particularly strict.

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: One of the main responsibilities of the kings and nomarchs of the First Intermediate Period was to ensure that the gods were happy. If the gods were happy, order would reign, if not, the world would be in chaos.

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously “moral” or “ethical” norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

– Yes

Notes: The concept of "maat" (which roughly translates to order, justice, truth) was one of the most important elements of Egyptian society and religion. Tomb biographies from this period, particularly those of rulers, often stated that they kept people fed, brought order to the land, and subdued enemy armies. These are all associated with upholding maat.

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– Yes

↳ Food:

– Yes

↳ Sacred space(s):

– Yes

↳ Sacred object(s):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other religions:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other polities:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:

– Yes

↳ Adultery:

– Yes

↳ Incest:

– No

↳ Other sexual practices:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about property crimes:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

↳

↳ Supernatural beings care about conversion of non-religionists:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about economic fairness:

– Yes

Notes: To some extent - if you were wealthy, it was seen to be good (in the eyes of men and gods) to share wealth with those in need. Specifically, "to clothe the needy and feed the hungry"

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:

– Yes

Notes: But only really when entering sacred spaces.

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– I don't know

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– I don't know

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– No

Notes: It is more that spirits and gods could prevent you from reaching the afterlife in the first place, or make your journey there very difficult.

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: The gods could control any and all aspects - so all bad luck, weather, victories, losses, etc. could be attributed to the gods.

↳ Supernatural punishments in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of political failure:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of defeat in battle:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of disaster on journeys.
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of mild sensory displeasure:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of extreme sensory displeasure:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of impaired reproduction:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck visited on descendants:
 - Yes

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

- ↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:
 - I don't know

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural rewards in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of eternal happiness:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as a superior life form:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in a superior realm:

– No

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: The gods were considered all powerful, and all success could be attributed to their favour.

↳ Supernatural rewards in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of good luck:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of political success or power:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of success in battle:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of peace or social stability:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of healthy crops or good weather:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of success on journeys:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced health:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of fortune visited on descendants:

– Yes

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– Yes

Notes: To some extent - at the end of the First Intermediate Period, the king Mentuhotep II was able to reunite the lands of Upper and Lower Egypt. By doing this he restores faith in one ultimate religious and political ruler. This is associated with the favour of the gods - as one of his officials notes in his tomb, "A good beginning came about when Montu gave both lands to King Nebhepetra (Mentuhotep II)" (Seidlmayer 2000: 122).

↳ Is the messiah's whereabouts or time of coming known?

– Yes

↳ Alive, identified:

– Yes

↳ Is the messiah's purpose known:

– Yes

↳ Messiah is a political figure who restores political rule:

– Yes

↳ Messiah is a priestly figure who restores religious traditions:

– Yes

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: The concept of Maat (roughly translated as truth, justice, order) are the core of the social and religious norms.

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

– No

Notes: The concept of maat applies to daily life as well as religious life.

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: The concept of Maat (roughly translated as truth, justice, order) are the core of the social and religious norms. From the biography of Ankhtify of Mo'alla, some of the values that were held during this period are recorded. They largely follow what came previously and after in terms of following Ma'at, but there is additional reference to combat and strength that are not always present.

↳ Honesty / trustworthiness / integrity:

– Yes

↳ Courage (in battle):

– Yes

↳ Compassion / empathy / kindness / benevolence:

– Yes

↳ Generosity / charity:

– Yes

↳ Independence / creativity / freedom:

– Yes

↳ Power / status / nobility:

– Yes

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Does membership in this religious group require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence):

– Yes

↳ Monogamy (males):

– No

↳ Monogamy (females):

– No

↳ Other sexual constraints (males):

– Yes

Notes: If religious practices are the same during this period as others, which seems likely, priests were not able to enter temples after recently having sex.

↳ Other sexual constraints (females):

– I don't know

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– Yes

Notes: There seem to be certain foods that were taboo in certain regions and at certain times - such as working in the temple.

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of property/valuable items:

– Yes

↳ To other in-group members:

– No

↳ To out-groups:

– No

↳ Destroyed:

– No

↳ Other:

– Yes [specify]: Objects and property were meant to be offered to the gods at temples.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

– Yes

Notes: The population was expected to partake in religious ceremonies and festivals.

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

– Yes

Notes: As far as accepting the guiding rule of maat.

Does membership in this religious group require marginalization by out-group members:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

– Yes

↳ What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to small-scale rituals.

– Field doesn't know

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale “ceremonies” and “festivals.”

– Yes

↳ On average, for large-scale rituals how many participants gather in one location:

– Field doesn't know

↳ What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to large-scale rituals.

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

Orthodoxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are interpreted in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper interpretation, etc.

– Yes

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

Orthopraxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are performed in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper procedure, etc.

– Yes

↳ Does participation entail synchronic practices:

– No

↳ Is there use of intoxicants:

– Yes

Notes: Beer was regularly consumed, additional intoxicants are debated.

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

E.g. special changes to appearance such as circumcision, tattoos, scarification, etc.

– No

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

– No

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

– A state

Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– Yes

Notes: In this period, there are references to leaders offering famine relief at the behest of gods.

Is famine relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Rulers were connected both to bureaucracy and to religion, and so famine relief was seen as both a religious and political duty.

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– No

Notes: Not beyond basic necessities like food.

Is poverty relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm:

– No

Is institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– Yes

↳ Is formal education restricted to religious professionals:

– Yes

↳ Is such education open to both males and females:

– No

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

– No

Notes: There seems to be a system of apprenticeship, but not a formal system of education.

Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

– Yes

Notes: In ancient Egypt, religion was strongly related to the bureaucracy.

Do the group's adherents interact with other institutional bureaucracies:

– Yes

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

– Yes

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide water management (irrigation, flood control):

– Yes

Notes: At times it is unclear when temples and priests would have done this; however, from this period there is a reference to an overseer of priests taking on the responsibility of ensuring that the irrigation system at Asyut was working properly (Seidlmayer 2000: 131).

Is water management provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Notes: The king was occasionally responsible for larger irrigation works, but it is unclear if this occurred during the First Intermediate Period.

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– No

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: This is a bit complicated - in the Old Kingdom it seems that temples and funerary estates could be assigned a proportion of the taxes that were officially levied by the state, and there are records noting that they came directly from estates (Muhs 2016: 30-31). Whether this happened in the First Intermediate Period too, is a bit more difficult to say, due to the breakdown of the centralized government and a lack of documentation.

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Again, there is some uncertainty due to the decentralized nature of government during this period, however, temple and funerary estates were generally expected to pay taxes to the state, though these institutions were frequently exempted from this requirement (Muhs 2016).

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

– No

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– No

Are the group's adherents subject to institutionalized punishment enforced by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– I don't know

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:

– I don't know

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

– No

Notes: The rules of maat (justice, order, truth) are at the basis of customs and laws, but this does not seem to have translated into a formal set of rules.

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Notes: The rules of maat (justice, order, truth) are at the basis of customs and laws, but this does not seem to have translated into a formal set of rules.

Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

– No

Do the group's adherents participate in an institutionalized military provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: There was no professional military in Egypt until the New Kingdom, so individuals would be conscripted into forces by nomarchs when the need arose. There was significant conflict in the First Intermediate Period, and so this probably impacted many people.

Are the group's adherents protected by or subject to an institutionalized military provided

by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: There was no professional military in Egypt until the New Kingdom, so individuals would be conscripted into forces by nomarchs when the need arose. There was significant conflict in the First Intermediate Period, and so this probably impacted many people.

Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– Yes

Notes: The Egyptian used hieroglyphs to write their language, which was itself a religious script, but could be used for other purposes as well.



Is use of this distinct written language confined to religious professionals:

– No

Is a non-religion-specific written language available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: While there was only one language, formal hieroglyphs were used for religious texts, while hieratic was starting to be used for less formal texts in this period.

Is a non-religion-specific written language used by the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: While there was only one language, formal hieroglyphs were used for religious texts, while hieratic was starting to be used for less formal texts in this period.

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

- Gathering
- Hunting (including marine animals)
- Fishing
- Pastoralism
- Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards
- Large-scale agriculture (e.g., monocropping, organized irrigation systems)

Is food provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes



Please characterize the forms/levels of food production [choose all that apply]:

- Gathering
- Hunting (including marine animals)
- Fishing
- Patorialism
- Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards
- Large-scale agriculture (e.g., monocropping, organized irrigation systems)

Bibliography

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