Fellahin

also known as "Egyptians (Rural)"

Data source: eHRAF
Secondary source
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*Data Source entry, prepared based on data sourced from an external project.
*Secondary Source entry, prepared from a literature review by a Ph.D. RA

Entry tags: Religion, African Religions, Egyptian Religions

The Fellahin of Egypt are indigenous rural villagers mostly living in the Nile Valley. "They are believed to be among the oldest farmers on earth whose highly productive agriculture, characterized by total reliance on irrigation and intensive labor, contributed to the rise of the ancient Egyptian civilization" (eHRAF Culture Summary). Given Egypt's proximity to the origin and development of Christianity, the Fellahin culture cannot be considered isolated from Christian influence. Notably, the majority of Fellahins are Muslims.

Date Range: 1925 CE - 1960 CE

Region: NileValley

Region tags: Africa, Northern Africa, Egypt

This entry focuses on the SCCS focal village of Silwa, which is located in the Upper Nile Valley of Egypt. The Fellahin culture includes many other societies in Upper, Middle and Lower Egypt along the banks of the Nile valley.

Status of Participants:

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

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

—Source 1: Divale, W. 2004. Codebook of Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. World Cultures: The Journal of Cross-Cultural and Comparative Research.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

—Source 1 URL: http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/ehrafe/

—Source 1 Description: eHRAF World Cultures

—Source 2 URL: http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=mr13-001

—Source 2 Description: Ammar, H. 1954. Growing up in an Egyptian village: Silwa, Province of Aswan. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

—Source 3 URL: http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=mr13-003

—Source 3 Description: Ayrout, H.H., and Wayment, H. 1945. The Fellaheen. Cairo: R. Schindler.

—Source 1 URL: http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=mr13-005

—Source 1 Description: Blackman, W.S. 1926. The Karīn and Karīneh. Journal Of The Royal Anthropological Institute Of Great Britain And Ireland 56. London: 163–69.

—Source 2 URL: http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=mr13-002

—Source 2 Description: Blackman, W.S. 1927. The Fellahin of Upper Egypt: their social and industrial life today with special reference to survivals from ancient times. London: George G. Harrap & Company, Ltd.

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

—Yes

Notes: Although the majority of the population are Muslim, a minority group of Coptic Christians are present and in contact. The Fellahins, as a societal group, are also in contact with other societies. See below for more details on societal-level interactions.

⮑ Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

—Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1734: Market Exchange outside of Local Community; Market exchange outside of local community, involving local, regional, and supra-regional products (code=4, original code 22) (Lang, 1998; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

⮑ Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

—Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1649: Internal Warfare; internal warfare seems to occur once every 3-10 years (code=5, original code=2). SCCS Variable 1654: Pacification; inferred to be unpacified (code=2). (Ember and Ember, 1992; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

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

—No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1650: Frequency of External Warfare; absent or rare (code=1). SCCS Variable 1654: Pacification; inferred to be unpacified because warfare frequency is greater than or equal to 3 (code=2). (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Size and Structure

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

—Field doesn't know

Notes: In the focal site of Silwa, at the time of 1950, the community size was coded by Murdock and

Wilson (1972; retrieved from Divale, 2004) to be between 1,000-4,999 individuals. The community is defined as a unit of significant social interaction beyond the family. The Fellahin group contains many more communities in addition to Silwa, so it is difficult to determine the total population. The majority of Fellahins are Muslim, with a small minority of Coptic Christians (Blackman, 1927).

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

—Estimated population, percentage of sample region: 75

Notes: 75% is a conservative guess of the estimated percentage of Muslim Fellahins in the Nile Valley during 1925-1960. All sources indicate that the majority of the population is Muslim, but an exact percentage is unknown. Ayrout and Wayment claim 95% of the Fellaheen are Muslim (1945:96), and no other ethnographers provide an exact percentage. Rural Egyptians (most of whom may be Fellahin) in 2009 comprised about 57 per cent or about 47 million of 83 million estimated Egyptians (CIA 2010). (eHRAF World Cultures, Fellahin Culture Summary). The majority of Fellahins are Muslim, with a small minority of Coptic Christians (Blackman, 1927).

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: Adherents to the Islam faith follow the Koran. (See Ammar, 1954)

⤷ Are they written:

—Yes

Notes: Most society members are Muslim, and follow the Koran. The Koran is a written text, but memorization and oral recitation of the Koran are markers of a learned person. (See Ammar, 1954, chapter 10)

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

—Yes

Notes: According to SCCS variable 66, Large or Impressive Structures, the most impressive edifice(s) is a religious or ceremonial building(s) (Code=4). (Murdock and Wilson, 1972; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

—Yes

⤷ Tombs:

— Yes

Notes: "More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of [Page 98] the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sîdi' So-and-So" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945:97).

⌐→ Temples:

— Yes

Notes: Mosques

Are there specific sites dedicated to sacred practice or considered sacred:

— Yes

Notes: "I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with barakeh, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is alled el-Kenīseh (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive" (Blackman, 1927: 106).

Are pilgrimages present:

— Yes

Notes: (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945)

⌐→ How strict is pilgrimage:

— Optional (rare)

Notes: "...few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of 'Hagg' and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house" (Aryout & Wayment, 1945:97).

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: "When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If this is not done the rō (soul) will remain in the house and cannot go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead" (Blackman, 1927:110).

Belief in afterlife:

— Yes

Notes: "When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If this is not done the rō (soul) will remain in the house and cannot go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead" (Blackman, 1927:110).

Reincarnation in this world:

— Yes

Notes: "It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming [Page 101] a mother she will go to the tomb of her dead child, taking a friend with her, and request the man whose business it is to do so to open the tomb. The disconsolate mother then goes down inside the tomb where the body lies, and steps over it backward and forward seven times, in the belief that the dead child's spirit will re-enter her body and be born. Here we see a definite belief in reincarnation" (Blackman, 1927:100).

⤷ In a human form:

— Yes

Notes: "It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming [Page 101] a mother she will go to the tomb of her dead child, taking a friend with her, and request the man whose business it is to do so to open the tomb. The disconsolate mother then goes down inside the tomb where the body lies, and steps over it backward and forward seven times, in the belief that the dead child's spirit will re-enter her body and be born. Here we see a definite belief in reincarnation" (Blackman, 1927:100).

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1998: Belief in Reincarnation of Deceased Adults; None (Code=0) (Rosenblatt, Walsh, and Jackson, 1976; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

— Yes

Notes: "When death has actually taken place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a fiīh, who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the remains of the soap used in the washing. As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations" (Blackman, 1927:109).

↳ Interment:

— Yes

Notes: Blackman, 1927:114 see Chapter 7: Death and Funerary Ceremonies

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

— Yes

Notes: "When death has actually taken place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together" (Blackman, 1927:109).

↳ Secondary burial:

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1850: Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Ordinal Scale; secondary contact with the body or bones of the deceased does not occur (Code=1) (Schroeder, 2001; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are formal burials present:

— Yes

Notes: "The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl" (Blackman, 1927:110). "The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners, their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing [Page 112] ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all" (Blackman, 1927:111).

↳ As cenotaphs:

— Yes

Notes: After death, a monument is customarily erected over the grave of Muslim Sheiks

(venerated holy men). Sheiks can have multiple tombs/monuments associated with them; this is typical of Muslim sheiks of any standing. (Blackman, 1927:240-41)

Specific to this answer:

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite   ✓ Religious Specialists

↳ In cemetery:

— Yes

Notes: Blackman, 1927:114 see Chapter 7: Death and Funerary Ceremonies

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

— Yes

Notes: "If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the fellāhīn" (Blackman, 1927:116).

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

— No

Notes: "The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (tell or kom), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945:98).

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

— Yes

Notes: "The modern Egyptian fellain believe in a variety of superhuman beings..." (Blackman, W. 1926:163).

↳ A supreme high god is present:

— Yes

Notes: "The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First of All Living" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1954:140).

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:

— Yes

Notes: "'God will provide. God distributes his benefits. God protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb'" (Ayrout & Wayment,1945:140).

↳ The supreme high god knows what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

— Yes

Notes: "To everyone the fate which God has assigned him" (Ayrout & Wayment,1945:140).

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can reward:

— Yes

Notes: "A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal mean are desirable acts" (Ammar, 1954:75).

↳ The supreme high god can punish:

— Yes

Notes: "A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal mean are desirable acts" (Ammar, 1954:75).

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

— Yes

Notes: SCCS variable 1960: Ghosts Present, coded as yes (1). (Rosenblatt, Walsh, and Jackson, 1976; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

— Yes

Notes: "It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will reappear as a violent ghost--'sul' or 'marid'--haunting people at night and

causing them harm by frightening them with its firery eyes" (Ammar, 1954:136).

→ Previously human spirits have knowledge of this world:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh [holy man] may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building" (Blackman, 1927:241).

→ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

→ Human spirits can punish:

— Yes

Notes: "Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby" (Ammar, 1954:78).

→ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

— Yes

Notes: One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called e□-□ala□, meaning the coming forth or the going up. On the day of e□-□ala□ the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there" (Blackman, 1927:117). "The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond" (Blackman, 1927:120).

→ Human spirits communicate with the living:

— Yes

→ In waking, everyday life:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither" (Blackman, 1927:241).

↳ In dreams:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither" (Blackman, 1927:241).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

— Yes

Notes: "The modern Egyptian fellāīn believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the afārīt (sing. afrīt) or ginn, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the afrīt, and it is called, in the case of a man, the arīn (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, arīnch. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the ukht (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word karīneh to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The ginn, or afārīt, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the arān (pl. of arīn), though the two communities are in touch with each other" (Blackman, W. 1926:163).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

— Yes

Notes: As shadows. See anecdotal example in Blackman, 1927, page 228. "The afārīt may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man" (Blackman, 1927:230).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

— Yes

Notes: "An arīnch [a spirit known as an individual's double] may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the arīneh clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on. A man's arīn does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his arīn. When he is sorry and expressed repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured" (Blackman, 1926:166).

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: "The afārīt are believed to be made of fire, and to have been created many thousands of years before Adam. They may be the chosen assistants of people of evil intent who wish to harm others; they may also, of their own accord, enter into anyone who is doing something wrong, thereby laying himself open to such possession. They are sometimes quite harmless, and will do no injury to a human being unless they are interfered with" (Blackman, 1927:227).

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

— Yes

Notes: Mulsims venerate sheikhs, and Coptic Christians venerate saints (both saints and sheiks are deceased holy figures) (see Blackman, 1927, p.84).

↳ These mixed human-divine beings can be seen:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh [holy man] may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake..." (Blackman, 1927:241).

↳ Mixed human-divine beings have knowledge of this world:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh [holy man] may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building" (Blackman, 1927:241).

↳ These mixed human-divine beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: "Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby" (Ammar, 1954:78).

↳ These mixed human-divine beings can punish:

— Yes

Notes: "Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby" (Ammar, 1954:78).

↳ Mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh [holy man] may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake..." (Blackman, 1927:241).

↳ In waking, everyday life:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh [holy man] may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake..." (Blackman, 1927:241).

↳ In dreams:

— Yes

Notes: "A dead sheikh [holy man] may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake..." (Blackman, 1927:241).

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

— Field doesn't know

Notes: It is unclear whether the organization of the afārīt is a formal pantheon. "The modern Egyptian fellāīn believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the afārīt (sing. afrīt) or ginn, who have an organized society with a king at their head" (Blackman, W. 1926:163).

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: See additional questions below

↳ 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: "It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering hum his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could also be ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a

saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfillment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury" (Ammar, 1954:75).

Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:

— Yes

Notes: "It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering hum his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could also be ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfillment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury" (Ammar, 1954:75).

Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

— Yes

Notes: "It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail" (Ammar, 1954:77).

Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

— Yes

Notes: "It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice" (Ammar, 1954:75).

Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

— Yes

Notes: "A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal mean are desirable acts" (Ammar, 1954:75).

Supernatural beings care about other:

— Yes [specify]: Faith in God

Notes: "Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of [Page 79] sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God" (Ammar, 1954:78).

— Yes [specify]: Temper

Notes: "An arīnch may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the arīneh clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on. A man's arīn does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his arīn. When he is sorry and expressed repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured" (Blackman, 1926:166).

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

— Yes

Notes: Multiple supernatural beings have the power to punish Examples include: God, jinn, and saints. See Ammar, 1954 chapter three for specific examples.

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

— Yes

Notes: Multiple supernatural beings have the power to punish Examples include: God, jinn, and saints. See Ammar, 1954 chapter three for specific examples.

↳ Done only by high god:

— No

Notes: Multiple supernatural beings have the power to punish Examples include: God, jinn, and saints. See Ammar, 1954 chapter three for specific examples.

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

— Yes

Notes: Multiple supernatural beings have the power to punish Examples include: God, jinn, and saints. See Ammar, 1954 chapter three for specific examples.

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

— Yes

Notes: "Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby" (Ammar, 1954:78).

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

— Yes

Notes: "Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a

new-born baby" (Ammar, 1954:78).

⮡ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

— Yes

Notes: "A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval" (Ammar, 1954:75).

    ⮡ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:

    — Yes

    Notes: "A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval" (Ammar, 1954:75).

    ⮡ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:

    — Yes

    Notes: "Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby" (Ammar, 1954:78).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

— Yes

Notes: "'God will provide. God distributes his benefits. God protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such, are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945:140).

    ⮡ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

    — Yes

    Notes: "'God will provide. God distributes his benefits. God protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such, are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945:140).

        ⮡ Reward in this life consists of good luck:

        — Yes

        Notes: "A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints" (Ammar, 1954:75).

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

— Yes

    Notes: "A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval" (Ammar, 1954:75).

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: "...sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village; and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm" (Ammar, 1954: 73).

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

— No

Notes: The Fellahin society is intertwined with the teachings of the Koran. These teachings guide conventional norms such as diet and cleanliness, as well as moral norms and values. See Ammar, 1954 for more details and specific examples.

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: See questions below for more detail

    ↳ Ritual purity / ritual adherence / abstention from sources of impurity:

— Yes

    Notes: "Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm...Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'" (Ammar, 1954:73).

    ↳ Respectfulness / courtesy:

— Yes

    Notes: Value system of politeness, see example in Ammar, 1954:49.

→ Familial obedience / filial piety:

— Yes

Notes: "The keynote to the educational process is the eagerness of the adults to create a docile attitude in their children and thus make them acquire filial piety" (Ammar, 1954:127). See Ammar, 1954, section title: Inter-Family Relations

→ Fidelity / loyalty:

— Yes

Notes: "It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful" (Ammar, 1954:121).

→ Cooperation:

— Yes

Notes: "Moreover, the individual faces each of life's rejoicings or crises not only by himself but with the support and co-operation of all those related to him either by patrilineal (□asaba), matrilineal (lahma) and in-law (nasab) relationship, or any other intimate ties. The extent and frequency of such a support, and the hierarchical unit that undertakes the help, varies according to the situation envisaged, to the number of close relatives, and to the prestige of the person" (Ammar, 1954:56).

→ Faith / belief / trust / devotion:

— Yes

Notes: "To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation" (Ammar, 1954:73).

→ Beauty / attractiveness:

— No

Notes: Beauty/attractiveness is not valued in the sense that it must be concealed (at least for women). "Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting [Page 186] men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married" (Ammar, 1954:185).

→ Cleanliness (physical) / orderliness:

— Yes

Notes: "Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation,

renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean" (Ammar, 1954:73).

⌐→ Other important virtues advocated by the religious group:

— Yes [specify]: Memory

Notes: "...Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition'" (Ammar, 1954:204).

— Yes [specify]: Chastity

Notes: "Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex" (Ammar, 1954:185).

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

Notes: "The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful" (Ammar, 1954:121). "The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'" (Ammar, 1954:185).

⌐→ Monogamy (males):

— Yes

Notes: "It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful" (Ammar, 1954:121).

   ↳ Monogamy (females):

— Yes

  Notes: "It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful" (Ammar, 1954:121).

   ↳ Other sexual constraints (males):

— Yes

  Notes: "...any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful" (Ammar, 1954:121). "Adolescent boys urinate out of sight...Boys wear long pants... any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex" (Ammar, 1954:185).

   ↳ Other sexual constraints (females):

— Yes

  Notes: "It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful" (Ammar, 1954:121). "Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house...girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men. For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting men" (Ammar, 1954:184).

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

— Yes

  Notes: "Ramadān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips" (Blackman, 1927:259).

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

— Yes

  Notes: "The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's

circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it" (Ammar, 1954:116). Ammar (1954:120) describes how "the four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision". "During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood" (Ammar, 1954:186).

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

— Yes

Notes: Regular prayer. For example: "Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone" (Ammar, 1954:75).

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

— Yes

Notes: "One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called e□-□ala□, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of e□-□ala□ the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there" (Blackman, 1927:117).

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."

— Field doesn't know

Notes: It is unclear whether participation in the following ceremony is mandatory. "The Mūlid en-Nebi, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints...The mūlid held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs" (Blackman, 1927:252). "On the day following the termination of Rama□ān, el-□Īd e□-□ughaiyar (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor...El-□Īd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. " (Blackman, 1927:259).

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

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

— A state

Notes: The Fellahins are fully embedded within the Egyptian civil system. SCCS Question 236: Jurisdictional hierarchy of local community; clan-barrios (Code=4). SCCS Question 237: Jurisdictional hierarchy beyond local community; three levels (e.g., states) (code=4). (Murdock, 1962-1971; retrieved from Divale, 2004). SCCS Question 699: Political organization; little state--political integration in independent units averaging 10,000-100,000 (code=4) (Whyte, 1978; retrieved from Divale, 2004). SCCS Question 1729: Presence of an Overarching Political Unit; ethnic group to which the local community belongs occupies a politically subordinate position in the postcolonial state (code=8) (Lang, 1998; retrieved from Divale 2004).

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

— Yes

Notes: The Kuttab is "the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran" (Ammar, 1954:206)."To expect the Kuttabs to prepare children for practical life or to teach them arithmetic, drawing, or rhythmic movements, according to some of the modern critics of these institutions, is to assume modern standards and social demands in a society which by its very organization does not require its schools to provide such activities. This is the task of the parents, and is to be learnt through life itself. It must be emphasized here that children are sent to the Kuttab voluntarily and they themselves are not averse to attending it to learn part of the Koran" (Ammar, 1954:212).

  ↳ Is formal education restricted to religious professionals:

    — No

    Notes: See Ammar, 1954

  ↳ Is such education open to both males and females:

    — No

    Notes: Most Kuttabs are only open to boys. Ammar (1954:207) references a conversation he had with a Kuttab Sheikh, who thought "it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls".

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

— Yes

Notes: Compulsory school established by the Provincial Council in 1925 after "the 'Egyptian Constitution' promulgated in 1923, declared in Article 19 that elementary education should be free and compulsory for all boys and girls" (Ammar, 1954:214).

  ↳ Is extra-religious education open to both males and females:

— Yes

Notes: Compulsory school established by the Provincial Council in 1925 after "the 'Egyptian Constitution' promulgated in 1923, declared in Article 19 that elementary education should be free and compulsory for all boys and girls" (Ammar, 1954:214).

Public Works

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

— Yes

Notes: "The Government, by its control of the land, and still more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile...The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance." (Ammar, 1954:44).

Taxation

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

— Yes

Notes: "The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through its sarrafs in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and by means of the Crédit Agricole attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah" (Ammar, 1954:45).

Enforcement

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

— Yes

Notes: "The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revnue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945:46). SCCS variable 90: Police, is categorized as "specialized and institutionalized on at least some level or levels of political integration" (code=5) (Ruden and Marshall, 1972; retrieved from Divale, 2004)..

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

— Yes

Notes: "The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, — and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him" (Ammar, 1954:45).

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

— Yes

Notes: The Fellahins fall under the jurisdiction of the Egyptian Government, and must abide by laws and regulations out forth by the government (see Ayrout & Wayment, pages 44-50).

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

— Yes

Notes: The Fellahins fall under the jurisdiction of the Egyptian Government, and must abide by laws and regulations put forth by the government. (see Ayrout & Wayment, pages 44-50).

Warfare

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

— Yes

Notes: "The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his eninterest, or collects the exemption fine" (Ayruot & Wayment, 1945:45).

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: "The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his eninterest, or collects the exemption fine" (Ayruot & Wayment, 1945:45).

Written Language

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: Arabic is the official language of Egypt, but "it is worth noting here that there is no definite standard or critique for determining literacy in the official census in Egypt. Officials who conduct the census may consider a person literate if he or she can read a sentence in print. They might decide to include a person as literate on hearsay. Even if they take writing as one of the requirements for literacy, it is difficult to know exactly what criterion they adopt, and what type of writing or speed they require. A person is sometimes considered literate if he can sign his name" (Ammar, 1954:221).

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

— Yes

Notes: Many of the fellahins are farmers along the Nile River Valley. The dominant mode of subsistence is advanced agriculture (SCCS variable 833, code=1), and the subsidiary mode is domestic animals (SCCS variable 834, code=4) (Murdock and White, 1969; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

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

— Large-scale agriculture (e.g., monocropping, organized irrigation systems)

— Other [specify in comments]

Notes: The dominant mode of subsistence is advanced agriculture (SCCS variable 833, code=1), and the subsidiary mode is domestic animals (SCCS variable 834, code=4) (Murdock and White, 1969; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

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

— Yes

Notes: The Fellahins commonly trade food with people from other communities. Additionally, "The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance. The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945: 45).

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

— Large-scale agriculture (e.g., monocropping, organized irrigation systems)

— Other [specify in comments]

Notes: The Fellahins commonly trade food with people from other communities. Additionally, "The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance. The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust" (Ayrout & Wayment, 1945: 45).