

Religion at Deir el-Medina

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Entry tags: Egyptian Religions, Religious Group

Deir el-Medina is an archaeological site located on the West Bank of Thebes (current Luxor). It was inhabited by a community of workmen who built the tombs of the Valley of the Kings (Toivari-Viitala 2011). This workmen's village provides a wide range of sources for the study of daily life (McDowell 1999; Meskell 2002), economy, politics and personal beliefs (Weiss 2015) during the New Kingdom (from the reign of Thutmose I until that of Ramesses XI).



Date Range: 1504 BCE - 1069 BCE

Region: Deir el-Medina

Region tags: Egypt, Deir el-Medina, West Bank Luxor

The workmen's village of Deir el-Medina in the New Kingdom, Ancient Egypt.

Status of Participants:

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

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: McDowell, A. 1999. Village Life in ancient Egypt. Laundry lists and Love Songs, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Source 2: Weiss, L. 2015. Religious Practice at Deir el-Medina, Leiden: Peeters-Leuven.
- Source 3: Toivari-Viitala, J. 2001. Women at Deir el-Medina. A study of the status and roles of the female inhabitants in the workmen's community during the Ramesside Period, Leiden: Peeters-Leuven.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: Toivari-Viitala, J. 2001. Deir el-Medina (development), In Willeke Wendrich (ed.), UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, Los Angeles. <http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002b227q>
- Source 1 Description: Article on the different stages and occupations of Deir el-Medina.
- Source 2 URL: <http://dem-online.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/>
- Source 2 Description: Deir el-Medina online database
- Source 3 URL: <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4hichack.html>
- Source 3 Description: Transcriptions and information on hieratic documents (ostraca and papyri) from Deir el-Medina

Notes: Another useful online resources: Museo Egizio (Turin) online collection database; For tombs: osirisnet.net; For the Theban area: https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/links/cached/chapter2/2_17b_thebanmapping.htm

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

- Source 1 URL: <https://dmd.wepwawet.nl/bibliography.htm>
- Source 1 Description: A Systematic Bibliography on Deir el-Medina by: R.J. Demarée, B.J.J. Haring, W. Hovestreydt and L.M.J. Zonhoven
- Source 2 URL: <https://deirelmedinaegypt.wixsite.com/home>
- Source 2 Description: Good website for pictures and general information for a better understanding of the site of Deir el-Medina.
- Source 3 URL: <https://www.ifao.egnet.net/archeologie/deir-el-medina/>
- Source 3 Description: Website of the IFAO (Institut Français d'archéologie Orientale) with the reports by Bernard Bruyère and many other egyptologists and experts.

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: Deir el-Medina was considered as a strong location for religious practice as it is located in the Theban area. Indeed, Hathor, the Mistress of the West Theban Mountain, was extremely important. Similarly, the veneration for royal ancestors such as king Amenhotep I and his mother, queen Ahmose-Nefertari, is marked at the site with the presence of oracles, chapels and temples. The area was still considered as a sacred region after the Ramesside period (Dynasties 19-21), and although it experienced looting the Ptolemaic Hathoric temple was prominent. In fact, Deir el-Medina means in Arabic "The monastery of the town". To summarize, Deir el-Medina was weekly provided with clothing, water and other necessary products. Similarly, the strong religious significance of the site made that during the Coptic era, was considered as a sacred settlement too. Hence, different religious groups interacted in the zone not exclusively during the Ramesside period.

↳ Is the cultural contact competitive:

– No

↳ Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

– Yes

↳ Is the cultural contact neutral:

– Yes

↳ Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– No

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

– No

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

– No

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– Field doesn't know

Does the religion have official political support

– Yes

↳ Are the priests paid by polity:

– Yes

↳ Is religious infrastructure paid for by the polity:

– Yes

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

– Yes

↳ Are political officials equivalent to religious officials:

– Yes

↳ Is religious observance enforced by the polity:

– Yes

↳ Polity legal code is roughly coterminous with religious code:

– Yes

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

– Yes

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):

— I don't know

Notes: There were 68 houses with an average of 6 to 8 members per household. Then there were additional workers, water-carriers, laundry workers, officials, etc.

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

— I don't know

Notes: The workmen's team included approximately 120 workers under Ramesses IV. Their families and close relatives or friends together with external workers who provided daily water and food (and other main goods) also lived in the area.

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: The range of literacy among Deir el-Medina inhabitants was extremely high according to authors such as McDowell, in comparison with other areas. This could have been due to the fact that the artisans worked on the tombs of the Valley of the Kings, where they could have learnt the scripture by copying and imitating. Similarly, there is evidence in the Great Pit at Deir el-Medina of inscribed ostraca probably used as sketches by young individuals who were learning about their jobs (officials, scribes...). At Deir el-Medina papyri such as the Turin Papyrus were found together with the so-called Naunakhte's Archive (The last Will of this lady; a votive stela from his son, and a legal document from his husband, Khaemnu, see: Jaroslav Černý (1945). «The Will of Naunakhte and the Related Documents». The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (31): 29-53. JC.). Similarly, thousands of small inscribed pieces of pottery (ostraca) were found at the Great Pit at Deir el-Medina, the majority of which are now at the Ashmolean museum in Oxford. Some of them are figurative (scenes) and other, literary (inscribed). All of them bear important information on religious, economic and daily life at Deir el-Medina.

↳ Are they written:

— Yes

↳ Are they oral:

— Yes

↳ Is there a story (or a set of stories) associated with the origin of scripture:

— I don't know

Notes: The range of literacy among Deir el-Medina inhabitants was extremely high according

to authors such as McDowell, in comparison with other areas. This could have been due to the fact that the artisans worked on the tombs of the Valley of the Kings. where they could have learnt the scripture by copying and imitating. Similarly, there is evidence in the Great Pit at Deir el-Medina of inscribed ostraca probably used as sketches by young individuals who were learning about their jobs (officials, scribes...).

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

— Yes

Notes: There are examples of monumental architecture at Deir el-Medina. This includes the famous Temple of Hathor, a temple to Amenhotep I, other ramesside temples, chapels, and hundreds of tombs in the Western Necropolis of the site, even though they are more humble, their decorations and substructures are very important for tracing development in tombs during the New Kingdom. Similarly, the residential area contains 68 houses for the inhabitants of the site, which were subsequently subdivided as the different generations occupied them.

↳ In the average settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

— I don't know

↳ Size of largest single religious monument, square meters:

— I don't know

Notes: The largest religious monument is perhaps the Hathoric Temple

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

— I don't know

Notes: Ptolemaic temple of Hathor

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:

— I don't know

↳ Height of average monument, meters:

— I don't know

↳ In the largest settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

— I don't know

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes

↳ Tombs:
– Yes

↳ Cemeteries:
– Yes

↳ Temples:
– Yes

↳ Altars:
– Yes

↳ Devotional markers:
– Yes

↳ Mass gathering point [plazas, courtyard, square. Places permanently demarcated using visible objects or structures]:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Other type of religious monumental architecture:
– Yes [specify]: Chapels (private and "public" for the whole community)

Is iconography present:

– Yes

↳ Where is iconography present [select all that apply]:
– At home
– Only religious public space
– Some public spaces
– All public spaces

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

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- ↳ Eyes (stylized or not):
 - Yes
- ↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic):
 - Yes
- ↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic):
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Supernatural beings (anthropomorphic):
 - Yes
- ↳ Supernatural beings (abstract symbol):
 - Yes
- ↳ Portrayals of afterlife:
 - Yes
- ↳ Aspects of doctrine (e.g. cross, trinity, Mithraic symbols):
 - Yes
- ↳ Humans:
 - Yes
- ↳ Other features of iconography:
 - Yes

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

– Yes

- ↳ Are sacred site oriented to environmental features:
 "Environmental features" refers to features in the landscape, mountains, rivers, cardinal directions etc...
 – Yes

Notes: Hathor: linked with the Western Mountain/Hill and the desert, for example.

Are pilgrimages present:

– Yes

Notes: During commemorative issues, festivals (Opet, Beautiful Feast of the Valley, Heb-Sed...).

- ↳ How strict is pilgrimage:
 - Optional (common)

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

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

– Yes

Notes: The ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs regarding the Afterlife implied (for ancient Egyptians) the existence of different elements within the individual. These elements were namely the akh, the ba, the ka, the name, the ib (heart) and the shadow. To summarize these beliefs, ancient Egyptians believed that the personhood was composed of several non-physical elements and other tangible manifestations such as the body itself, for instance.

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

– Yes

Notes: This is a complex question because among the elements that were included in one individual, the mind was more associated with the physical organ of the heart whereas the akh (spirit) is sometimes compared with the modern religious term of "soul". Nonetheless, in general, the ancient Egyptians distinguished these components from the human body.

- ↳ Other spirit-body relationship:

– Yes [specify]: The different elements of the human being were separated when the individual died and compiled together again in the mummification process through several religious rites such as the Opening of the Mouth.

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

Notes: However, in Ancient Egypt the Afterlife has also a tangible space or location: the West of the Nile symbolized the perfect sacred space for burying the deceased, manifested in the numerous tombs built on the West Bank of the Nile. In the New Kingdom, due to the progressively solarization, the West was conceived as the place where the sunset took place in a symbolic journey of the Sun (Ra) moving from the East (sunrise) to the West (sunset).

Reincarnation in this world:

– No

Notes: The individual was expected to successfully pass the Judgement of Osiris, after which (through the negative confession, chapter 125 Book of the Dead, and the judgement of the heart and Maat) he/she was prepared and ready for accessing the Afterlife. More than reincarnation, the individual was believed to experience a reconstitution of his/her personhood components to continue his/her life in the Netherworld.

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes



Mummification:

– Yes

Notes: For the period (New Kingdom) addressed at the site of Deir el-Medina, mummification was the preferred method to preserve the body of the deceased.

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

Notes: One of the best preserved examples is the TT8 (the tomb of Kha and Meryt). This tomb was found intact with very well preserved grave goods. Kha was a Royal Architect under Amenhotep II, and one of these goods is his protractor (an instrument used by architects to measure angles) and his cubit stick made of gold. Other goods are bread loaves, wigs, clothing, furniture (beds, headrests, stools, chests) and jewelry. In general, grave goods also contained cultic equipment used during the lives of the owners and also in the Afterlife. This is why they were buried with the owners. Some of the tombs were plundered especially in the 20th Dynasty, so information on the goods is not always present in the archaeological record. Nonetheless, TT8 is a good example of funerary material culture at Deir el-Medina.

↳ Personal effects:

– Yes

↳ Valuable items:

– Yes

↳ Significant wealth (e.g. gold, jade, intensely worked objects):

– Yes

↳ Some wealth (some valuable or useful objects interred):

– Yes

↳ Other valuable/precious items interred:

– Yes [specify]: Daily life objects that could be used during the lifetime of the individuals of the community such as furniture, ritual artifacts and cosmetic objects: stools, chairs, beds, offering tables, amulets, figurines, kohl containers and so on.

↳ Other grave goods:

– Field doesn't know

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

↳ As cenotaphs:

– No

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– Yes

Notes: Ancestor/deities private chapels

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

– Yes

Notes: Mostly infant burials but not exclusively. Similarly, ancestor rituals may have occurred at Deir el-Medina in households. There are some objects such as anthropoid busts, false doors in

domestic contexts, and the so-called akh-ikr-n-Ra stelae that can be interpreted as proof of the veneration for dead relatives and close friends within the houses (see Lara Weiss. 2015. Personal religious practice at Deir el-Medina, Leiden: Peeters-Leuven).



Other formal burial type:

— Yes [specify]: Infant burials, collective burials

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

— Yes

Notes: Supernatural beings are present among the beliefs of the inhabitants of Deir el-Medina. Especially those related to protection of women during pregnancy and protection of children. One of these popular beings is the god Bes, considered a "demon" by some experts. This dwarf god is depicted at houses at Deir el-Medina as well as the goddess Taweret. The counterpart of god Bes. They also protected households and they are commonly depicted at Tell el-Amarna as well. Similarly, the contact with the deceased at Deir el-Medina is very strong. The akhw (good spirits) and the mwtw (damned spirits) were present and they were believed to intervene in the inhabitants' lives. These interventions were not always good, in fact, the mwtw could cause illnesses and accidents, whereas the akhw acted as intermediaries with divinity and protected their relatives.



A supreme high god is present:

— Yes

Notes: At Deir el-Medina there existed a wide range of gods and goddesses as in the rest of Egypt during the Ramesside period. Nonetheless, during the Amarna episode, a sort of Henotheism (several gods with a supreme god, in this case, Aten) was initiated. After this episode, the Ramesside kings made efforts to fully restore the cult to Amun. Indeed, in the case of Deir el-Medina a type of "supreme god" was Amun linked to the cult of Amenhotep I at that time. There is, however, no scholarly consensus that Amun was the supreme god at Deir el-Medina. However, taking into consideration the extent of the restored religious cult to Amun, it seems that this god was prominent in comparison to others at Deir el-Medina and he was also conceived as the creator.



The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

— Yes

Notes: Some gods and goddesses were anthropomorphic.



The supreme high god is a sky deity:

— Yes

Notes: More than a "supreme" god (depending on the period) it was conceived as the creator: the Sun god. For other periods, Amun-Ra or Amun. Nonetheless, Ra (the sun) can be considered, generally speaking, as a supreme deity but without excluding the existence of other gods and goddesses (except the Amarna Period).

- ↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):
 - No
- ↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):
 - Yes

Notes: Amenhotep I and his mother, queen Ahmosis-Nefertari, were deified at Deir el-Medina. It seems that there was a link between Amun and Amenhotep I at the village at some point in its religious development.
- ↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:
 - Yes
- ↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites:
 - Yes

Notes: Different members of the royal dynasty in Ancient Egypt tried to legitimate their role as rulers by associating themselves with the god (e.g. Hatshepsut) especially but not exclusively during the New Kingdom.
- ↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites:
 - I don't know
- ↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good:
 - Yes

Notes: However, more than good or bad, the god had to behave in accordance to the universal Justice or Order: Maat. Gods reacted to human emotions and behavior, they could reward or punish human beings.
- ↳ Other feature(s) of supreme high god:
 - Yes [specify]: Creator
- ↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:
 - Yes
 - ↳ The supreme god's knowledge is restricted to particular domain of human affairs:
 - Yes

Notes: Priesthood and the king.
 - ↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s)

within the sample region:

— Yes

Notes: Temples

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted within the sample region:

— Yes

Notes: In some cases, the gods were restricted to sacred spaces but they can be manifested in households for example, by creating an accurate atmosphere for the ritual cult.

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted outside of sample region:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

— Yes

Notes: Even though it depends on the period, it seems that gods and the supreme god were not only restricted to temples but they can be present at households among other contexts (chapels, etc.).

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

— Yes

Notes: Indeed, there is an expression "have the god in the heart", which means that the god knows exactly the behavior and nature of the individual. This can be seen in the Judgement of Osiris where the individual had to confirm through the negative confession and the measuring of the heart his/her behavior in his/her lifetime in accordance to Maat.

↳ The supreme high god knows your basic character (personal essence):

— Yes

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

— Yes

Notes: In fact, divine oracles were intended to answer these type of questions and divination practices together with a vision of the future of the individual,

e.g.: the oracle of Amun at Deir el-Medina.

↳ The supreme high god has other knowledge of this world:

– Yes [specify]: In some cosmogonies, explanations of the world, the supreme god is conceived as the creator or the world.

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

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god can reward:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god can punish:

– Yes

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

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god exhibits negative emotion:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god possesses hunger:

– Yes

↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural beings other than the high god:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god possesses/exhibits some other feature:

– Yes [specify]: Happiness, hate, and any other similar sentiments to human beings.

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

↳ In dreams:

– Yes

↳ In trance possession:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Through divination practices:

– Yes

Notes: Divination is attested at Deir el-Medina (See articles by Szpakowska and Emily Teeter 2011; also Andrea McDowell 1999: Village Life in a ancient Egypt. Laundry lists and love songs).

↳ Only through religious specialists:

– No

Notes: In the majority of periods, only priests and the king could contact the gods directly. During the Amarna Period, Akhenaten and the royal family in some occasions were the only mediators with the god Aten. In conclusion, this can vary according to the times.

↳ Only through monarch

– No

Notes: Except during the Amarna Period.

↳ Other form of communication with living:

– Yes [specify]: Personal piety manifested in the interaction with the gods by appealing to them directly in some cases.

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– No

Notes: But they were believed to cause negative consequences that could manifest, such as illnesses and so on.

↳ 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:

– Yes

↳ 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):

– Yes

Notes: In some cases they were appealed to through divination consulting and oracle requests.

↳ Human spirits have other form(s) of knowledge regarding this world:

– Yes [specify]: Manifested in the so-called letters of the dead for example. They interacted with the living and had several means of causing effects..

↳ 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 communicate with the living:
– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:
– Yes

↳ In dreams:
– Yes

↳ In trance possession:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Through divination processes:
– Yes

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↳ Only through specialists:

– No

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

↳ Communicate with living through other means:

– Yes [specify]: The Letters to the dead are a good example of dead interference in the living's world. Sometimes individuals "blamed" the bad spirits (mwtw) for their problems of health and fertility, for example. But dead can also interfere as benevolent spirits (akhw).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: Apotropaic and household spirits such as Bes and Taweret, protectors of women, pregnant women, infants and also the household itself, are good examples of supernatural-deities that were appealed to for daily life issues too.

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– No

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– Yes

↳ 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):
 - Field doesn'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

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature:

– Yes [specify]: They can protect individuals, interfere with gods and cause illnesses but also cause good issues such as improve fertility.

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– No

Notes: The king is the supreme dual figure, on the one hand he was divine (Horus) and on the other, he was a mortal human being.

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

– Yes

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– Yes

Notes: More than supernatural beings, there were different ancestors within a family group who protected the household.

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– No

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– No

↳ Other organization for pantheon:

– Yes [specify]: Not necessarily hierarchical but horizontal relationships among supernatural beings.

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

↳ 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

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– Yes

↳ Food:

– No

↳ Sacred space(s):

– Yes

↳ Sacred object(s):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– Yes [specify]: Daily cult maintenance for the ancestors, the kings and queens and the deities.

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:

– Yes

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

– No

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

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

– I don't know

↳ 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

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– Yes [specify]: fertility, childhood care, pregnant women, daily life issues, illnesses, wounds.

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– Yes

↳ Done by other entities or through other means [specify]

– Yes

Notes: Physical enemies, angry ancestors, angry gods and supernatural beings.

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– Yes

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– Yes

↳ Done randomly:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– Yes

Notes: Do not cooperate within the community, aggression to other companions, disrespect to ancestors, gods and royal members; do not performance daily cults, etc.

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– No

Notes: In order to access the Afterlife, individuals were expected to have behaved in accordance with Maat (Universal Justice). If the deceased was not able to access the Afterlife after the Judgement of Osiris, he became trapped as an evil spirit (similar to a phantom). These spirits were known as the damned ones: the mwtw.

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

↳ 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

↳ Other [specify]

– Yes

Notes: In some cases, punishment can developed into the death of the individual (e.g. infants death).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:

– Yes

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

- ↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:
 - Yes
- ↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:
 - Yes
- ↳ Done to enforce group norms:
 - Yes
- ↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:
 - Yes
- ↳ Done randomly:
 - No
- ↳ 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

↳ Other [specify]

– Yes

Notes: The deceased needed their cult to be maintained by relatives for every single social group. Kings, queens, nobles, artisans, etc. Everyone continued living in the Afterlife and this is why they needed daily cult worship and offerings in order to nourish their spirits and different elements of the individual.

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

↳ 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
- ↳ Other [specify]
 - Yes

Notes: Good luck: becoming rich, living with the gods in the Afterlife..

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– No

Notes: In general there were no messianic beliefs. However, Akhenaten was conventionally considered as the "prophet" of the god Aten by some experts.

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

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

– No

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

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

– No

Notes: Except by some range of individuals within the priesthood.

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

– No

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

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

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Tattooed mummy found. Perhaps due to rituals.

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:

– Yes

Notes: Fertility matters, for instance.

↳ To out-groups:

– Yes

↳ Destroyed:

– Yes

Notes: E.g. the ritual of breaking the red pots applied to fertility figurines or other anthropomorphic figures, even animal figurines.

↳ Other:

– Yes [specify]: More than sacrifice, inhabitants offered several votive artifacts in order to formulate requests or divine intercession (or ancestor intervention)

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

– Yes

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

– Yes

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.”

– Field doesn't know

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

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

– Yes

↳ Tattoos/scarification:

– Yes

↳ Circumcision:

– I don't know

↳ Food taboos:

– Yes

Notes: Generally linked to fish (even though it is not clear whether fish was an established taboo) sometimes linked to impurity.

↳ Hair:

– Yes

Notes: Shaved heads in some cases.

↳ Dress:

– Yes

↳ Ornaments:

– Yes

↳ Archaic ritual language:

– Yes

↳ Other:

– Yes [specify]: Perhaps community rituals to ancestors, deified royal members (Amenhotep I and Ahmose-Nefertari).

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

– Yes

↳ Fictive kinship terminology universal:

– No

↳ Fictive kinship terminology widespread:

– Yes

Notes: Senet (sister) to refer to wife, for example.

↳ Fictive kinship terminology employed but uncommon:

– Yes

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

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

– An empire

Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– Yes

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

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– Yes

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

– Yes

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

– Yes

Notes: Concern for the elderly and infants is present in textual and archaeological sources.

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:

— Field doesn't know

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

— Yes

Notes: The answer to this question can be discussed. Nonetheless, authors such as Steven Snape (2014) argue that some chapels at Deir el-Medina linked to temples may have functioned as At sebAw: schools, where boys received an education on how to write and read. This would explain the rates of literacy among the inhabitants of the site (McDowell 1999) but also the huge amount of sketched (unfinished) ostraca at the Great Pit. Nonetheless, education and the transmission of religious traditions, for example, could have been provided by the main unit of the site: the family/household.



Is formal education restricted to religious professionals:

— No

Notes: Scribes, doctors, officials, and some others were instructed too.



Is such education open to both males and females:

— Yes

Notes: Educations was different to some extent for both genders.

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

— Yes



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

— No

Notes: Generally, however, in the New Kingdom, the priesthood included important titles for women, including the God's Wife of Amun, Divine Adoratrice, and more.

Bureaucracy

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

— Yes

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

Is water management 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 transportation infrastructure:

– Yes

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

– Yes

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

– Yes

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

– Yes

Enforcement

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

– Yes

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an

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

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– Yes

Notes: Kenebet court.

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

– Yes

Notes: For serious crime, judged by high officials and viziers.

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– Yes



Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– Field doesn't know



Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– Field doesn'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

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:
 - Yes
- ↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:
 - Yes
- ↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:
 - Yes
- ↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:
 - Yes

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

– Yes

Notes: This question is difficult to answer with certainty. However, it seems that at Deir el-Medina there was a local institution to solve legal disputes and other aspects related to law: the Kenebet. It is difficult to ascertain if this institution has a specific legal code. However, some sources (see Jana Toivari-Viitala 2001: Women at Deir el-Medina) especially ostraca provide information on the fact that (physical) punishment was not as severe as it was applied by the central administration. For example, the case of Panneb, an inhabitant that employed physical violence against women at the village (apart from other several crimes), who was possibly executed after many offences and crimes, and after several women attended to the Kenebet searching for justice. If this is the case, then, it may be that the Kenebet had its specific legal code to solve disputes among the inhabitants.

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

– Yes

Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

– No

Notes: However the medjay (police) guaranteed order within the settlement.

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

– Field doesn't know

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

Written Language

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

– Yes



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

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

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Notes: There was a specific calendar for the festivals of Amenhotep I (a month took his name, Pamenoth).

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

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

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