

Ancient Egyptian Religion in the Early 18th Dynasty

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Entry tags: Egyptian Religions, African Religions, Religious Group

The entry gives an overview of the religious beliefs and practices of the Egyptian population at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, the first dynasty of the New Kingdom (ca. 1550-1070 BCE). During this period, which approximately goes from the reign of the dynasty founder Ahmose to that of Thutmose III (ca. 1550-1425 BCE), Egypt became a world power, expanding its influence and control in Near East and Nubia through a series of military campaigns. As a consequence, the pharaohs began to control significant wealth, which they largely bestowed on their gods, especially the theban god Amon (also known as Amon-Ra given its fusion with the sun god Ra). He was elevated to the role of king of the gods and then became the dynastic/state god par excellence.



Date Range: 1550 BCE - 1425 BCE

Region: Egypt - Early New Kingdom

Region tags: Africa, Northern Africa, Egypt

The Nile Valley at its extent during the early New Kingdom, with Egypt's influence and control in the Near East and modern Sudan (ancient Nubia).

Status of Participants:

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

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

—Source 1: Assmann, Jan 1995. *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism*. London: Routledge.

—Source 2: Hornung, Erik 1983. *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Reference: Jan Assman. *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom*. Routledge. isbn: 9780367864910.

Reference: Erik Hornung. *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

—Source 1: Betsy, M. Bryan 2000. "The 18th dynasty before the Amarna period (c. 1550-1352 BC)" in *The Oxford history of ancient Egypt* edited by Ian Shaw. Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, pp. 207-264

—Source 2: Assmann, Jan 2001. *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

—Source 3: Teeter, Emily 2011. *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reference: Betsy Bryan M.. *The 18th dynasty before the Amarna period (c. 1550-1352 BC)*. (Ian Shaw, Ed.),

The Oxford history of ancient Egypt. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reference: Jan Assmann. The Search for God in Ancient Egypt. Cornell University Press. isbn: 9780801487293.

Reference: Emily Teeter. Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt. Cambridge University Press. isbn: 9780521848558.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Hatshepsut_From_Queen_to_Pharaoh
- Source 1 Description: PDF of the book Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh edited by Roehrig, Catharine H. with Renée Dreyfus and Cathleen A. Keller (2005).
- Source 2 URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20141024095320/http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/nk/index.html>
- Source 2 Description: University College London page dedicated to Egypt in the New Kingdom

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

- Source 1 URL: <http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/>
- Source 1 Description: The Egyptian Book of the Dead. A Digital Archive of Text Witnesses.

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: In the early New Kingdom, Egypt expanded its control in the Nubian region and its influence in Near East through a series of military campaigns. This brought the Egyptians into contact with other cultures and thus other religious beliefs and practices. As a consequence, Egyptians adopted foreign deities (especially from the Levant and Near East) into their pantheon. However, as for Nubia, contact took place predominantly in one direction, with the indigenous population adopting Egyptian customs (including religious practices).



Is the cultural contact competitive:

– Yes



Is the cultural contact neutral:

– No



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

– Yes

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

– No

Notes: Religious affiliation was assigned by default at birth for every member of Egyptian society.

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– No

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

Notes: The pharaoh was the head of state and also the religious head, i.e. chief priest of every deity.

↳ Are political officials equivalent to religious officials:

– I don't know

Notes: Political officials and religious officials could have the same prestige/power within Egyptian society, especially high ranking officials and high priests. Various political officials bore more than one title, which could include religious activities. However, a religious office did not always have political power.

↳ Is religious observance enforced by the polity:

– No

↳ Polity legal code is roughly coterminous with religious code:

– Yes

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

– Yes

Notes: The king made large donations to the gods and thus to their temples. Some of these were also exempt from paying taxes.

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

— No

Size and Structure

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

— Field doesn't know

Notes: A figure around 4 million has been estimated for the population of Egypt during the New Kingdom.

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

— Field doesn't know

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: The pharaoh was the head of state and also the religious head, i.e. chief priest of every deity.

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: During the New Kingdom, the predominant religious text was the Book of the Dead, a collection of funerary inscriptions (or spells) useful for the deceased in the underworld. The spells could be written on papyrus rolls, but also on tombs walls, grave goods, coffins and mummy bandages. The Book of the Dead wasn't restricted to royalty but it was made available to most people. However, there are numerous other religious texts, such as hymns to the deities and other funerary books (for example the Amduat, which provides descriptions and images of the underworld).



Are they written:

— Yes

Notes: During the New Kingdom, the predominant religious text was the Book of the Dead, a collection of funerary inscriptions (or spells) useful for the deceased in the underworld. The spells could be written on papyrus rolls, but also on tombs walls, grave goods, coffins and mummy bandages. The Book of the Dead wasn't restricted to royalty but it was made available to most people. However, there are numerous other religious texts, such as hymns to the deities and other funerary books (for example the Amduat, which provides descriptions and images of the underworld).

↳ Are they oral:

– Yes

Notes: It can be assumed that all the most important Egyptian religious texts have an oral tradition. Most of them, in fact, are presented as a collection of rituals intended for oral performance.

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

– Yes

Notes: Ancient Egyptians believed that hieroglyphic writing was of divine origin: hieroglyphs were thus "words of the god," referring to the god Thot to whom the invention of writing was attributed.

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– Yes

Notes: The early rulers of the 18th dynasty devoted a great deal of resources and energy to building (and restoring) numerous temples throughout the territory under Egyptian control.

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

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Many settlement and religious monuments have not been preserved.

↳ Size of largest single religious monument, square meters:

– Square meters: 1200000

Notes: The indicated figure refers to the precinct of the temple of Amon at Karnak. The sacred area of Karnak (which include the precinct of Amon, Mut and Khonsu) covered an area of 3 sq km.

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

– I don't know

↳ 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:
 - Field doesn'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]:
 - Yes

- ↳ Other type of religious monumental architecture:
 - No

Is iconography present:

– Yes

- ↳ Where is iconography present [select all that apply]:
 - On persons
 - At home
 - Some public spaces

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

– Yes

↳ Eyes (stylized or not):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic):

– Yes

↳ 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

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: In Ancient Egypt, an individual was considered to be made up of a number of physical and non-physical elements. The ba, the ka and the akh were the main spiritual entities: the ba corresponds to the modern concept of the soul, the ka represents the vital force of its owner, whilst the akh is the designation that acquires the individual once transfigured after death. The other components of a person were the body with its intact heart, the name and the shadow.

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

— Yes

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

— Yes

↳ Other spirit-body relationship:

— Yes [specify]: In order for the deceased to reach the afterlife and become akh, his body had to be preserved intact.

Belief in afterlife:

— Yes

Notes: New Kingdom Egyptian texts refers to the topography of different afterlife spaces, such as the West (the region of the setting sun where the tomb was metaphorically located), the sky (equated with the body of Nut, divine mother of the deceased, where he journeys with the sun god by day) and the “underground” underworld, realm of the god Osiris.

↳ 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: New Kingdom Egyptian texts refers to the topography of different afterlife spaces, such as the West (the region of the setting sun where the tomb was metaphorically located), the sky (equated with the body of Nut, divine mother of the deceased, where he journeys with the sun god by day) and the “underground” underworld, realm of the god Osiris.

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined “above” space:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined “below” space:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined horizontal space:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife located in "other" space:

– No

Reincarnation in this world:

– No

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes

↳ Cremation:

– No

↳ Mummification:

– Yes

↳ Interment:

– Yes

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

– Yes

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

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

– No

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

↳ Secondary burial:

– Yes

Notes: At the beginning of the New Kingdom, family tombs were also used, so it may occur that a person who had already been buried could be reburied elsewhere, to be reunited with other family members. In other cases, a tomb could be reopened and the bodies inside rearranged to make space for other family burials. Nevertheless, the reburial practice was used only occasionally and mainly for practical (non-ritual) needs.

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

Notes: During this period, we can find both objects used in daily life (i.e. wigs, clothing, furniture, jewelry ecc.) and ritual objects, created for the burial specifically (i.e. coffin, amulets, shabti figures, funerary papyri, etc.).

↳ Personal effects:

– Yes

Notes: During this period, we can find both objects used in daily life (i.e. wigs, clothing, furniture, jewelry ecc.) and ritual objects, created for the burial specifically (i.e. coffin, amulets, shabti figures, funerary papyri, etc.).

↳ Valuable items:

– Yes

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

– Yes

Notes: This kind of objects are present in royal tombs or very high status burials.

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

– Yes

↳ Other valuable/precious items interred:

– No

↳ Other grave goods:

– Yes

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

↳ As cenotaphs:

– No

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– Yes

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

– No

↳ Other formal burial type:

– No

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: Ancient Egyptian religion was polytheistic, so a pantheon composed of different deities (i.e. supernatural beings) was worshipped.

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: At the beginning of the 18th dynasty, Amon, god of Thebes, grew in importance. Thebes was in fact the city of origin of the first pharaohs of the dynasty who, due to the political power and financial means at their disposal, bestowed a significant amount of wealth to the temples and sacred processions dedicated to the Theban god, as never before. The 18th dynasty also witnessed the unprecedented rise of another deity, the sun god Ra. Now, almost all Egyptian gods participate in the sun cult, acquiring solar features. Amon-Ra was thus elevated to dynastic god par excellence, becoming "King of the Gods".

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):

– Yes

Notes: Osiris (a chthonic deity of high importance) appears as the night form of the sun god in the New Kingdom.

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):

– Yes

Notes: At the beginning of the New Kingdom, the pharaoh remained the intermediary between the divine and human spheres. The king, in particular, gained significant importance as the son of god Amon-Ra. It was the god Amon-Ra himself who created the pharaoh and decided his future, and the earliest iconographic evidence of the divine birth of the pharaoh comes from the funerary temple of queen Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (beginning of the 18th dynasty). During this period, the conception of the kings' funerary temples also changed: they were no longer just dedicated to the funerary cult of the king but places of veneration of Amon-Ra and the living ruler, who was associated with the god. At the same time, the divine temples also became the places of veneration of the king.

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– Yes

Notes: At the beginning of the New Kingdom, the pharaoh remained the intermediary between the divine and human spheres. The king, in particular, gained significant importance as the son of god Amon-Ra. It was the god Amon-Ra himself who created the pharaoh and decided his future, and the earliest iconographic evidence of the divine birth of the pharaoh comes from the funerary temple of queen Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (beginning of the 18th dynasty). During this period, the conception of the kings' funerary temples also changed: they were no longer just dedicated to the funerary cult of the king but places of veneration of Amon-Ra and the living ruler, who was associated with the god. At the same time, the divine temples also became the places of veneration of the king.

↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites:

– No

↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites:

– No

↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good:

— Yes

Notes: The Ancient Egyptian gods can be terrifying, dangerous, and unpredictable, but they cannot be evil.

↳ Other feature(s) of supreme high god:

— Yes [specify]: He was a creator god.

↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:

— Yes

↳ The supreme god's knowledge is restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

— No

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

— No

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

— Yes

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

— I don't know

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

— Yes

↳ 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

↳ 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):

— I don't know

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

— I don't know

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

— Yes

Notes: Amon-Ra superintended everyday events and directed them in his unquestionable judgement to realize his divine will.

↳ 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:

— No

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

↳ In dreams:

– Yes

↳ In trance possession:

– I don't know

↳ Through divination practices:

– Yes

↳ Only through religious specialists:

– No

↳ Only through monarch

– No

Notes: The king remained the main intermediary between the divine and human spheres, but from the 18th dynasty onwards private people began to turn to the god without the king's intermediation.

↳ Other form of communication with living:

– No

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– No

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– Yes

↳ Previously human spirits have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

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

– No

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

– No

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– No

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– No

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

– Field doesn't know

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

– Field doesn't know

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

– Field doesn't know

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

– Yes

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

– No

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

– No

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

- ↳ Human spirits can reward:
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Human spirits can punish:
 - Yes
- ↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ 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:
 - No
- ↳ Through divination processes:
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Only through specialists:
 - No

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

↳ Communicate with living through other means:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: The cult of Amon-ra was becoming increasingly important and popular, but multiple minor cults dedicated to the other deities of the Egyptian pantheon continued to be practiced (either as secondary cults in the major centres of the kingdom, or as main cults in the localities consecrated to these deities).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– No

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– No

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

– Yes

↳ 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:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: The first kings of the 18th Dynasty promoted the divine cult of the royal family. As a consequence, some members of the royal family start to be the objects of long-term cult activity, such as King Amenhotep I and his mother Queen Ahmose-Nefertary.

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

– Yes

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– Yes

Notes: One of the best known divine family groups is the Triad of Karnak (Thebes), which consisted of Amon-Ra, the goddess Mut and their child, the god Khonsu.

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– Yes

Notes: During this period the god Amon-Ra grew in importance until he became the King of the Gods.

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– Yes

↳ Other organization for pantheon:

– Yes [specify]: Geography (local deities and local groups of deities).

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:

– Yes

↳ Sacred space(s):

– Yes

↳ Sacred object(s):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:

– Yes

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

– I don't know

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

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:

– Yes

↳ Adultery:

– Yes

↳ Incest:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Other sexual practices:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about property crimes:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about conversion of non-religionists:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about economic fairness:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:
– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:
– Field doesn't know

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:
– I don't know

↳ 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]

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– Yes

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

– Yes

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of mild sensory displeasure:

– No

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory displeasure:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as an inferior life form:

– No

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in an inferior realm:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– Yes

Notes: total extinction of the individual (the so called "second death", from which there was no return).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

- ↳ Supernatural punishments in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:
 - No
- ↳ 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:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of disaster on journeys.
 - I don't know
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of mild sensory displeasure:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of extreme sensory displeasure:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of impaired reproduction:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck visited on descendants:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Other [specify]
 - I don't know

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:

– No

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– Yes

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– No

↳ 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 eternal happiness:

– Yes

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

– Yes

Notes: If the deceased was considered worthy by the gods, he would be transfigured into a perfect divine being (akh) after death.

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

– Yes

↳ Other [specify]

– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

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

– No

↳ 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:

– I don't know

- ↳ Reward in this life consists of extreme sensory pleasure:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced health:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of fortune visited on descendants:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Other [specify]
 - I don't know

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– No

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: At the core of social norms (religious, moral and conventional) was the Ancient Egyptian concept of "Maat", which could be translated with "order", "justice" and "truth". The behavior of a proper man had to be guided by the Maat.

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

– No

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– Yes

- ↳ Honesty / trustworthiness / integrity:
 - Yes

- ↳ Courage (in battle):
 - I don't know
- ↳ Courage (generic):
 - I don't know
- ↳ Compassion / empathy / kindness / benevolence:
 - Yes
- ↳ Mercy / forgiveness / tolerance:
 - Yes
- ↳ Generosity / charity:
 - Yes
- ↳ Selflessness / selfless giving:
 - No
- ↳ Righteousness / moral rectitude:
 - Yes
- ↳ Ritual purity / ritual adherence / abstention from sources of impurity:
 - Yes
- ↳ Respectfulness / courtesy:
 - Yes
- ↳ Familial obedience / filial piety:
 - Yes
- ↳ Fidelity / loyalty:
 - Yes
- ↳ Forbearance / fortitude / patience:
 - Yes

↳ Diligence / self-discipline / excellence:
– Yes

↳ Humility / modesty:
– Yes

↳ Faith / belief / trust / devotion:
– Yes

↳ Wisdom / understanding:
– Yes

↳ Discernment / intelligence:
– Yes

↳ Cleanliness (physical) / orderliness:
– Yes

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):
– No

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

– No

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

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

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

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

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

– No

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

– No

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

– No

Notes: No sacrifice of property/valuable items was required but making offerings to temples and tombs (in order to please deities and spirits of the dead) was common practice.

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

– Yes

Notes: The access to the temple was reserved for the king and priests, to a limited extent also for the élite, but not for common people. In fact, the Egyptian temple was not a place where the community gathered to pray to the gods. However, common people could attend religious festivals (during which statues of the gods were carried in procession out of temples) at specified times of the year.

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

– Yes

Notes: The behavior of a proper man had to be guided by the Maat, which could be translated with "order", "justice" and "truth".

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

– I don't know

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

– No

Notes: No participation was required but small-scale rituals took place (for examples in domestic spaces, tombs and private chapels).

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."

– No

Notes: The access to the temple was reserved for the king and priests (to a limited extent also for the élite) which were the only ones who could perform active roles during festivals and ceremonies. However, common people could attend religious festivals (during which statues of the gods were carried in procession out of temples) at specified times of the year (some of the most important ones took place annually).

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

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

– Yes

↳ Tattoos/scarification:

– I don't know

Notes: Tattoos are attested on Egyptian mummies but this change to appearance doesn't seem to be linked to membership of the religion group.

↳ Circumcision:

– Yes

↳ Food taboos:

– Yes

↳ Hair:

– Yes

Notes: Usually priests shaved their heads and bodies, washed several times daily, and wore

only clean linen clothing.



Dress:

– Yes

Notes: The typical garb of upper-level priests was a ritual leopard-skin cloak.



Ornaments:

– No



Archaic ritual language:

– Yes



Other:

– No

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

– Yes

Notes: According to the Ancient Egyptian religion, the King was the son of the god Amon-Ra.

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

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

– A state

Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– No

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

– Field doesn't know

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– Field doesn't know

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

— Field doesn't know

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

— No

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

— No

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

— No

Notes: Definite schools for scribes (where élite boys received an education on how to write and read) existed attached to the great temples. However, access to them was not apparently dependent on adherence to the religious group.

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

— Yes

Bureaucracy

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

— Yes

Notes: Ancient Egyptian society was characterized by a well-structured formal bureaucracy, which characterized both the administration of the state (both at the central and local level) but also the organization of the army and the temples. The temple administration (which had a structure similar to that of the state) had a specific hierarchy with the high priest at the top and then full-time and part-time priests.

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

— Yes

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

— Yes

Notes: The ancient Egyptian state had both a system and facilities for food storage (especially grain). The most important granaries were attached to palaces and temples. The food stored was used to pay a salary to state officials and workmen but could also be made available to the population in case of need.

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

– No

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

– Yes

Notes: The management of the water (system of irrigation and monitoring of periodic flooding of the Nile) was a state responsibility.

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

– No

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:

– No

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

– Yes

Notes: Taxes paid to the state (usually in the form of agricultural produce, mostly grain) were partly donated to the temples.

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

– No

Enforcement

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

– No

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

– No

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

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

– Yes

Notes: A judicial system was provided by the state and local government.

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– No

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

– Yes



Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– Yes



Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– Yes



Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:

– Yes



Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:

– No



Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:

– Yes

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

– No

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 entire population had to adhere the formal legal code provided by the state.

Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

— No

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

— Yes

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

Notes: The Ancient Egyptian written language, Hieroglyphs, was considered a sacred writing, but it was used both for religious and non-religious texts.



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:

— No

Notes: The Ancient Egyptian written language, Hieroglyphs, was considered a sacred writing, but it was used both for religious and non-religious texts.

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

— No

Notes: The Ancient Egyptian written language, Hieroglyphs, was considered a sacred writing, but it was used both for religious and non-religious texts.

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Notes: Ancient Egyptians used both a civil calendar (based on the annual cycle of the flooding of the Nile, it divided the year into three seasons) and a religious calendar (based on recurring festivals and ceremonies).

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

– Yes

Notes: Ancient Egyptians used both a civil calendar (based on the annual cycle of the flooding of the Nile, it divided the year into three seasons) and a religious calendar (based on recurring festivals and ceremonies).

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes



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

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

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

– Yes



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

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

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