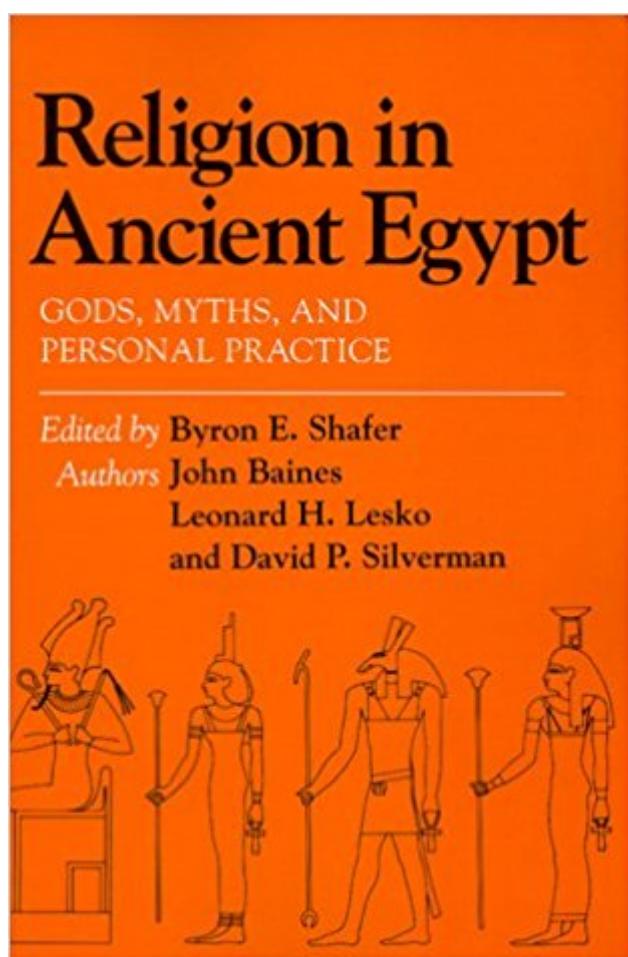


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Religion In Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, And Personal Practice



Synopsis

Meeting the need for an up to date English language survey this informative and accessible book will be welcomed by Egyptologists and their students as well as by other readers interested in learning more about the culture and religion of ancient Egypt

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Customer Reviews

Meeting the need for an up-to-date English-language survey, this informative and accessible book will be welcomed by Egyptologists and their students, as well as by other readers interested in learning more about the culture and religion of ancient Egypt.

"This is a very informative book recommended for all students of Egyptology." —Francesca Jourdan

As someone who has never studied or read anything regarding this subject before I can honestly say this has been an enjoyable, as well as, informative read. Chapter 1 Divinity and Deities in Ancient Egypt was beautifully written and therefore very easy to get through. Chapter 2 Ancient Egyptian Cosmogonies and Cosmology (my personal favorite) was a little more difficult to get through but definitely worth the effort. The author was trying to present (the rise of) each cosmogonical myth in context to what was going on both socially and politically around its city of origin, as well as Egypt as a whole, at the time. Chapter 3 Society, Morality, and Religious Practice was the hardest to get through mainly because it was written in a way that was, at times, hard to

understand. Some of the sentences didn't make sense and there were whole paragraphs that did not seem to belong with the rest of the text. It seemed as though everything that the author was trying to convey could have been done with about half the amount of text. Having said that, I did find the information presented extremely interesting and something I hadn't considered before (its a shame I kept nodding off). It was a nice break from what I normally read and, not having much to compare it to, would certainly recommend it to others.

Love learning new things about the Egyptians

Collections of essays by different scholars often have difficulty painting a cohesive picture of the subject, and this book is a case in point. David Silverman's chapter on the deities covers that territory reasonably well. Leonard Lesko describes the creation myths (though not as readably as James P. Allen) and then argues for an Egyptian conception of the shape of the world that I find flawed. His topics are thus too narrow for an overview of the whole religion. John Baines' essay covers everyday religious beliefs and practices, including morality, magic, divination, and popular religion. Being Baines, he gives a lot of important insights into these topics but makes them rather difficult to absorb with his vague and abstract language. His essay is therefore the most useful to the expert; those looking for an introduction to Egyptian religion should look elsewhere. Stephen Quirke's "Ancient Egyptian Religion" is a readable but rather simple overview, while "Gods and Men in Egypt" has the kind of depth that this book seems to have been aiming for.

Prof. Shafer of Fordham University put this book together in order to fill the need for an English-language survey of ancient Egyptian religion. The result is a relatively short introduction to the subject from three points of view, each addressed by a different author. John Baines writes about the gods, Leonard Lesko about myths, and David Silverman about religious practice. The idea and organization of the book is commendable; however, I felt that stronger editing could have made the three portions of the book more cohesive and compatible in quality. There was too much overlap between Baines' and Lesko's sections, and Lesko's chapter seemed to be aimed at a more specialized audience than were the other chapters. I felt that Baines dwelled too much on political history and took the focus off the topic at hand. His article would have benefitted from further subdivision; as it was, the overly long sections lacked clear direction. Baines handles concepts of divinity quite well, but I think he could have provided a better overview of the Egyptian pantheon. On the whole I would give his article a tentative 4 stars. Lesko's rather short chapter also placed too

much focus on political history, and this was doubly frustrating since he didn't say anything different from Baines. His discussion of myths seemed to lack organization and was befuddling for the newcomer to the field. The chapter mostly consists of lengthy and inadequately explained or connected quotations from Egyptian texts. These texts are interesting sounding but cryptic, and Lesko does not provide enough of an overview for one to understand either what they are saying or why he is quoting them. His article has two chief sections: one on cosmogonies, which is very long and opaque, and a much shorter and somewhat clearer section on cosmology. Overall, this article deserves a tentative 3 stars from a newcomer; someone with more specialized knowledge might find it more useful, but I am not sure. Silverman's chapter was by far the most accessible and informative. Frequent divisions in the text underscored its points while providing strong organization and direction. Silverman's explanations started from basic concepts and worked up to address difficulties in modern methods of study in his field. His chapter came across as an interesting and informative social history of Egypt with particular emphasis on the origins of its structure and morality, both of which derive from religion. This article was engaging and clear, and earns an enthusiastic 5 stars from me. On the whole, then, some parts of this book were more readable and useful than others. However, it seems to be the most scholarly and trustworthy introduction to the topic. I would not recommend it as pleasure reading, but if you need to know something about the subject it is a good resource.

This is so good I love reading this

This book is extremely useful for understanding the complex, multifaceted world of the ancient Egyptian Gods. One cannot simply list gods and myths and have them make sense; this book provides three Egyptologists' views on how the Egyptians saw the gods and the universe, how that view evolved in 3000 years, and how they were worshipped throughout that time. There are numerous illustrations, photos, and footnotes. The authors discuss theories about the Amarna period and the divine status of the Pharaoh that cannot be found in other books on Ancient Egypt. This is a great book to read if you want to understand the religion as a whole and get the essence of what it was like.

Four specialists - Shafer, Baines, Lesko and Silverman - took the difficult task of explaining the Ancient Egyptians' relation with religion. Through their art, their architecture and their literature, the Ancient Egyptians have left answers to all of their existential questions. Culture is religion; religion is

culture : every aspect of life was influenced by the deep beliefs of the people. This is a very informative book recommended for all students of Egyptology.

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