EGYPTIAN RELIGION AND HISTORY: AN OVERVIEW

Early Dynastic Period

Dynasty 1  c.3000 BC
Union of Upper and Lower Egypt into one nation under
Menes/Narmer with capital at Memphis.
Beginnings of writing
Formative period of ritual and calendar.
High God-Horus (as falcon).

Dynasty 2  c.2850 BC
Dissolution of United Kingdom
Southern kingdom adopts Seth as its emblem.

Old Kingdom

Dynasty 3  c.2780 BC
Southern and northern kingdoms reunited.
Beginning of the development of Heliopolitan theology.
Kings buried in step-pyramids.
High god-Atum.

Dynasty 4  c.2600BC
Great pyramid age
Concentration of power in the hands of the royal family
High god-Atum or Re

Dynasties 5 and 6  c.2500 BC
High priests of Heliopolis increase in power
Decline of royal power
Spread of Osiris cult pyramid texts

First Intermediate Period

Dynasties 7 to 10  c.2250 BC
Anarchy, followed by rise of rival kingdoms in Herakleopolis
and Thebes
Coffin texts

Middle Kingdom

Dynasties 11 to 13  c.2050 BC
State reunited with Theban power victorious
Reorganization of monarchy
High god-Amun

Second Intermediate Period

Dynasties 14 to 17  c.1750 BC
Egypt ruled by Asiatic invaders, Hyksos
New Kingdom

Dynasty 18

- Hyksos driven out; native rule restored
- Egypt pursues aggressive military policy, becomes leading power of the Ancient Near East
- Priesthood of Amun reaches the height of its power
- Book of the Dead
- Rebellion against Amun worship by Akhenaton in favor of monotheistic Atonism (visible sun)

Dynasty 19 to 21

- Restoration of Amun worship
- Second period of imperial wars
- Israelites attested in Palestine
- Intense literary activity—tales and love poetry

MYTHOLOGICAL SCHEME

In the Primeval Waters/ The Emergence/ The Order/ The Departure of the High God/ The Separation of Earth and Sky/ The Reign of Osiris/ The Passion of Osiris/ The Reign of Seth/ The Great Quarrel/ The Judgment/ The Salvation of Osiris