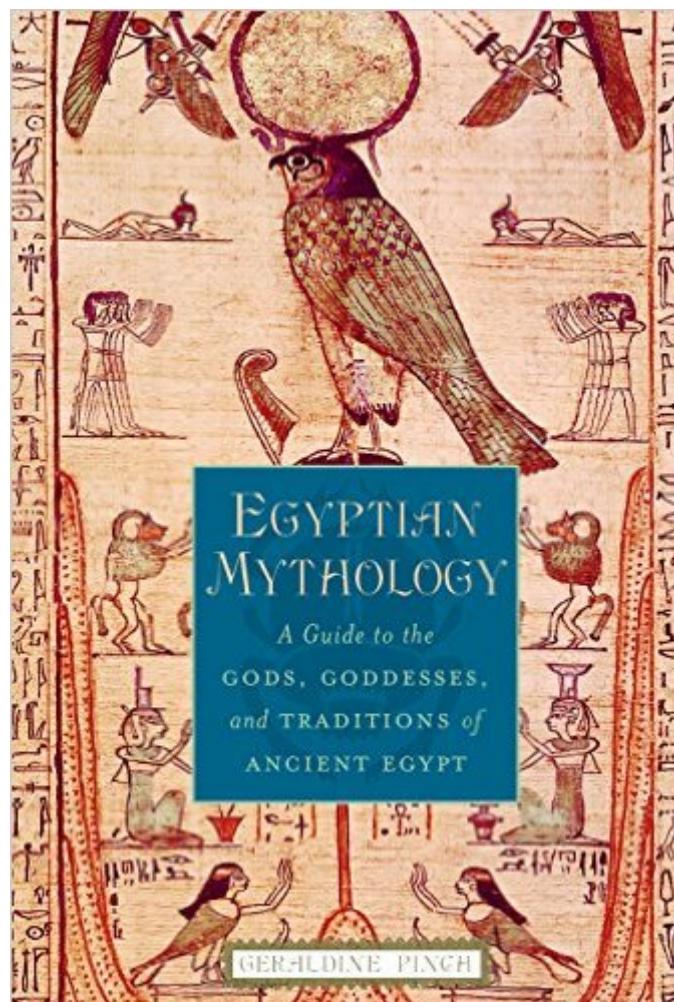


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Egyptian Mythology: A Guide To The Gods, Goddesses, And Traditions Of Ancient Egypt



Synopsis

From stories of resurrected mummies and thousand-year-old curses to powerful pharaohs and the coveted treasures of the Great Pyramids, ancient Egypt has had an unfaltering grip on the modern imagination. Now, in Egyptian Mythology, Geraldine Pinch offers a comprehensive introduction that untangles the mystery of Egyptian Myth. Spanning Ancient Egyptian culture--from 3200 BC to AD 400--Pinch opens a door to this hidden world and casts light on its often misunderstood belief system. She discusses the nature of myths and the history of Egypt, from the predynastic to the postpharaonic period. She explains how Egyptian culture developed around the flooding of the Nile, or the "inundation," a phenomenon on which the whole welfare of the country depended, and how aspects of the inundation were personified as deities. She explains that the usually cloudless skies made for a preoccupation with the stars and planets. Indeed, much early Egyptian mythology may have developed to explain the movement of these celestial bodies. She provides a timeline covering the seven stages in the mythical history of Egypt and outlining the major events of each stage, such as the reign of the sun God. A substantial A to Z section covers the principal themes and concepts of Egyptian mythology as well as the most important deities, demons, and other characters. For anyone who wants to know about Anubis, the terrifying canine god who presided over the mummification of bodies and guarded burials, or Hathor, the golden goddess who helped women to give birth and the dead to be reborn, or an explanation of the nun, the primeval ocean from which all life came, Egyptian Mythology is the place to look.

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Customer Reviews

The opening chapters of Pinch's book are fantastic: her explanation of Egyptian concepts of time, religion and culture is among the best I have read on the subject. With this foundation, she then goes into detail of differences (in the Egyptian understanding of the cosmos) between "linear time" and "cyclical time" (the ancient Egyptians were big on duality: night / day, good / bad, male / female, and of course, linear / cyclical reckonings of time.) The first 100 pages are really worth the price of the book for this reason. The remaining 200-ish pages are an encyclopedia of sorts, the symbols, deities and broader concepts of Egyptian beliefs are explained and cross-referenced. While this was interesting in and of itself (as encyclopedias tend to be), there is no narrative "thread" that ties this together other than how these deities relate to the broader cosmological world of ancient Egypt. For this reason, I deducted a star. In all, it is a very good guide to understanding the literature and culture of ancient Egypt, and I highly recommend it on these grounds alone. One caveat, however - my first copy for some reason, had a printing error, where pages 82 - 114 were missing; (pages 57 - 82 were duplicated in its place), therefore skipping some of the meatiest parts of the book. (The book store I bought my copy from was gracious enough to replace it.) Caveat emptor.

This book was the perfect start-off point for my thesis research on ancient Egypt. It goes into an amazing amount of depth on a broad range of the spiritual aspects of ancient Egypt while remaining interesting and brief. Not only has Pinch fit an amazing catalog of information which I've found hard to come across in such mass in any other text, but she takes care to reference and suggest a wealth of texts to turn to next for more detailed information on any given topic in the book. For anyone who is either curious of or finds themselves in a position where they need to know more about the gods and customs of ancient Egypt, this is the perfect learner's guide.

Superficial treatments of Egyptian myth are easy to find. Deeper-thinking coverage of individual myths is less common but available. Analysis of mythology in general, however, is lacking, even in the dry scholarly sources— in contrast to the reams of analysis of the gods. Pinch's book doesn't fully fill that gap, but it's probably the most thorough one-volume examination of myth out there. It is clearly written and gives a good outline of the prominent events in mythology. One crucial point that it makes very clear is the Egyptian concept of time and how it relates to myth. Mythic events in the "time of the gods", from creation to the accession of Horus, were the basis for cyclical events in the present—for instance, the accession of each king was a reenactment of the accession of Horus, and each sunrise was a reenactment of creation itself. Pinch doesn't go into as much detail about individual myths as other books that are more focused on storytelling. For that

I recommendÂ Myths and Legends of Ancient EgyptÂ by Joyce Tyldesley, which covers both Egyptian mythology and works of fiction, andÂ The Egyptian MythsÂ by Garry Shaw, which pays attention to many of the minor, overlooked myths to which Pinch only briefly refers. The advantage of Pinch is that she gives a better idea of mythology's significance within Egyptian culture, and how the sources for myths developed over time, than most other popular books on the topic. A large portion of the book is made up of a sort of dictionary of major deities and mythic motifs. The dictionary seems to be the cause of complaints in other reviews that this book is dry, but that section is meant as a reference guide, not something to be read straight through. Plus, the last section contains a useful, though far from exhaustive, annotated bibliography. Overall, this is a good starting point for the beginner and a handy reference for the expert.

I purchased this after reading another customer review on which was accurate. Filled with much background information of the ancient Egyptians culture and tons of information on their gods. Very good reference for someone needing to know about the identity and background of the many Egyptian gods.

I found this book highly informative and an easy enough read. I like the way she separates the creation myths together from the different seats of power in Egypt as well as guiding the reader through her thoughts on the subject matter.

Actually this is more a book on who the God and Goddesses of Ancient were. Some chapters told about how the gods and the cults evolved, but mainly it lists the major gods and goddesses of Egypt and their surrounding neighbors and where they came from and by the many names they were known by. It was well-written, with excellent pictures, and the author is an expert in her field, with field work behind her. It was fascinating to try and keep all the deities clear in my mind. I will be looking for more on all the deities of the area.

Egyptian Mythology is a great aid on my travel through Egypt. I visited the major sites of ancient Egypt following the Nile river. While the great pyramids of the old kingdom were spectacular, I really loved visiting the temples. This book helped me appreciate the images carved & painted on the walls of temples. The only shortcoming of the book is that it confused me with so many different creator gods. I wish there was more clarification/distinction between all the creator gods, e.g. Ptah is creator god of upper Egypt. This book made visiting Egypt much more interesting.

Wonderful beginners' book to start a life long "love" of history and mythology. Makes for a great "rainy" day reader. My granddaughter is especially fond of stories from this book. An easy read with good information.

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