

The Universe as divine sanctuary

The gods on earth and the divine lineage of kings

Osiris the perfect being, Horus the heir, Pharaoh the perpetuator

The god Osiris was born with all the insignia of royalty, the ideal heir to Atum. But his brother Seth decapitated him in his sleep, profaning his body several times. Since Osiris died without an heir, Seth claimed the throne. Isis then briefly revived the corpse and conceived an heir, Horus, whom she hid. Once Horus grew up he challenged his uncle, becoming king of the land thanks to the judgment of the gods.

Horus was the archetypal Egyptian king: a divine falcon, the heir and defender of kingship and kingdom. It was the duty of every pharaoh—the descendent of a long line that was both legitimate and divine—to maintain the order established at creation and to insure divine worship by building temples which showed that he was worthy of his office.

Akhenaten or solar absolutism

The reign of Amenhotep IV was unique in Egypt's history. Changing his name to Akhenaten, the king revived the founding concepts of sun worship in an absolute manner. He decreed exclusive veneration of Aten, the solar disk, namely the visible aspect of the creator of the world and all life, as well as sole repository of royalty. The king was the fleshly incarnation of Aten on earth, thus becoming the coordinator of the immanent cosmic order. In reaction to this heretical absolutism, after Akhenaten's death his successors ordered the systematic demolition of everything he built, something extremely rare in Egyptian history.



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