

# **Gods of Ancient Egypt**

Barbara Watterson

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The main characteristics of ancient Egyptian religion were animism, fetishism and magic. The myriad deities worshipped by the ancient Egyptians fell into three main categories: local gods, the inanimate objects (fetishes) of animals, birds and other living creatures associated with a particular locality; universal gods, the cosmic deities who represented the forces of nature - the sun, moon, stars, wind and storm; and personal gods, the objects chosen by men and women to be the recipients of their own individual worship. This study traces the origins of all the major deities of ancient Egypt and links each of them to a particular time and place. It is, however, more than a gazetteer of gods: the text recounts the sometimes racy, sometimes amusing, mythological stories associated with the major deities and, since the basis of religion in ancient Egypt was not belief but cult, particularly the local cult, there are sections of personal religion and temple ritual. The significance of the religious artefacts of ancient Egypt, from the smallest amulet to the largest temple, is also explained. In addition to a range of photographs and line illustrations, many in colour, there is a map of the principle cult centres, a list of localities giving their modern, classical and ancient Egyptian names, and a useful chronological table and glossary.



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