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Reading Precolonial Egypt's Impact on Modern Society with a Focus on Culture, Art, Architecture, Science and Religion.

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Abstract : This study focuses on precolonial Egypt's impact on Modern Society including culture art, architecture, science, and religion. The problematic of the study is that very few people, especially in postcolonial Africa, are aware of the great impact of Ancient Egyptian civilization on the modern world. The objective of the study is therefore to show the impact of precolonial Egypt on the modern world across different domains. The qualitative research method has been used to collect the data of the study. This method has been used because of its relevance to work of civilization. To ensure a better implementation of the study, the data were analyzed and interpreted in the theoretical contexts of Eurocentrism and Afrocentricity. As a result, the findings have revealed that precolonial Egypt deeply influenced modern society in the areas of art, architecture, science, and religion.

Keywords: Contemporary culture, influence, enduring legacy, Modern Society, precolonial Egypt.

Lire l'impact de l'Égypte précoloniale sur la société moderne en mettant l'accent sur la culture, l'art, l'architecture, la science et la religion.

Résumé : Cette étude porte sur l'impact de l'Égypte précoloniale sur le monde moderne, notamment dans les domaines de la culture, de l'art, de l'architecture, de la science et la religion. La problématique de l'étude est que très peu de gens, notamment dans l'Afrique postcoloniale, sont conscients de l'impact majeur de la civilisation égyptienne antique sur le monde moderne. L'objectif de l'étude est donc de démontrer l'impact de l'Égypte précoloniale sur le monde moderne dans différents domaines. La méthode de recherche qualitative a été utilisée pour collecter les données de l'étude. Cette méthode a été utilisée en raison de sa pertinence pour le travail de civilisation. Pour une meilleure mise en œuvre de l'étude, les données ont été analysées et interprétées dans les contextes théoriques de l'eurocentrisme et de l'afrocentricité. Ainsi les résultats de l'étude ont révélé que l'Égypte précoloniale a profondément influencé la société moderne dans les domaines de l'art, de l'architecture, de la science et de la religion.

Mots-clés : Culture contemporaine, Égypte précoloniale, héritage durable, influence, société moderne.

Introduction

The sands of time have not buried the legacy of ancient Egypt; instead, they have woven it into the very fabric of the modern world. The civilization that flourished along the banks of the Nile River, often hailed as the cradle of human civilization, left an indelible mark on history. Its richness in art, architecture, science, and religion has not only endured but thrived, continuing to influence and inspire contemporary culture in profound ways. It is actually in regard with the foregoing reality that this study focuses on unveiling the considerable impacts of Ancient Egypt on contemporary world, mainly in domains such as culture, art, architecture, science, and religion.

In the shadow of the pyramids and the great temples of Luxor, the people of ancient Egypt laid the foundations of modern society. Their achievements, born from a deep understanding of the natural world and an unwavering devotion to the divine, have transcended centuries. This enduring legacy is a testament to the resilience of human creativity and ingenuity. More explicitly, this paper embarks on a journey through time, exploring the remarkable impact of precolonial Egypt on the modern world. It delves into the realms of art and architecture, unraveling the intricate threads that connect ancient hieroglyphs to the digital designs of today. It peers into the annals of science and mathematics, where the echoes of Egyptian innovation resonate in laboratories and classrooms across the globe. It ventures into the sacred realm of religion and spirituality, revealing how the beliefs of pharaohs and priests continue to shape the faiths of millions.

The legacy of ancient Egypt, a civilization that thrived along the banks of the Nile for over three millennia, has a profound and enduring impact on modern society. From its monumental architecture to its advances in science, from its intricate hieroglyphic script to its rich religious beliefs, precolonial Egypt's influence echoes through the ages, touching contemporary culture in myriad ways. This study aims to investigate and delineate the multifaceted aspects of Egypt's enduring legacy in modern society, focusing on its pervasive influence on art, architecture, science, and religion.

Despite the palpable and widespread evidence of Egypt's influence, there remains a dearth of comprehensive research that holistically explores the nuances and depth of its impact on modern culture. The problem lies in the fragmentation and partial exploration of Egypt's legacy in various academic disciplines, which often obscures the broader narrative and interconnectedness of its influence. To address this issue, it is imperative to formulate a well-structured investigation that synthesizes the disparate threads of Egypt's legacy into a coherent and comprehensive tapestry.

Existing studies on Egypt's influence are frequently confined to specialized fields such as Egyptology, archaeology, or religious studies. While valuable insights have been gleaned from these isolated inquiries, a holistic view of Egypt's multifaceted impact remains elusive. Consequently, there is a need for a synthesized exploration that transcends disciplinary boundaries and offers a more comprehensive understanding of Egypt's contemporary influence. Despite Egypt's profound influence on diverse aspects of modern culture, there is a dearth of comprehensive research that delves into its far-reaching effects. This has resulted in a lack of in-depth understanding of how Egypt's legacy permeates contemporary society.

Consequently, a comprehensive investigation is warranted to elucidate the scope and depth of this influence. Egypt's influence on modern society transcends disciplinary silos, yet scholarly inquiries have often overlooked the intricate interconnections between art, architecture, science, and religion. This fragmented approach has hindered the recognition of Egypt's holistic impact on contemporary culture, necessitating an interdisciplinary investigation to bridge these gaps. Prevailing studies on Egypt's legacy often reflect Eurocentric biases, overlooking the African origins of this civilization and neglecting the voices of indigenous perspectives. A more inclusive and Afrocentric approach is essential to rectify these biases and provide a more accurate representation of Egypt's enduring legacy.

In light of these issues, this research seeks to address the fragmented state of knowledge regarding precolonial Egypt's impact on modern society. By adopting an interdisciplinary and inclusive approach, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ancient Egypt's legacy continues to

shape and inspire contemporary culture, particularly in the realms of art, architecture, science, and religion. The first purpose of this study is to showcase the influence of ancient Egypt on modern African society through art, architecture, philosophy and religion.

This research aims to comprehensively explore and document the multifaceted influence of precolonial Egypt on modern culture, spanning art, architecture, science, religion, education, and more. The research has adopted an interdisciplinary approach and prioritize an inclusive, Afrocentric perspective to provide a nuanced understanding of this enduring legacy. This study also aims to deepen postcolonial Africa or the modern world's understanding of how the precolonial civilization of ancient Egypt continues to shape and resonate in contemporary society, encompassing a wide spectrum of cultural, artistic, scientific, and religious domains.

This study is limited to the exploration and analysis of the contents that narrate the history of Africa, either by Africans or non-Africans. The study is also limited to the analysis and interpretation of works that attempt to highlight the contributions in art, architecture, science, and religion. All the documents that are used in this current study are therefore related to history and civilization. Here, the methods used to collect and analyze data are Eurocentrism and Afrocentricity to highlight the legacy of ancient Egypt on modern society. In this study, we used techniques such as close reading, intertextuality, and contextual analysis to identify the underlying assumptions and power structures that are embedded in the text.

In the context of this research, Afrocentricity involves a close reading of texts and cultural artifacts, paying attention to their language, symbols, and cultural codes. It entails the primary theory of the current study is Afrocentricity. To provide an efficient analysis of the collected data from the Afrocentric perspective, the study has also resorted to eurocentrism. The use of this second theory enabled us to explicate the various reasons for which black contributions to world history and their outstanding achievements across different domains have been hidden by Eurocentrists. The negative consequences of eurocentrism on post-colonial Africans are unfortunately evident everywhere in Africa because it operates through misrepresentations.

For instance, Coulibaly et al (2022, p.293) in talking about the consequences of eurocentrism emphasized: "the negative representation of Africa has produced valuable effects on the consciousness and behavior of black people, especially Africans. The consequences of these effects are multiple and of

several kinds: psychological, economic, political and cultural ones¹.” To reach our goal, this paper is divided into two major parts. The first part deals with the significance of Ancient Egypt in the development of art, architecture, science and religion, and the second one focuses on the legacy of ancient Egypt in contemporary culture.

1. The Significance of Ancient Egypt in the development of Art, Architecture, Science and Religion

Ancient Egypt's influence on modern society is a multifaceted and enduring phenomenon. Its rich heritage has left an indelible mark on art, with motifs such as the iconic Egyptian hieroglyphs, sphinxes, and pyramids finding their way into modern artistic expressions. In architecture, ancient Egyptian principles of design and engineering have influenced structures worldwide, and the enduring fascination with the pyramids is a testament to this legacy. Egypt's contributions to science, including mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, continue to underpin modern scientific thought.

Furthermore, its religious beliefs and rituals have not only influenced contemporary spirituality but also fostered a global fascination with ancient Egyptian religion, mummies, and the afterlife. Ancient Egypt's art, architecture, science, and religion stand as monumental pillars of human achievement, each contributing profoundly to the rich tapestry of human history and culture. Exploring these aspects of ancient Egypt offers a captivating journey through time, revealing a civilization that left an indelible mark on the world. Below, we delve into each of these facets and their enduring significance.

1.1. Art: The Language of Symbolism

Ancient Egyptian art is renowned for its symbolism and intricate detail. From colossal statues of pharaohs to vibrant tomb paintings, this art form served not only as a form of expression but also as a means to convey religious beliefs and societal values. Hieroglyphics, the system of writing using pictorial symbols, were often integrated into artworks, adding layers of meaning. This artistry continues to inspire contemporary artists worldwide, attesting to its timeless allure.

¹ Original version : « la représentation négative de l’Afrique a produit des effets précieux sur la conscience et le comportement des Noirs, notamment les Africains. Les conséquences de ces effets sont multiples et de plusieurs ordres : psychologiques, économiques, politiques et culturelles. »

1.2. *Architecture: Monumental Marvels*

The grandeur of ancient Egyptian architecture is exemplified by iconic structures such as the Great Pyramid of Giza and the temples of Luxor. These colossal edifices showcase the Egyptians' mastery of engineering, mathematics, and organization. Elements like towering obelisks, majestic columns, and elaborate mortuary temples remain influential in architectural design today, leaving a lasting legacy in the world's skylines.

1.3. *Science: Pioneers of Knowledge*

Ancient Egypt was a cradle of scientific inquiry. The Egyptians made significant contributions to mathematics, inventing complex systems of measurement and geometry. Their understanding of astronomy was fundamental to the development of calendars, and they made strides in medicine and pharmacology. Modern science and mathematics owe a debt to these early scholars who laid essential foundations.

1.4. *Religion: The Quest for Immortality*

Egyptian religion was deeply intertwined with daily life and the afterlife. Concepts of gods, pharaohs as divine rulers, and elaborate burial rituals aimed at ensuring a prosperous journey to the hereafter were central to their belief system. This intricate religious tapestry has left a lasting imprint on global religious thought and spirituality, with echoes found in various faiths and belief systems:

Egypt was the cradle of mathematics and astronomy, the wellspring of medicine and philosophy, the fount of literature and art, the mother of religion, the repository of science and technology, the epitome of law and governance, and the birthplace of civilization. - (Asante 2000, p. xv).

The above quote by Molefi Kete Asante highlights the numerous areas in which Ancient Egypt made significant contributions and emphasizes its importance as the birthplace of civilization. It highlights Egypt's multifaceted contributions to human civilization. It goes beyond acknowledging a single area of expertise and instead underscores Egypt's influence across a wide range of disciplines, from mathematics and astronomy to art and governance. When referring to Egypt as the "cradle" of mathematics and astronomy, Asante suggests that these fields of study had their origins or early developments in ancient Egypt. This underscores Egypt's historical importance in the advancement of human knowledge. Describing Egypt as the "wellspring of medicine and

philosophy" implies that many of the foundational ideas and practices in these domains can be traced back to ancient Egyptian thought and scholarship.

The aforementioned quote also acknowledges Egypt's role as a "fount of literature and art," emphasizing its contributions to artistic expression and written culture, including hieroglyphics and monumental architecture. Egypt's status as the "mother of religion" reflects its profound influence on the development of religious beliefs and practices. Ancient Egyptian religion, with its complex pantheon and rituals, has left a lasting legacy on religious thought. Egypt's position as the "repository of science and technology" suggests that it was a hub for scientific inquiry and technological innovation in antiquity. This includes advancements in engineering, agriculture, and architecture.

Egypt's characterization as the "epitome of law and governance" acknowledges its early systems of governance and legal codes. It implies that Egypt served as a model for subsequent civilizations in matters of governance. Referring to Egypt as the "birthplace of civilization" underscores its historical primacy in the development of organized societies, urbanization, and the complex social structures that define civilization. Like many statements emphasizing Egypt's contributions, the above quote serves as a historical corrective, countering Eurocentric biases that have sometimes downplayed or overlooked Egypt's central role in the history of human civilization. As such, the quote provides a comprehensive overview of Egypt's profound and diverse contributions to the foundations of human knowledge, culture, and civilization.

It reinforces the idea that Egypt's influence transcended specific disciplines and has left an enduring mark on the collective heritage of humanity. Ancient Egypt's art, architecture, science, and religion represent some of the most enduring and influential aspects of this remarkable civilization. These facets of Egyptian culture have not only left an indelible mark on their own society but have also significantly influenced the course of human history.

2. Ancient Egypt's Legacy in Contemporary Culture

The legacy of ancient Egypt in contemporary culture is a testament to the enduring impact of one of the world's most remarkable civilizations. From art and architecture to science and religion, Egypt's influence can be seen woven into the fabric of modern society. This profound legacy serves as a bridge between the distant past and the present, demonstrating the timelessness of Egypt's contributions to human civilization.

2.1. *Artistic reverberations*

The intricate artistry of ancient Egypt, characterized by its hieroglyphics, iconic sculptures, and mesmerizing murals, continues to inspire contemporary artists and designers. Its influence can be seen in modern jewelry, fashion, and interior design. Second, architectural marvels: The architectural prowess of ancient Egypt, showcased in the construction of the pyramids, temples, and tombs, has influenced architectural styles across the globe. Elements such as obelisks, columns, and motifs find echoes in modern buildings, monuments, and city planning.

2.2. *Scientific foundations*

Egypt's contributions to scientific fields like mathematics, astronomy, and medicine laid the groundwork for contemporary scientific inquiry. Mathematical principles, calendar systems, and medical knowledge from ancient Egypt still inform modern practices. Last, spiritual continuity: Ancient Egyptian religious beliefs and practices have left an indelible mark on contemporary religious thought and spirituality. Themes of resurrection, the afterlife, and divine symbolism continue to resonate in various faiths and esoteric traditions.

Egypt was the cradle of mathematics and astronomy, the wellspring of medicine and philosophy, the fount of literature and art, the mother of religion, the repository of science and technology, the epitome of law and governance, and the birthplace of civilization. - Molefi Kete Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*. (2000, p. xv)

This statement of Molefi Kete Asante highlights the numerous areas in which Ancient Egypt made significant contributions and emphasizes its importance as the birthplace of civilization. "Cradle of Mathematics and Astronomy". This phrase highlights Egypt's pioneering contributions to fields like mathematics and astronomy. Egypt's mathematical knowledge is evident in its architectural precision, calendar systems, and geometry, while its understanding of astronomy is reflected in its sophisticated celestial observations and alignments.

Egypt's role as a "wellspring of medicine" suggests that it was an early center for medical knowledge and practices. Additionally, the mention of philosophy implies that Egypt contributed to early philosophical thought, particularly through figures like Imhotep. Egypt's rich literary and artistic traditions are celebrated here. Hieroglyphics and papyrus documents reveal a wealth of literature, including religious texts, poetry, and historical records.

Egyptian art, characterized by hieroglyphic inscriptions and elaborate tomb paintings, has had a profound influence on world art.

Egypt's religious traditions, with a pantheon of gods and complex rituals, significantly influenced subsequent religious beliefs, including those of Greece and Rome. The mention of Egypt as the "mother of religion" acknowledges its role as a source of religious concepts and practices. This phrase recognizes Egypt's role as a repository of scientific knowledge and technological innovations. Advancements in fields like architecture, engineering (e.g., pyramids), and agriculture are evident in Egypt's historical record.

Egypt's ancient legal systems and governance structures, which included codified laws and administrative hierarchies, set a precedent for organized societies and influenced later legal and political systems. Egypt's contributions to early civilization are emphasized, highlighting its role as one of the world's earliest complex societies. The Nile River's fertile lands supported agricultural development and urbanization, contributing to the rise of civilization.

Consequently, Asante's quote serves as a powerful reminder of Egypt's multifaceted influence on human history. It challenges Eurocentric narratives that have often downplayed or overlooked the contributions of African civilization, particularly ancient Egypt, to the foundations of global civilization. By encapsulating Egypt's achievements in various domains, the quote underscores the profound and lasting impact of this ancient African civilization. In this regard, Coulibaly and Koné (2018) write:

We therefore understand that Egypt was founded and developed thanks to the creative genius of the African Man who was the first inhabitant of Egypt and the first creator of the greatest and ancient civilization of humanity. Diop also teaches that Greek scholars who visited, studied or stayed in Egypt testified to the Negroid and African character of the ancient Egyptians. It is the same black Egyptians who gave Europe all the elements of its civilization in all areas such as culture, politics, economy, education, sciences, etc. Without the contact of these ancient Egyptians with the ancient Greeks, Greece and Europe would not have become what they are today². (pp.114-115)

² Original Version : « Nous comprenons donc que l'Égypte a été fondée et développée grâce au génie créateur de l'Africain qui fut le premier habitant de l'Égypte et le premier créateur de la plus grande et ancienne civilisation de l'humanité. Diop enseigne également que les savants grecs qui ont visité, étudié ou séjourné en Égypte ont témoigné du caractère négroïde et africain des anciens Égyptiens. Ce sont ces mêmes Égyptiens noirs qui ont donné à l'Europe tous les éléments de sa civilisation dans tous les domaines tels que la culture, la politique, l'économie, l'éducation, les sciences, etc. Sans le contact de ces anciens Égyptiens avec les anciens Grecs, la Grèce et l'Europe ne seraient pas devenues ce qu'elles sont aujourd'hui. »(pp.114-115)

As revealed in the above passage, Ancient Egypt has played a significant role in the development of world civilization. The change in the of domains culture, art, science, politics and economy is a tangible sign of Ancient Egypt's contribution in the improvement of modern human societies.

Conclusion

To conclude, we note that the enduring legacy of precolonial Egypt continues to reverberate through the corridors of time, leaving an indelible mark on modern society. The profound impact of Ancient Egypt extends beyond the sands of its time, transcending epochs and continents. Our exploration into the realms of art, architecture, science, and religion reveals a tapestry woven with threads of ingenuity, wisdom, and timeless inspiration.

This study also reveals that Art incarnated hieroglyphs which turn the walls of temples and tombs into beauty, continues to captivate contemporary artists and enthusiasts. The mastery of form and symbolism in ancient Egyptian art offers a font of inspiration, fostering creativity and innovation in the arts today. Here, architecture, epitomized by the grandeur of the pyramids, stands as a testament to human engineering prowess. The architectural marvels of ancient Egypt, with their precision and monumental scale, echo in the design principles of modern structures, influencing urban landscapes globally.

In this analysis, science is deeply interwoven with the spiritual fabric of ancient Egypt which left for future generations a lasting legacy. From the celestial precision of the pyramids to the medical knowledge preserved in papyri, Egyptian contributions to science serve as a beacon guiding contemporary scientific inquiry and discovery. In this view, religion can be seen as a paramount enduring legacy which permits to maintain and perpetuate spiritual consciousness. The concept of an afterlife, the intricate pantheon of deities, and the moral principles embodied in ma'at continue to resonate, transcending cultural boundaries and influencing diverse religious ideologies.

Today, African elite is alienated and uprooted. He cannot make a difference Good and Evil. He does not know what is good for himself and his community. In this circumstances, the legacy of precolonial Egypt beckons us to reflect on the interconnectedness of humanity's journey. The enduring impact of this great civilization compels us to refer to the past to better understand the present. In the words of the ancient Egyptians, "Know thyself", we find not only a reflection of our shared past but also a guiding light for the future. The lessons of precolonial Egypt are a testament to the timeless power of knowledge, creativity, and the human spirit which urges us to forge a path towards a better tomorrows rooted in the wisdom of the ancients.

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