

Full Length Research Paper

The role of the ancient Egyptians' beliefs in the afterlife in preserving the ancient Egyptian cultural heritage

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The ancient Egyptians preserved their tangible cultural heritage through their burial rituals. The scientific study of the material-objects found in the Egyptian tombs helped researchers to excavate, preserve, study and attempt to interpret the Egyptian cultures. Contemporary Africans do not or they rarely bury their dead with many items as the ancient Egyptians did. This research compares the reasons for the Egyptian preservation of their cultural heritage through burials with those of contemporary Africans. The primary purpose of this research is to explain the contribution of mummification and modern Egyptology in the preservation of the ancient Egyptian cultural heritage, and secondarily, to compare the perception of contemporary Africans on the preservation of their afterlife cultural heritage with those of the ancient Egyptians.

Key words: Afterlife beliefs, archaeology, Egyptology, excavation, intangible cultural heritage, tangible cultural heritage, sites.

INTRODUCTION

Conceptualization of cultural heritage

The ancient Egyptians had elaborative burial rituals which can be justified due to their afterlife beliefs. They had to bury their dead with small and large items with a view according to which the dead went on a journey. The afterlife beliefs of the ancient Egyptians enabled them to preserve their cultural heritage firstly, for themselves to use during their afterlife journeys and secondly for their progenies to locate their important places or historical sites and items for rituals and to continue to practice what was assumed to be a respected ritual regarding the dead (cf. Jordan 1976:147). If their practices of mummification and other burial rituals suggest their own careful way of

preserving their cultural heritage, it thus becomes pertinent to link the meaning of cultural heritage with the Egyptian afterlife beliefs. The aim is to evaluate the role of their afterlife beliefs in preserving their cultural heritage.

The word *culture* has distinctive definitions according to an individual's profession (Rouhi, 2017: 7109). Hoppers defined culture as the activities pertaining to "training, development and refinement of [the] mind, taste and manners" (Hoppers, 2004: 1-2). He noted that the word culture might have originated from the Latin word which could be likened to the words *tending* or *cultivating*. In other word, Hoppers suggested that culture is a form of human development that is learnt within a period of

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time and is passed-on from generation to generation. In his view, culture is generally a way of life of a group of people (Hoppers, 2004: 2-5). Richard and Boyd noted that culture is as ancient as the origins of humans and that the environment is a major influencer that shapes the human culture (Richerson and Boyd, 2014: 1-5).

Delafosse said that the period through which the African culture originated is not known reason being that Africans in antiquity did not record how their culture originated (Delafosse, 1931: xxv-2). Notwithstanding, Oyebade emphasized that Africans had other means of preserving and teaching or communicating their own culture or knowledge to future generations. He mentioned that oral tradition, poetry, songs, proverbs, crafts, legends, rituals, folk songs, ceremonies, myths, folk tales are some means among which Africans preserved their culture (Oyebade, 2004: 52). In summary, culture is a *tangible* and *intangible* practice that is generated, sustained, preserved, refurbished and highly cherished or classified as sacred among a group of people and is transmitted from generation to generation.

Before the twentieth century, heritage used to be regarded simply as the residue of the past with an emphasis on tangible or physical remains that represented a nation's past glory (Kamel Ahmed, 2015: 67-68). The twenty-first century perception of heritage also involves the preservation of intangible remains of the past and this was emphasized during the UNESCO Convention of 2003 (Selicato, 2016: 8). Ehab pointed that the two major components that pertained to heritage are firstly, the remains itself and secondly, the management of the remains together with its interpretation and its significance to the people at present (Kamel Ahmed, 2015: 67-68). While heritage has an emphasis on location, more formal collective preservation of artefacts, national and international attraction, culture has lesser of these features. There are two sources regarding the origin of the word heritage. Firstly, Francesco Selicato said that the word *heritage* originated from the Latin word *patrimonium*, a word with two significant meanings: *pater* (father) and *munus* (duty). This suggests that heritage means *the duty of the father or things belonging to the father* and inherited by future generations (Selicato, 2016: 7).

Secondly, Rouhi said that the word heritage originates from the Latin word *hereditagium* which means anything that is inherited. Hereditary succession and the rights to inheritance dominate the conceptualization of heritage according to Rouhi (Rouhi, 2017: 7110). Both Selicato and Rouhi's definitions of heritage emphasized the passing of supposedly sacred items and beliefs systems to other generations as key to the conceptualization of heritage. The meaning of heritage has now developed to not only what is inherited from a father, but to the beliefs and unique natural geographical sites that is valued by a community. It can therefore be deduced that *cultural heritage* means the conservation, the preservation and

the study of a way of life of a group of people that is transmitted from one generation unto the other. The referred way of life could be represented through tangible or material objects and also through intangible or immaterial objects.

The ancient Egyptians for example preserved their dead alongside certain items. They thought that the practice of the afterlife beliefs was sacred. Because of their acts of preservation, the future generations of the Egyptians saw what their ancestor believed and current researchers on Egypt also benefits from the Egyptian preservation methods by excavating and by studying their artefacts. Agai noted that the most accessible sources of information obtained about the ancient Egyptians were obtained mostly from their tombs (Agai, 2015: 429). This research contends that the various objects found in the Egyptian tombs and the existence of the Egyptians pyramids are few examples among many mediums through which the ancient Egyptians preserved their cultural heritage. The question of how and when the Egyptians began to preserve their cultural heritage through burial rituals is significant in this research. Mummification, other burial rituals and the rise of the 17th to 20th century archaeological excavations in Egypt contributed to the excavation and the preservation of the Egyptian cultural heritage. In conclusion, it is discussed the implications of the Egyptian methods of preserving their cultural heritage through their afterlife beliefs on the present-day African society.

ORIGINS OF THE AFTERLIFE BELIEFS

The beliefs in the afterlife are responsible for generating various forms of burial rituals among many cultures. It is not precisely known how and when the beliefs in the afterlife became a norm among modern humans. Most scholars rather ascertained that the Neanderthals originated the afterlife beliefs together with burial rituals among early and modern humans. The remains of a 60,000 year old Neanderthal had been found in Shanidar in Iraq. The remains contained clusters of fossil pollen which shows that flowers of white, yellow and blue colours were carefully arranged alongside the body of the deceased. The remains of a teenage boy believed to be a Neanderthal had also been found in Moustier in France. The child was buried with his head resting on his arms, a pile of flints lay under his head and a beautiful stone axe lay near his hand. Surrounding him were the bones of wild cattle (Leakey, 1982: 57). Scholars like Leakey, Carrington, MacGregor and Hultkrantz believed that the Neanderthals burial practices suggest the first kinds of humans to have believed in the afterlife (Leakey, 1982: 57; Hultkrantz, 1982: 24; MacGregor, 1992: 55-56; Carrington, 1965: 108). It is likely that the Neanderthals buried their dead with items and with elaborative ceremonies because they believed in the afterlife: By

now, discovery after discovery has shown that these ancient people [Neanderthals] are due to the honour accorded human pioneers, for they inaugurated some of the activities and beliefs that are considered most characteristic of mankind. The Neanderthal conceived life after death (Constable, 1973: 97).

It is at present not clear how the Egyptians began to believe in the afterlife. Jordan said that the remains of early humans in the form of Australopithecus to Homo erectus and the Neanderthals have not been found in Egypt (Jordan, 1976: 28). This view is further supported by Redford who noted that humans began to occupy Egypt only when they had developed the skills to produce objects and cognitively transform their environments. He suggested that modern humans were likely the pioneers of Egypt over 350, 000 years (Redford, 2006: 11). Burland also reiterated that the first humans to occupy Egypt were Stone Age humans' and thus modern humans (Burland, 1957: 12-13). Agai said that while scanty presence of Chellean and Acheulian objects has been found in Egypt, there are little or no evidence to support the view according to which those objects were used by early humans. He suggested that modern humans are likely the first to have occupied Egypt (Agai, 2013:7). If the view that Neanderthals originated the afterlife beliefs is true, it thus suggests that modern humans originated the afterlife beliefs in Egypt.

PRESERVATION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Contribution of mummification

The writing of the full history of Egypt cannot be completed without highlighting the developments that transpired along the Nile Valley which was associated with crop production and with the resurrection of the dead. Murnane suggested that the idea of Heaven as a place of crop production could be linked to the farming activities of the Nile (Murnane, 1992: 36). Around the end of the Old Kingdom period, the activity of god Osiris was connected with the natural seasonal cycles of the Egyptian Nile (Jordan, 1976: 146; El-Shahawy, 2005: 73). This background is relevant for this research because the idea of the resurrection of the dead contributed to necessitating mummification (Agai, 2013: 55-60).

In addition, mummification contributed to shaping the Egyptians views regarding the afterlife. Partridge mentioned that the initial purpose of mummification was associated with sanitation and within a period of time preservation (Partridge, 1994: 10). Mummification is therefore important because it contributed to the preservation of the Egyptians cultural heritage. Using modern techniques to study mummified bodies gave researchers firsthand information regarding many cultures of the Egyptians especially their views of the afterlife (Spronk, 1986: 55-57). Through the study of

mummified bodies, it is now learnt that the Egyptians offered food to their dead (Davies, 1997: 27); they also buried their dead especially wealthy individuals with images, amulets and sculptures or statues that represented the servants who were buried alongside their leaders (Rensberg and Eck, 2008: 1510; Jordan, 1976: 144-145). Through the study of mummified bodies, scholars now know that the Egyptians glorified their mummified deceased bodies as *sah* in heaven (Spronk, 1986: 90) and that cremation was not or was rarely practiced in ancient Egypt (Scheffler, 2000: 123). Because the Egyptians preserved their cultural heritage through the practice of mummification, there are many archaeological findings that were made and that reveals the beliefs systems of the Egyptians.

In addition, Herodotus, the historian of Halicarnassus (c. 484- 420 BCE) visited Egypt during the Saite Period and he recorded what he came across including how the Egyptians were mummified (Tyldesley, 2005: 27). Though evidence is difficult to come by, individual researchers may not rule-out a possible interest and preservation of the Egyptian cultural heritage by foreigners who invaded Egypt. The invasion of Egypt by Napoleon attests to the supposition that ancient peoples particularly the Semitic Peoples might have preserved the Egyptian cultural heritage. Mummification and the Egyptian burial processions which supported the burial of individuals with items contributed to the preservation of the Egyptian cultural heritage.

Contribution of Egyptology

There is a link between Egyptology and the acts of the preservation of the Egyptian cultural heritage. Scales defined Egyptology as the scientific reading of the Khamitian culture, history and archaeological remains found in Egypt (Scales, 1995: 11). There is a tradition among some Egyptologists according to which Tuthmosis IV and Prince Khaemwaset are regarded as the *world's first Egyptologists* simply because they preserved and restored the remains of their ancestors. It may be recalled that Tuthmosis IV, the younger son of the 18th Dynasty King Amenhotep II cleared away sand and repaired the broken statue of Hor-em-akhet, the god of the Sphinx while Prince Khaemwaset, the fourth son of Ramesses II cleared sand, repaired and restored the neglected ancient pyramid cemeteries of Sakkara and Giza (Tyldesley, 2005: 21-22).

However, Tyldesley said that Tuthmosis IV and Prince Khaemwaset might not have been the first Egyptologists because they were other Egyptians leaders that preserved Egyptians artefacts before them. He said that King Djoser, the 3rd Dynasty king stored certain galleries beneath his Sakkara Step Pyramid. Among the items stored by King Djoser are 40, 000 old stone vessels and cups together with some inscribed names of the 1st and

the 2nd Dynasty pharaohs (Tyldesley, 2005: 22-23). King Djoser's interest in preserving artefacts led him to build a step-mastaba or step-pyramid of about 204 feet using stone that were cut in the Old Kingdom Period (Schwantes, 1969: 58). In addition, during the Second Intermediate Period, the monuments of Hatshepsut's father were destroyed. Hatshepsut, an 18th Dynasty female king is said to have boasted of restoring the monuments. An inscription carved on the Speos Artemidos, a temple dedicated to the lion goddess Pakhet in Middle Egypt expressed her joy of this achievement of restoring her ancestor's legacies:

I have done these things by the device of my heart. I have never slumbered as one forgetful, but have made strong what was decayed. I have raised up what was dismembered, even from the first time when the Asiatics were in Avaris of the North Land, with roving hordes in the midst of them overthrowing what had been made... (Tyldesley, 2005: 22-23).

It is likely that before the formal rise of Egyptology from the 17th century AD together with some Egyptians and foreigners that invaded Egypt led to the preservation of some Egyptian cultural heritage. There are certain individuals whose role to the rise of Egyptology will be discussed in this research: Napoleon Bonaparte, Gaston Maspero, and Howard Carter. There are three major contributions of Egyptology to the preservation of the Egyptian cultural heritage. Egyptology contributes to the uncovering, the preservation and the study of the Egyptian cultural heritage. Napoleon is neither an Egyptologist nor an archaeologist yet his contribution to the study of the Egyptian cultural heritage deserved to be recognized (Jeffreys, 2003: 1).

In May 19, 1798, Napoleon alongside 17, 000 troops and 700 horses, and about 150 scientists and engineers together with 300 Maltese travelled to Egypt and arrived at Alexandria on July 1, 1798 (Tyldesley, 2005: 43-44, 47). The team Napoleon went to Egypt with a group of professionals labeled *Commission des Sciences et Arts d'Egypte*. The professionals were scientists and they include a band of 167 scholars (Gallagher, 2015:3). The professionals comprised 4 astronomers, 4 economists, 3 botanists, 3 zoologists, 3 pharmacists, 3 painters, 3 archaeologists, 52 engineers, 8 surgeons, 11 surveyors, 7 chemists, 6 interpreters, 2 writers, 2 musicians, 1 engraver, and 1 sculptor, 5 architects, 5 designers, 5 printers, 4 mineralogists and the rest were students (Tyldesley, 2005:43-44, 47). A unique feature about the study of Egypt before Napoleon is that it was individualistic and antiquarian in nature not gathering a crowd of researchers/scientists as it was during Napoleon's time (Jeffreys, 2003: 1).

The French led by Napoleon waged war against the Mamelukes and they defeated them. The Mamelukes was the military-wing that started to rule Egypt after the

Turkish Ottomans conquered and handed over Egypt to them in 1517 (Gallagher 2015: 1). In August 23, 1799, Napoleon left Egypt for France after suffering a defeat from Britain and Ottoman rulers in Egypt (Tyldesley, 2005:46). Thirty-four of Napoleon's soldiers perished in Egypt. Those that did not die and returned to France dedicated their lives to the study of the Egyptian heritage through the artefacts they took to France (Brier, 2013:60). Napoleon set-up a library so that the monuments, hieroglyphs, plants remains, artefacts and other materials they found in Egypt might be studied. He founded the *Institut d'Egypte*, described as the first world Egyptological Society in August 21, 1798. The society was grouped into four disciplines: mathematics, physics, political economy and arts (Tyldesley, 2015: 49). Brier said that Napoleon's initiatives which brought about a formal study of Egypt marked the beginning of formal Egyptology: "It was a severe case of Egyptomania, but even more important, it marks the beginning of scientific Egyptology" (Brier, 2013: 50).

Other things that made Napoleon popular were his finding of the Rosetta stone in July 1799 in the Nile Delta. The Rosetta stone written in 196 BCE and it inscribed a thank you message from the priest of Egypt to Pharaoh Ptolemy V who subsidized taxes for the Egyptians (Brier, 2013: 56-57). One of Napoleon's members of staff by the names Denon Vivant returned to France and published *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt* in 1802. Other editions of a similar publication were produced in different languages by Vivant. The publication of Denon Vivant also included some drawings of Egypt and Brier noted that "the drawing Denon had provided the first accurate depiction of Egypt that Europe had ever seen" (Brier, 2013: 60). Another publications led by Napoleon included the voluminous *Description de l'Egypte* (Brier, 2013: 60; Tyldesley, 2005: 50). The contribution of Napoleon to the uncovering, to the study and the preservation of the Egyptian cultural heritage are insurmountable.

Gaston Maspero who taught Egyptian language at the College de France from 1869 to 1874 also found the deformed mummy of Ramses II in July 5, 1881. The research interest started when he and other archaeologist travelled to Egypt in November 1880 to conduct archaeological reaches at the order of the government of France. Maspero contributed immensely to the founding of the prestigious Egyptian Museum in 1902 and the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology. He was born in Paris on 23 June 1846 and died on 20 June 1916 (Scheffler, 2000: 121). Some scholars believe that the mummy of Ramses II found by Maspero is the actual body of the biblical Pharaoh of Exodus 1:11 who enslaved the Israelites and led to their mass departures from Egypt. This link was established due to the findings on the stele of Merneptah or the Victory Stele found by W.F. Petrie in 1896. The stele suggests that Merneptah was the father of Ramses II who ruled Egypt around 1304-1237 BCE (Scheffler, 2000: 121). Patrick

Clark mentioned that there are interpretive misunderstandings in the comparative study of the Ramses II and the Victory Stele (Clarke, 2013: 57).

The British Egyptologist Howard Carter around 1922 and 1923 made some archaeological discoveries in ancient Thebes, on the west bank of the Nile River. He made the finding in a place popularly referred to as *the Valley of the Kings* which was a burial site for the New Kingdom Pharaohs around 1539-1078 BCE (Scheffler, 2000: 117). Carter found a sealed tomb at the valley and discovered the mummified remains of Tutankhamen, a Pharaoh who ruled Egypt for nine years (1361 and 1352 BCE). The tomb had more than 2000 funerary items some of which are three golden funerary couches in the shape of animals, ivory game boards' and boxes of funerary figures. In the burial chamber were found two statues that represented the Pharaoh's *Ka* (Scheffler, 2000: 117, 119).

Inside the burial chamber were four shrines covering the sarcophagus with its three inlaid coffins made of gold in the image of Tutankhamen. Next to the burial chamber was another room guarded by Anubis (a jackal-god whose job was to protect the embalmed deceased). This room contained canopic jars which were guarded by the goddesses Serket, Isis, Nephthys and Neith. One of the most unique items found by Carter was the beautiful mask that covered the face of Tutankhamen. The mask was made up of beaten gold and is measured about 54 x 39 cm and weighed 11 kg together with a necklace collar which consists of rows of lapis lazuli, colored glass beads, quartz and amazonite. The eyes of the mask are made of quartz and obsidian while the eye-lids consist of inlaid blue glass. The brow is made in the shape of a vulture head and the *uraeus* (sacred serpent). The mask also has a plaited beard which turns up at the end and is made up of colored glass held in a framework of gold (Scheffler, 2000: 117, 119). The archeological findings made by Napoleon, Maspero and Carter have contributed to the excavation, the study and the preservation of the Egyptian cultural heritage especially with regard to the afterlife. The mummy of Ramses I found by Maspero is for example kept at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo for view and research (Scheffler, 2000: 121). Without these and many other archaeological findings in Egypt, the knowledge we have about the Egyptian cultural heritage will not have been profound.

Implications for the contemporary African-society

Africa is a continent with millions of people and with diversity of languages, economy, history, political systems, religions and culture which include various initiation and burial rites. There are about 55 countries in Africa and each country has various ethnic nationalities (Agai, 2018:85-99). Mbiti and Bond noted that despite the cultural diversities in Africa, the beliefs in the afterlife are

seemingly similar except for diverse burial rites or rituals among Africans (Mbiti, 1977: 110-111; Bond, 1992:3-4). With regard to burial diversities for example, the Abaluyia ethnic group in Kenya do bury their dead naked so that the deceased could be reincarnated while the Zulus of South Africa bury their dead in a squatting position which to them symbolizes the positioning of an embryo meant to give rise to another life (Opoku, 1989:17). Opoku reiterated that to an African, the afterlife is beyond an exercise of the memory in the remembrance of the dead; instead, the afterlife is a reality that superseded the imaginations of the human memory.

The dead have an independent existence. They do not continue to live merely because they are remembered by those who are living, for the fact of life and non-life is not dependent on the memory of human beings, for human memory does not create life (Opoku, 1989:19, 22). To an African person, death means a transition from a lower level of existence to a supreme or ancestral level of existence particularly when burial rites are tenaciously adhered (Lawuyi, 1998: 372). While the beliefs in the afterlife are of high importance to the African people, some contemporary Africans do little to continue to preserve their afterlife cultures through the practice of burying their dead with material objects. Unlike the ancient Egyptians that buried their loved ones with various objects so that the deceased might continue to live a normal life in the afterlife, contemporary Africans do little or nothing to bury their loved ones with many materials as the Egyptians did. While the Yorubas of Nigeria are for example known for their practices of extravagant burial rituals which normally last for many days (Adamolekun, 2001:610), they do not build pyramids or bury their loved ones with many small and large objects as the Egyptians did. The Egyptian preservation of their cultural heritage through burials before the Period of Decline has helped modern scholars through several researches to understand the Egyptian culture in a more in-depth perspective (James, 1976: 155).

Shadreck Chirikure said that economic problems have led many governments and people in Africa to trade their heritage sites for economic and industrial developments. For example, Swaziland was offered an opportunity by UNESCO for the building of its first World Heritage Site in its Ngwenya Middle Stone Age ochre mines but the government refused and traded the site for further iron mining in order to boost her economy (Chirikure, 2013: 2). Other factors that affect the preservation of cultural heritage sites in Africa include inadequate or lack of interest and the non-protection of heritage sites by the general populace together with the absence of risk management protocols that would have been used to reconstruct damaged heritage sites. The rise of religious extreme groups in Mali, Nigeria and Egypt has led to the further destruction of heritage sites (Chirikure, 2013: 1-2).

In Kurra Falls of Plateau State, Nigeria, the invasion of

indigenous lands by the Fulani people has led to the random displacement of local farmers and they left behind their graves sites which they normally preserve and use for rituals. There is yet to be a formidable plan by the government of Plateau State to return the indigenes of Kurra Falls to their respective indigenous lands so that they can continue to preserve their cultural heritage by conserving the grave sites of their ancestors. Furthermore, the Kasubi tomb in Uganda has been gutted by fire and there has been no proper contingency plan to reconstruct the tomb appropriately (Chirikure, 2013: 2). It is important to note that the Tombs of Buganda Kings in Kasubi are significant contributor to Uganda's tourism and economy. The Buganda kingdom is one of the most ancient and largest surviving kingdoms in Uganda. It was likely built before 1884. The tomb housed about 4 kings of Kasubi that were buried alongside other burial objects and is now a World Heritage Site (Baker, 2017: 98).

While the age of burying the dead with plenty of material objects are seemingly diminishing among Africans, the beliefs that the dead lived is not diminishing drastically among Africans. The African religions and other religions that originated from the Ancient Near East like Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are becoming popular in Africa and these religions support the notion of a possible afterlife. These religions also discouraged the journeys of the dead in an afterlife with many material objects (cf. Agai, 2015: 1-2). Because Africans in the present do not bury their loved ones with many material objects for future archaeologists or heritage students to investigate or preserve, there is a tendency that with regard to tangible heritage sites, little might be known in future about the afterlife belief systems of the current African people. However, the complicated architectural edifices and information technologies developed in African will surely survive and can be studied in time to come. These modern technologies might be used to capture African cultures or heritage sites or African belief systems.

CONCLUSION

The Egyptians preserved their cultural heritage through their various burial practices such as mummification, burying the dead with objects, continues offering of food and other items to the dead and many more. These practices helped them to preserve their afterlife cultural heritage and it has also helped contemporary researchers to be well-informed about ancient Egypt. In contemporary Africa, burying leaders or wealthy people with so many materials would have attracted looters into many grave sites and the view of burying with material objects is depreciating due to the domineering influences of Judaism, Islam, Christianity and post-modernity. While the reality of the afterlife is sometimes questioned by many, the idea that earthly or worldly materials would not

survive in the afterlife except for the soul or spirit of an individual and sometimes for a transformed resurrected body dominates the minds of many contemporary Africans (cf. Small, 1977: 99-100; Grosso, 1989: 237-239; Trueblood, 1963: 137). This has made many not to value the burial of a deceased with material objects except for some royal families, 'for example, among the Yorubas (cf. Awolalu, 1979: 172).

While it is important for Africans to preserve their cultural heritage sites and beliefs systems, in future, archaeologists may not need to rely on burial sites to obtain items buried alongside a deceased. There is a tendency that future scientific research may enhance the preservation of deceased bodies which also could be used for future research. This may allow researchers to have access to a deceased body that is *neo-mummified* using modern scientific technologies but with little or no burial items that accompanied a deceased as the Egyptians did. A significant implication of this research to the contemporary African society is that, while the ancient Egyptians preserved their tangible cultural heritage through their progressive views of the afterlife, contemporary Africans may have continue to preserve primarily the heritage sites of their ancestors more than the sites that pertained specifically to their own lifetimes. Reason being that, contemporary Africans in their own lifetimes have more intangible cultural heritage because they still value the afterlife beliefs than tangible cultural heritage because they do not or they less bury their deceased with many items. *Intangible* cultural heritage emphasize belief systems while *tangible* cultural heritage emphasize the preservation physical or material sites and objects. This suggestion is open to further interpretation.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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