

# Ancient egypt's religious contributions to western civilization assignment

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Ancient Egypt's Religious Contributions to Western Civilization Behind all aspects of life of those who dwelt on the Nile in ancient times??? behind their art, political structure and cultural achievements-one may sense forces at work which are religious in origin. Essentially, the principles of ancient Egyptian religion were significantly influential on all aspects of their daily life choices. The existence or absence of such things as ceremonies, buildings, language, and customs were dependant on their religious usefulness.

The course of Egyptian religion advanced through history beginning with polytheism throughout different kingdoms during the Predynastic period to Christianity and eventually partial conversion to Islam and other religions. The interaction of scholars, merchants, and travelers that occurred mostly around the Nile Delta can be considered an important reason there is such a vast variation in beliefs across the globe today.

Thus, it is not only important to examine religious practices and their effects on daily life of ancient Egyptians but more importantly to observe the geographical movement and progression of religion from Northern Africa through Eurasia and settling into Europe as a beginning of Western civilization. The time period during the Old Kingdom spanned over a course of over one thousand years occurring from 4300-3000 B. C. E. During this time, the majority of Egyptians were polytheistic??? worshipping many gods all of whom had a particular province of life.

Human forms such as Amun or Ptah, animal forms such as Anubis as a jackal or Sobek a crocodile, or a combination of human and animal such as Horus a falcon-headed man are all examples of gods that were worshipped in ancient

Egypt. Egyptians wrote songs and dances and built magnificent statues and temples in tribute of the gods they worshipped, the pharaoh, and royal family. The power and wealth of the reigning family gave them the status of gods in the eyes of ordinary people who depended on their generosity and protection.

At this idea is where one can see a faint trace of the foundation of Christianity in that a human could be adored like a god on earth to be a savior who rescues people from immorality. The most prevalent examples of religious practices from the Old Kingdom are pyramid and coffin texts, used for royal burial tombs and sarcophagi. These were spells and messages written on the funeral sites of the deceased believed by the ancient Egyptians to be their rite of passage from one world to the next.

The Egyptians had a strong belief and clear vision of the afterlife, and as preparation for such, they used customs such as these pyramid and coffin texts to protect the dead and secure their admission to the afterlife. Though investigators today cannot place specific psychological motives on ancient inhabitants, many such as David E. Stannard believe the concept of preparation of dead bodies for another life to have emerged from their disciplined religious beliefs, anxieties of loved ones, and psychic emptiness resulting from the absence of the deceased individual.

After the Roman Empire finally adopted Christianity, those of Northern Africa are essentially forced to stop worshipping their gods and the religious practices of the Old Kingdom essentially die. Their gods and idols were taken from them, their temples were closed down, and all knowledge of the ‘

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pagan' hieroglyphs that transmitted their culture was lost from any historical records for some 1400 years. Christianity spread among the Roman Empire beginning in 313 B. C. E. Before this massive religious movement, tribes and race or war divided the nations of the earth and continued to cause tension well after the spread of Christianity. However, these two great powers, the Roman Empire and the teachings of Christ, did more than reconcile individuals on a personal level but also reunited some groups to friendship. At first, Christianity spread just through Latin or Greek-speaking cities and then to more broad, ethnically diverse areas. These efforts, however, required the breaking of many language barriers because of the hundreds of spoken languages.

In order for the message, teachings, and literature of Christianity to pass from one culture to the next, there must have been a common ground of communication between the groups. This is the most significant contribution ancient Egypt made to the development of Western civilization. As these barriers between people were broken, individuals were brought together in a more closely-knit way, but more importantly, the walls that had been hindering relationship between peoples since the beginning of time were broken simply by being able to communicate with each other.

Christian clergy in Egypt replaced the ancient hieroglyphs still being used to write the language??? that only a few priests could read??? with a modern script based on Greek letters and script. The teachings of Christianity and the new written language spread up the Nile through the Nubian corridor and across into Eurasia where the Western civilization was beginning to form.

Ancient Egypt may or may not have contributed to a variety of cultural issues and situations during the development of Western civilization.

However, based on the arguments discussed above, we can be certain that ancient Egyptian religion has played a significant role in laying a foundation for Western religion and??? as a result??? affected the capacity of the communicate between nations currently. As Christianity spread from West and North Africa across the continent through Ethiopia and Nubia into Eurasia, the world was changed in significant amounts.

Although there are hundreds of languages still spoken across the world presently, the ability to communicate somewhat between nations is a vital point in history. Imagine what the world would be like today if no one could communicate with those from a different area, and all of the different tribes and peoples were still fighting and not able to talk to one another. The Egyptian way of speaking and writing Christ's teachings became the foundation for the development and expansion of communication and religious beliefs and possibilities of the West.