

A Historical Study of Ancient Civilizations and their Influence on Cultural Practices: The Case of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Egypt

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Abstract

This study explores the historical roots and cultural significance of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in ancient Egyptian civilization and its persistence in modern times. It examines how ancient cultural practices were transmitted and adapted across generations, influencing contemporary societal norms. It should be noted that cultural exchanges play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards Female Genital mutilation. Cultural exchange facilitates the sharing of experiences, promotes understanding, and fosters a sense of community actions. The transfer of ancient traditions, including Female Genital Mutilation, through trade, exchange of cultures and many others, is complex. Historically, trade routes and cultural exchanges, spread ideas and practices. This paper highlights the complex interplay between cultural heritages, how cultural exchanges influence the transmission of FGM from communities to communities beyond Egypt, Egyptian life and the mode of transmission.

Keywords: Female Genital Mutilation, Cultural Practices, Cultural Influence, Ancient Civilizations.

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INTRODUCTION

Ancient civilizations have profoundly shaped the cultural, social, and religious practices of modern societies. The transmission of traditions, values, and customs across generations and geographical boundaries has been a complex and multifaceted process. One such practice that has sparked intense debate and controversy is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). With roots tracing back to ancient civilizations, including Egypt, FGM has evolved over time, influenced by various cultural, social, and economic factors. This study explores the historical origins and cultural significance of FGM in ancient Egyptian civilization and its persistence in modern Egyptian society, highlighting the complex dynamics between cultural heritage, cultural transmission and the spread of cultures especially FGM which is seen as an ancient Egyptian tradition that later cuts across cultures and is persisting till date [1].

Ancient Egypt was seen as an oasis in the desert of Northeastern Africa, dependent on the annual

inundation of the Nile River to support its agricultural population. The country's chief wealth came from the fertile floodplain of the Nile valley, where the river flows between bands of limestone hills, and the Nile delta, in which it fans into several branches North of present-day Cairo. Between the floodplain and the hills is a variable band of low desert that supported a certain amount of game. The Nile was Egypt's sole transportation artery [2].

To the North East was the Isthmus of Suez. It offered the principal route for contact with Sinai, from which came turquoise and possibly copper, and with Southwestern Asia, Egypt's most important area of cultural interaction, from which were received stimuli for technical development and cultivars for crops. Immigrants and ultimately invaders crossed the isthmus into Egypt, attracted by the country's stability and prosperity. From the late 2nd millennium BC onward,

¹ Amin, T, et al., "Female Genital Mutilation: Egypt in Focus", *European Journal of Forensic Sciences*, p. 24.

² <https://doi.org/10.5455/ejfs.236502>, 30th May 2025 at 5am.

numerous attacks were made by land and sea along the eastern Mediterranean coast [3].

At first, relatively little cultural contact came by way of the Mediterranean Sea, but from an early date Egypt maintained trading relations with the Lebanese port of Byblos (present-day Jabil). Egypt needed few imports to maintain basic standards of living, but good timber was essential and not available within the country, so it usually was obtained from Lebanon⁴. Minerals such as obsidian and lapis lazuli were imported from as far afield as Anatolia and Afghanistan. These changes went alongside import and export of cultures [5].

Historical records suggest FGM was practiced in ancient Egypt as early as 2000 BC. The procedure was often associated with notions of purity, modesty and femininity. Over time, FGM became deeply engrafted in Egyptian culture, with its persistence attributed to a complex interplay of factors, including:

1. Cultural and social norms
2. Religious beliefs
3. Economic and educational factors
4. Lack of legal enforcement

Geographical location of Egypt

Egypt is located in Northeastern Africa, bordering with the Mediterranean Sea to the North of Gaza Strip and Israel to the North East, the Red Sea to the East, Sudan to the South and Libya to the West. Egypt's strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe had made it an important hub for trade, culture, and history; hence, the blend and spread of culture to other parts of the world. Egypt is mostly desert, with the Sahara Desert covering much of the country and the Sinai Peninsula having its own unique geography.

The Nile River runs through Egypt and is the lifeblood of the country, supporting agriculture and civilization for millennia. The Nile Delta is a fertile region where the Nile River empties into the Mediterranean Sea, supporting a large population and agriculture. Egypt has several mountainous regions, including the Sinai Peninsula and the Western Desert's oases. It has a hot desert climate, with very little rainfall

throughout the year. Temperatures vary seasonally, with hot summers and mild winters.

Egypt is home to one of the world's oldest and most influential civilizations, with a rich history and cultural heritage. Egypt's ancient monuments, such as the Pyramids of Giza and the temples of Luxor, are renowned worldwide for their architectural and historical significance. It has a significant Islamic heritage, with Cairo being a major center of Islamic learning and culture [6].

Historical presentation of Egypt

Egypt's rich history spans thousands of years, with various dynasties and empires rising and falling. Ancient Egypt run from 3100 BC - 30 BC. The Old Kingdom started from 2613-2181 BC which was the Pyramid-building era, including the Great Pyramid of Giza. The Middle Kingdom was from 2040-1750 BC. It was the Period of resurgence and cultural achievements [7]. The New

Kingdom was from 1570-1085 BC, which was the Era of powerful pharaohs, including Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and Ramses II. There was also the Ptolemaic Period; 323-30 BC.

The Ptolemaic dynasty, a Greek dynasty founded by Alexander the Great's general Ptolemy. The Romans ruled Egypt from 30BC-395CE, which later became a Roman province, with significant cultural and economic exchange. Arab armies, leading to the spread of Islam, later conquered Egypt. The Mamluk Sultanate was a period of Mamluk rule, marked by cultural and architectural achievements then came the Ottoman Period from 1517-1914 CE.

Egypt was an Ottoman province, with varying degrees of autonomy. Immediately after the Ottoman rule was the Modern Period that started from 1914 to present day. The British colonized Egypt and occupied them until 1922 when they gained independence. It became a republic in 1953, with Gamal Abdel Nasser as its first president. The complex and diverse interaction of Egypt with different cultures produced the traditional riches in Egypt.

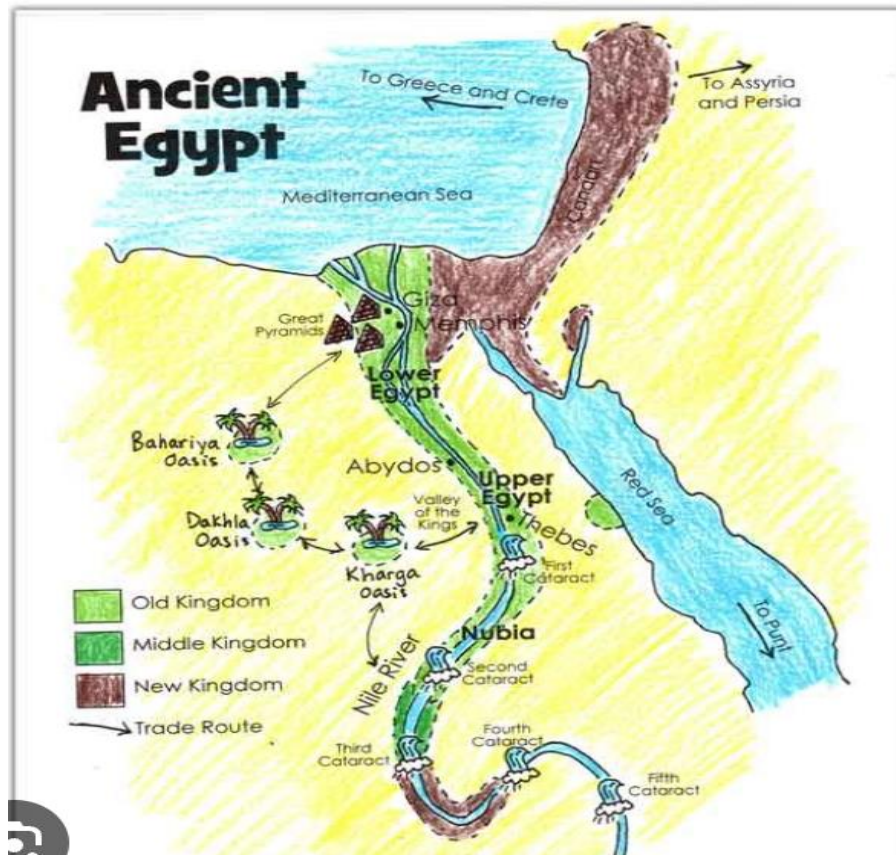
³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://aithor.com>, Tuesday 6th April 2025 at 7am.

⁵ Yount K. M., "like mother, like Daughter, Female Genital Mutilation in Minia, Egypt", *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, 2002, pp. 200-215.

⁶ <https://www.egypttoursportal.com>, Tuesday, 20th March 2025 at 6am.

⁷ www.bbc.co.uk, Tuesday, 20th March 2025 at 6am.



Map 1: An interactive Map of Ancient Egypt

www.in.pinterest.com

Conquests also was an added advantage to its rich culture^[8].

Most Egyptians were probably descended from settlers who moved to the Nile valley in prehistoric times, with population increase coming through natural fertility. In various periods, there were immigrants from Nubia, Libya, and especially the Middle East. They were historically significant and may have contributed to population growth, but their numbers are unknown. Most people lived in villages and towns in the Nile valley and delta. Dwellings were built of mud brick and had long disappeared beneath the rising water table or beneath modern town sites, thereby obliterating evidence for settlement patterns.

In antiquity, as now, the most favored location of settlements was on slightly raised ground near the riverbank, where transport and water were easily available and flooding was unlikely. Until the 1st millennium BC, Egypt was not urbanized to the same extent as Mesopotamia. Instead, a few centers, notably Memphis and Thebes, attracted population and particularly the elite, while the rest of the people were relatively evenly spread over the land. The size of the

population has been estimated as having risen from 1 to 1.5 million in the 3rd millennium BC to perhaps twice that number in the late 2nd millennium and 1st millennium BC^[9].

Nearly all of the people were engaged in agriculture and were probably tied to the land. In theory, all the land belonged to the king, although in practice those living on it could not easily be removed and some categories of land could be bought and sold. Land was assigned to high officials to provide them with an income, and most tracts required payment of substantial dues to the state, which had a strong interest in keeping the land in agricultural use. Abandoned land was taken back into state ownership and reassigned for cultivation^[10].

The people who lived and worked on the land were not free to leave but were obliged to cultivate it, but they were not enslaved. Most paid a proportion of their produce to major officials. Free citizens who worked the land on their own behalf did emerge; terms applied to

⁸ J. Baines and J. Malek, *The cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (Facts on the File 2000).

⁹ <https://www.egypttourportal.com/blog/ancient-egyptian-civilization/ancient-egypt-and-ancient-greece/#:~:text=Summary,exchanges%20in%20the%20ancient%20world>

¹⁰ Ibid

them tended originally to refer to poor people, but these agriculturalists were probably not poor. Slavery was never common, being restricted to captives and foreigners or to people who were forced by poverty or debt to sell themselves into service.

Enslaved persons sometimes even married members of their owners' families, so that in the long term those belonging to households tended to be assimilated into free society. In the New Kingdom, from about 1539 to 1077 BC, large numbers of captives were enslaved and acquired by major state institutions or incorporated into the army. Punitive treatment of enslaved foreigners or of native fugitives from their obligations included forced labor, exile or compulsory enlistment in dangerous mining expeditions. They were also involved in non-punitive employment.

Ancient Egyptian Civilizations cutting across the Globe

Education (Egyptian hieroglyphic numeral)

Egyptian hieroglyphic numerals Chart of numerals in the Egyptian hieroglyphic writing system was a major instrument in the centralization of the Egyptian state and its self-presentation. The two basic types of writing-hieroglyphs, which were used on monuments and display, and the cursive form known as hieratic-were invented at much the same time in late predynastic Egypt. Writing was used for administration, and until about 2650 BC no continuous texts are preserved; the only extant literary texts written before the early Middle Kingdom seem to have been lists of important traditional information and possibly medical treatises.

The use and potential of writings were restricted both by the rate of literacy, which was probably well below 1 percent, and by expectations of what writing might do. Hieroglyphic writing was publicly identified with Egypt. Perhaps because of this association with a single powerful state, its language, and its culture, Egyptian writing was seldom adapted to write other languages; in this, it contrasts with the cuneiform script of the relatively centralized, multilingual Mesopotamia. Nonetheless, Egyptian hieroglyphs served in the middle of the second millennium BC as the model from which the alphabet, ultimately the most widespread of all writing systems, evolved.

Arts and Literature

This artistic presentation of values originated at the same time as writing but before the latter could

record continuous texts or complex statements. Some of the earliest continuous texts of the fourth and fifth dynasties show an awareness of an ideal past that the present could only aspire to emulate. A few "biographies" of officials allude to strife, but more-nuanced discussion occurs first in literary texts of the Middle Kingdom. The texts consist of stories, dialogues, lamentations, and especially instructions on how to live a good life, and they supply a rich commentary on the more one-dimensional rhetoric of public inscriptions [¹¹].

The dominant visible legacy of ancient Egypt is in works of architecture and representational art. Until the Middle Kingdom, most of these were mortuary: royal tomb complexes, including pyramids and mortuary temples, and private tombs. There were also temples dedicated to the cult of the gods throughout the country, but most of these were modest structures. From the beginning of the New Kingdom, temples of the gods became the principal monuments; royal palaces and private houses, of which very little is known, were less important [¹²].

Temples and tombs were ideally executed in stone with relief decoration on their walls and were filled with stone and wooden statuary, inscribed and decorated stelae (freestanding small stone monuments), and, in their inner areas, composite works of art in precious materials. The design of the monuments and their decoration dates in essence to the beginning of the historical period and presents an ideal, sanctified cosmos. Little in it is related to the everyday world, and, except in palaces, works of art may have been rare outside temples and tombs.

Decoration may have recorded real historical events, rituals, or the official titles and careers of individuals, but its prime significance is the more general assertion of values, and the information presented was evaluated for its plausibility and compared with other evidence. Some of the events depicted in relief on royal monuments were certainly iconic rather than historically factual.

Literary works were written in all the main later phases of the Egyptian language. Middle Egyptian; the "classical" form of the Middle and New kingdoms, continuing in copies and inscriptions into Roman times; Late Egyptian, from the 19th dynasty to about 700 BC; and the demotic script from the 4th century BC to the 3rd century CE—but many of the finest and most complex are among the earliest [¹³].

¹¹ A. A. Shaqqa, "Declaring that There Are No Slums in Egypt Is a New Achievement for the Nation", *DOSTOR*, May 2021, <https://www.dostor.org/3462955>.

¹²A. Faust W. Ehud, "Judah, Philistia, and the Mediterranean World: Reconstructing the Economic System of the Seventh Century BCE", 2005.

¹³ F. Barth, *Ethnic groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of culture Difference*, Brown Series in Anthropology, 1969, p.153.

Literary works also included treatises on mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and magic, as well as various religious texts and canonical lists that classified the categories of creation probably the earliest genre, dating back to the beginning of the Old Kingdom, c. 2543 BC, or even a little earlier. Among these texts, little is truly systematic, a notable exception being a medical treatise on wounds.

The absence of systematic inquiry contrasts with Egyptian practical expertise in fields such as surveying, which was used both for orienting and planning buildings to remarkably fine tolerances and for the regular division of fields after the annual inundation of the Nile; the Egyptians also had surveyed and established the dimensions of their entire country by the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. These precise tasks required both knowledge of astronomy and highly ingenious techniques, but they were apparently achieved with little theoretical analysis.

Religion, The king and gods

The highly distinctive Egyptian method of rendering nature and artistic style was also a creation of early times and could be seen in most works of Egyptian religion. In content, there were hierarchically ordered so that the most important figures, the gods and the king, were shown together, while before the New Kingdom gods seldom occur in the same context as humanity. The decoration of a nonroyal tomb characteristically shows the tomb's owner with his subordinates, who administer his land and present him with its produce. The tomb owner is also typically depicted hunting in the marshes, a favorite pastime of the elite that may additionally symbolize passage into the next world [14].

The king and the gods are absent in nonroyal tombs, and, until the New Kingdom, overtly religious matters were restricted to rare scenes of mortuary rituals and journeys and to textual formulas. Temple reliefs, in which king and gods occurred freely, showed the king defeating his enemies, hunting, and especially offering to the gods, who in turn conferred benefits upon him. Human beings were present at most as minor figures supporting the king. On both royal and nonroyal monuments, an ideal world was represented in which all were beautiful and everything went well; only minor figures may have had physical imperfections. Temples were economic as well as religious institutions.

Administration and law

In the earliest periods Egypt was administered as a personal estate of the king through the central Old Kingdom. It was divided into about 35 provinces, each

with its own officials. Administration was concentrated at the capital, where most of the central elite lived and died. In the nonmonetary Egyptian economy, its essential functions were the collection, storage, and redistribution of produce; the drafting and organization of labor for specialized labor, probably including irrigation and flood protection works, and major state projects; and the supervision of legal matters. Administration and law were not fully distinct, and both depended ultimately on the king [15].

The essential medium of administration was writing, reinforced by personal authority over the nonliterate 99 percent of the population; texts exhorting the young to be scribes emphasize that the scribe commanded while the rest did the work. Most officials (almost all of whom were men) held several offices and accumulated more as they progressed up a complex ranked hierarchy, at the top of which was the vizier, the chief administrator and judge. The vizier reported to the king, who in theory retained certain powers, such as authority to invoke the death penalty.

The settlement of disputes was an administrative task, for which the chief guiding criterion was precedent, while contractual relations were regulated by the use of standard formulas. State and temple both partook in redistribution and held massive reserves of grain; in periods of decentralization similar functions were exercised by local grandees. Markets had only a minor role, and craftsmen were employees who normally traded only what they produced in their free time. The wealthiest officials escaped this pattern to some extent by receiving their income in the form of land and maintaining large establishments that included their own specialized workers.

Military, paramilitary and Priesthood

Before the Middle Kingdom, the civil and the military were not sharply distinguished. Military forces consisted of local militias under their own officials and included foreigners, and nonmilitary expeditions to extract minerals from the desert or to transport heavy loads through the country were organized in similar fashion. Until the New Kingdom, there was no separate priesthood. Holders of civil office also had priestly titles, and priests had civil titles. Often, priesthoods were sinecures: their chief significance was the income they brought. The same was true of the minor civil titles accumulated by high officials. At a lower level, minor priesthoods were held on a rotating basis by "laymen" who served every fourth month in temples. State and temple were so closely interconnected that there was no real tension between them before the late New Kingdom [16].

¹⁴ P. Clayton, *Chronicles of the Pharaohs*, Thames and Hudson, 1994. P. 44

¹⁵ C. Howard and TGH James, *The Path to Tutankhamun*, 1992.

¹⁶ B. J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt Anatomy of a Civilization*, Routledge, 1994, p.76.

Dating, Sources, Calendars, and Chronology

For all but the last century of Egyptian prehistory, whose Neolithic and later phases are normally termed “predynastic,” evidence is exclusively archaeological; later native sources have only mythical allusions to such remote times. The Dynastic period of native Egyptian rulers is generally divided into 30 dynasties, following the Egyptian of the Greco-Egyptian writer Manetho of Sebennytic (early 3rd century BC), excerpts of which are preserved in the works of later writers. In early periods, the kings’ years of reign were not consecutively numbered but were named for salient events, and lists were made of the names.

More-extensive details were added to the lists for the 4th and 5th dynasties, when dates were assigned according to biennial cattle censuses numbered through each king’s reign. Fragments of such lists are preserved on the Palermo Stone, an inscribed piece of basalt (at the Regional Museum of Archaeology in Palermo, Italy), and related pieces in the Cairo Museum and University College London; these are all parts of a single copy of an original document of the 5th dynasty. These acts assigned dates to events which has been modified and is now used all over the world today [17].

The Egyptians did not date by eras longer than the reign of a single king, so a historical framework must have been created from totals of reign lengths, which were then related to astronomical data that allowed whole periods to be fixed precisely. This was done through references to astronomical events and correlations with the three calendars in use in Egyptian antiquity. All dating was by a civil calendar, derived from the lunar calendar, which was introduced in the first half of the 3rd millennium BC.

The civil year had 365 days and started in principle when Sirius, or the Dog Star (also known in Greek as Sothis) became visible above the horizon after a period of absence, which at that time occurred some weeks before the Nile began to rise for the inundation. Every 4 years the civil year advanced one day in relation to the solar year (with 3651/4 days), and after a cycle of about 1,460 years it would again agree with the solar calendar. Religious ceremonies were organized according to two lunar calendars that had months of 29 or 30 days, with extra, intercalary months every three years or so.

These references cannot yield an absolute chronology. Such a chronology can be computed from larger numbers of lunar dates and cross-checked from solutions for the observations of Sirius. Various

chronologies are in use, however, differing by up to 40 years for the second millennium BC and by more than a century for the beginning of the first dynasty. The chronologies offered in most publications up to 1985 were thrown into some doubt for the Middle and New Kingdoms by a restudy of the evidence for the Sothic and especially the lunar dates. For the first millennium, dates in the Third Intermediate period are approximate; a supposed fixed year of 945 BC, based on links with the Bible, turns out to be variable by a number of years.

Late period dates (664 - 332 BC) are almost completely fixed. Before the 12th dynasty, plausible dates for the eleventh can be computed backward, but for earlier times dates are approximate. A total of 955 years for the 1st through the 8th dynasty in the Turin Canon has been used to assign a date of about 3100 BC for the beginning of the 1st dynasty, but this requires excessive average reign lengths, and an estimate of 2900 BC was preferable. Radiocarbon and other scientific dating of samples from Egyptian sites have not improved on, or convincingly contested, computed dates. More-recent work on radiocarbon dates from Egypt does, however, yield results encouragingly close to dates computed in the manner described above [18].

Achievements and Legacy The Great Pyramid of Giza

The Great Pyramid of Giza, built for Pharaoh Khufu, is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and an engineering marvel. The pyramids were built using limestone and granite blocks, with precise calculations and labor-intensive construction processes. These pyramids served as tombs for pharaohs, ensuring their safe passage to the afterlife. Meanwhile in ancient Egyptian society, hierarchy was highly respected. The hierarchical pyramid runs from the pharaohs, nobles, priests, artisans, and peasants. The pyramids, temples, and tombs showcase ancient Egyptian architectural skills [19].

The Nile River's annual flooding made the land suitable for agriculture, with crops like grains and flax. Ancient Egyptians believed in a complex pantheon of gods and goddesses, with rituals and offerings to ensure their favor.

The Mathematics and Arts

Their art and symbolism were renowned for its civilization, hieroglyphics, and depictions of everyday life. They made significant contributions to mathematics and astronomy, including a 365-day calendar [20].

¹⁷ I. Shaw, *the Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 122.

¹⁸ N. Reeves and R. H. Wilkinson, *The complete Valley of the Kings*. Thames and Hudson, 1996, p. 65.

¹⁹ I. Shaw, *The Oxford history of Ancient Egypt*, p. 285.

²⁰ Ibid.

Marriage and the family

In urban and elite contexts, the Egyptian ideal was the nuclear family, but, on the land and even within the central ruling group, there is evidence for extended families. Egyptians were monogamous, and the choice of partners in marriage, for which no formal ceremony or legal sanction is known, did not follow a set pattern. Consanguineous marriage was not practiced during the Dynastic period, except for the occasional marriage of a brother and sister within the royal family, and that practice may have been open only to kings or heirs to the throne. Divorce was in theory easy, but it was costly.

The status of women

Women had a legal status only marginally inferior to that of men. They could own and dispose of property in their own right, and they could initiate divorce and other legal proceedings. They hardly ever held administrative office but increasingly were involved in religious cults as priestesses or “Chan tresses.” Married women held the title “mistress of the house,” the precise significance of which is unknown. Lower down the social scale, they probably worked on the land as well as in the house.

Rules of succession to the kingship were understood. The common conception that the heir to the throne had to marry his predecessor’s oldest daughter was disapproved; kingship did not pass through the female line. The choice of queen seems to have been free; often the queen was a close relative of the king, but she also might be unrelated to him. In the New Kingdom, for which evidence is abundant, each king had a queen with distinctive titles, as well as a number of minor wives.

Urbanization and wealth distribution

The uneven distribution of wealth, labor, and technology was related to the only partly urban character of society, especially in the 3rd millennium BC. The country’s resources were not fed into numerous provincial towns but instead were concentrated to great effect around the capital itself - a dispersed string of settlements rather than a city and focused on the central figure in society, the king [21]. In the 3rd and early 2nd millennia, the elite ideal, expressed in the decoration of private tombs, was manorial and rural. Not until much later did Egyptians develop a more pronouncedly urban character.



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The separation of Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, its common link and cultural relationship [22].

These attitudes and their potential dissemination through society counterbalanced inequality, but how far they were accepted could not be known. The core group of wealthy officeholders numbered at most a few hundred, and the administrative

class of minor officials and scribes, most of whom could not afford to leave memorials or inscriptions, perhaps 5,000. With their dependents, these two groups formed perhaps 5 percent of the early population. Monuments and inscriptions commemorated no more than one in a thousand people. In this light, the infiltration of FGM was just a way to beautify a woman and not considered as anything negative.

²¹ J. A. Tyldesley, *Tales from Ancient Egypt*, Rutherford Press, 2004, p. 223.

²² www.stepintoafrica.com.

Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt

The practice of FGM was traced to Egypt in the fifth century BC and argue that the geographical [23] distribution of FGM suggest that it originated on the West Coast of the Red Sea [24]. Egyptian mummies showed women infibulated and this was supported by a Greek Papyrus in the British Museum dated 163 BC. A Greek historian and geographer in the second – century BC reported that a group along the Eastern Coast of the Red Sea cut their women in “Egypt style” and that another group “cut off in infancy with razor the whole portion that others circumcise”. Curiously today, FGM is referred to as “pharaonic circumcision” (Egyptian). In Sudan as “Sudanese circumcision” then Egypt [25].

How FGM spread from Egypt to other parts of the world.

Female Genital Mutilation is a complex issue with a long history, and its spread is multifaceted. While ancient Egyptian practices may have influenced neighboring regions right to the Roman Empire [26], FGM's prevalence varies across cultures and continents. FGM is prevalent in many African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, and others. Middle East: Some Middle Eastern countries, like Yemen and Oman, also practice FGM. Diaspora Communities: FGM has been practiced in diaspora communities in Europe, North America, and Australia and it had a common route with which it moved from one country to another [27].

The exportation of FGM through slavery and slave trade

There certainly appeared to be a link between FGM and slavery. In 1609, it was reported that a group near Mogadishu, Somalia had a custom to “sew up” their female especially young slaves to make them unable for conception which makes them sell dearer, both for their chastity and for better confidence which their buyers put in them. It was reported that Egyptians practiced female circumcision and infibulation to prevent pregnancy in women and the slaves. Egyptians raided and traded the black south for slaves from dynastic to Byzantine time and Sudanese slaves were exported through the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf before the rise of Islam. This was later

experienced in other neighboring countries and eventually, other parts of the world picked it.

Cultural Exchange and Migration,

As people moved and interacted, cultural practices like FGM were shared and adopted. Historical trade routes and colonialism facilitated the exchange of ideas, including harmful practices like FGM. Concerning the Social and Cultural Norms, FGM was often seen as a necessary practice for social acceptance, marriageability, and cultural identity. Other anthropologist believes that FGM was practiced among Equatorial African herders to protect young female herders from being raped or “an outgrowth of human sacrificial practice or some early attempt at population control” but the prigin was as a result of cultural adaptability and contact with other cultures and Egypt [28].

Today, FGM is an entrenching practice that occurs in the “African Sudanic belt” between the tropic of cancer and the Equator, from the West Atlantic Coast across to Egypt down to Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa. The practice spread across wide cultures and is practiced today as a mix of cultural, religion and social factors within families and communities. It can be clearly stated that this act is an ancient traditional ritual which was practiced from Asia, Egypt, by Australia aboriginal tribes [29].

Trade and Exchange:

The Nile River

The Nile River was a crucial internal trade route within Egypt, connecting various regions. Extensive Trade Networks where the Egyptians traded with numerous regions, including Punt (present-day Somalia), Byblos (present-day Lebanon), Canaan, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean islands. Goods exchanged included myrrh, frankincense, resins, cedar wood, wine, olive oil, textiles, metals, glass, horses, and pottery. Beyond goods, the exchange extended to ideas and technologies, influencing art, architecture, and religious beliefs and traditions. Usually, in the exchange of knowledge, there was a give-and-take. Today, we realise that all these nations are key nations where FGM is practiced.

²³ V. S. Fainzang, “Circumcision, excision et rapport de domination”, *Anthropologie et societies*, 1985, pp. 112-117.

²⁴ M. A. Watson, “Female Circumcision from Africa to the America: Slavery to the Present”, *the social science Journal*, 2005 pp. 250-270.

²⁵ A. Abdelshahid and C. Campbell, “Should I circumcise my daughter” Exploring diversity and ambivalence in Egyptian parents’ Social representation of female circumcision”, *Journal of community and Applied Social Psychology*, 2015, p. 65.

²⁶ M. Knight, “Cutting cut or ritual mutilation, some remarks on the practice of female and male circumcision in Graeco-Roman Egypt”, *Isis*, 2001, pp. 310-320.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ F. Ahmadu, “Rights and Wrongs: An insider/outsider reflects on power and excision”, in shell- Duncan’s Hernlund, *Female Circumcision in Africa. Culture, controversy and change*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021, p. 290.

²⁹ Ibid.



Diplomacy

Cultural ideas and artifacts certainly did flow across borders in all directions, especially through trade and diplomacy. The challenge was identifying that influence in the surviving data, which are very incomplete. The Hittites and the Egyptians flourished before other dynamic empires. Any facet found in one of those cultures from the Late Bronze Age or earlier that is comparable with these cultures. Imperial neighbors such as Egypt, Haiti, Assyria, and Babylon had both prestige and powerful international contacts through which to propagate their cultures.

Nevertheless, Egypt was also influenced through diplomacy by other renown nations. One well-known example is the Egyptian adoption of Levantine gods, including Baal, who was worshipped as Seth in Egypt. Other international cultural phenomena may also have originated from other countries. These include the Kispu offering ritual for dead ancestors (analogous to the marzeah feast mentioned in Jer 16:5 and Amos 6:7), and perhaps certain aspects of spoken prophecy (as evidenced by the Mari).



Diplomatic exchange between Egypt and Israel
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Migration and influence on social and cultural norms

While migration provides an important channel for financial remittances from migrants back to developing countries, it also provides the populations of both the home and host countries with the opportunity to

be exposed to different social norms and practices. The interconnections fostered by migration permit the flow of ideas, know-how, skills, and social and political practices, as much back to the origin countries as from them to the host countries. These transfers of ideas,

which have been in recognition of the more established expression which can be the key elements of institutional change, the long-term impacts of which can also be more significant than the financial flows. Such transfers can include political ideas, where migrants transmit different political opinions from the standard opinions in their origin countries. As such, they can drive political change, such as democratic transition and introduce new cultures.

CONCLUSION

Ancient civilizations have profoundly shaped the cultural, social, and religious practices of modern societies. Egypt's rich history spans thousands of years, with various dynasties and empires rising and falling. The transmission of traditions, values, and customs across generations and geographical boundaries has been a complex and multifaceted process. One such practice that has sparked intense debate and controversy is Female Genital Mutilation. With roots tracing back to ancient civilizations, stemming from Egypt, FGM has evolved over time, influenced by various cultural, social, and economic factors. Historically, the study explores ancient Egyptian texts, artifacts, and practices related to FGM. In the cultural aspects, it analyzed the transmission of these cultures and FGM from ancient Egyptian culture, including social, religious, and familial aspects to other neighbouring civilizations which has persisted even till date. Investigation was done on how FGM practices evolved over time, influenced by factors like colonization, globalization, and cultural exchange. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a complex issue with a long history, and its spread is multifaceted. While ancient Egyptian practices may have influenced neighboring regions, FGM's prevalence varies across cultures and continents. FGM is prevalent in many African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, and others. Today, FGM is practiced in some Middle Eastern countries, like Yemen and Oman and in diaspora communities in Europe, North America, and Australia.

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