

## FROM MYTHS TO MORPHOLOGY: POTENTIALS OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL TRACES OF EGYPT IN KIKUYU SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** This study explores the intersection between art, culture, and language by comparing the pre-colonial Kikuyu society of Kenya with ancient Egypt, based on the premise that art and design are inseparable from cultural identity. The research was inspired by oral traditions among Kenyan communities, particularly references to "Misri"—a term widely associated with ancient Egypt—and linguistic, artistic, and mythological elements that suggest possible historical links. **Problem:** While certain Kenyan communities such as the Kisii and Maragoli openly claim an ancestral origin from Misri, the Kikuyu do not. However, recurring cultural and linguistic parallels, particularly in symbolic art, mythic narratives, and key vocabulary, raise questions about potential cultural connections that have been largely overlooked or dismissed in mainstream scholarship. This highlights a broader issue: the marginalization of Egypt's influence in sub-Saharan African histories and cultural studies. **Setting:** The research focuses on two geographical and historical contexts—Kenya, specifically the Kikuyu community before colonial influence, and ancient Egypt, from the pre-dynastic period up to the 18th dynasty. These settings offer a contrasting yet intriguing framework for cultural comparison. **Subjects:** The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources. Subjects included Kenyan scholars, cultural custodians, and members of the general public with at least a Form Four level of education. Data was collected through archival research, museum visits, interviews, and questionnaires, along with analysis of artistic and linguistic materials from both cultures. **Results:** The study identified 21 "Egypto-Kikuyu coincidences" across various cultural domains, including similarities in language structure, names of historical figures, symbolism in art and design, mythological themes, and architectural forms. These coincidences do not serve as direct proof of origin or migration but provide substantial grounds for hypothesizing cultural diffusion or historical interaction. **Conclusion:** While the study does not conclusively establish a direct genealogical or migratory link between the Kikuyu and ancient Egyptians, it presents compelling evidence of shared cultural elements. Linguistic and cultural traces of Egypt in Kikuyu society have significance suggesting that the two are not unrelated. These findings suggest the need for a broader, more inclusive understanding of African history that recognizes Egypt as part of the continent's collective heritage. **Recommendation:** The study recommends further comparative research across other African cultures to explore similar links and deepen understanding of Africa's interconnected past.

**Keywords:** Kikuyu culture, Egypto-Kikuyu coincidences, African art and design, Comparative cultural studies, Oral traditions

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper is founded on the premise that art and design are integral parts of culture, and culture itself is inseparable from art. The inspiration for this study originated from the traditions of certain Kenyan communities (such as the Gusii and Luhya) that have claimed a connection to the legendary land of 'Misri', as documented by Were (1974)<sup>2</sup> and Ochieng (1976)<sup>3</sup>. This inspiration was further fueled by the accidental discovery of intriguing similarities between the cultures of pre-colonial Kikuyu and ancient Egypt. The research adopted a qualitative approach to explore two independent variables: the culture of pre-dynastic Egypt up to the eighteenth dynasty and the pre-colonial Kikuyu culture. While ancient Egypt boasts an abundance of paintings, reliefs, sculpture, and architecture, Kikuyu culture presents fewer artifacts for comparative analysis. The resulting dependent variables are categorized under the term "Egypto-Kikuyu Coincidences." The hypothetical proposition posits that certain aspects of Kikuyu language, myths, and material culture suggest possible interactions with the culture of ancient Egypt.

A fundamental assumption underpinning this research is the identification of the legendary "Misri" with the region of pharaonic Egypt, an assumption supported by various linguistic references. In Kiswahili Bibles, Egypt is referred to as "Misri," and in Hebrew, it is known as "Mizraim." Similarly, in Egyptian Arabic, it is referred to as "Masri" or "Misir." Furthermore, ancient Egyptian texts mention the land of "Punt," which is now believed to be located around the horn of Africa, corresponding to modern-day Puntland (Ben Jochannan, 1971). Historical evidence confirms that people were able to travel along the Nile, including the Luo people.

The Kikuyu were chosen as the sample group due to their term for "long ago," which, when compared with the Meru and Kiswahili words for the same concept, reveals a coincidence with two regents of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt. While the Kikuyu themselves do not claim a Misri origin in their traditions, the Kisii and Maragoli communities have stated that the Kikuyu were part of their migration from Misri. The research encompassed an extensive literature review on the art, scripts, and culture of both the Kikuyu and ancient Egypt. It involves analyzing a myth from each community, conducting interviews with scholars, and administering questionnaires to a selected group from the Kenyan public.

The outcome of the research identifies twenty-one Egypto-Kikuyu coincidences. While these coincidences do not definitively establish the origins of the Kikuyu people, they create fertile ground for further investigation. One of the recommendations arising from the study proposes employing this model to explore connections between the art and culture of other communities and that of ancient Egypt.

### **Words as Tools of Investigation**

The investigation delved into the art, design, and structure of specific words in the Kikuyu language as a means of academic inquiry. Early in the study, a pattern emerged in the words for "long ago" across various local languages. In the case of Kikuyu, Swahili, and Meru, "long ago" is expressed as Tene (Kikuyu), Kare (Meru), and Zamani za Kale (Kiswahili). Notably, a resemblance between the root in the name of Pharaoh Akhenaten and the word "tene" became apparent. The prefix "Akhen" and the root "aten" aligned with Akhenaten's name. This Pharaoh had a co-regent named Smenkhare, wherein "smen" served as the suffix and "khare" as the root. The Kikuyu ("tene"), Meru ("kare"), and

Swahili ("kale") languages seemed to employ the root words of these two names to convey the notion of antiquity. For the Meru community, their concept of "long ago" includes the memory of captivity in Mbwaa. On the other hand, the Kikuyu memory stretches back only to the origin story of Gĩkũyũ and Mũmbi, encapsulated in a period known as Tene. The words Mbwaa, Tene, and Khare the same bygone and memorial period.

### **Objectives**

The overarching objectives of this research were two-fold:

1. To comprehensively evaluate the art and culture of Ancient Egypt, spanning from the pre-dynastic period to the eighteenth dynasty, through an analysis of well-established secondary sources.
2. To similarly examine the pre-colonial Kikuyu culture, leveraging secondary sources to illuminate diverse facets of their cultural expressions.

In tandem with these broad objectives, the research outlined six specific goals, encompassing methodologies such as expert interviews, documentation of pertinent materials, and questionnaire administration. These methods collectively contribute to a robust analysis of data, thereby facilitating informed conclusions and recommendations.

### **Research Problem**

The central research problem emerges from a notable disjunction: the Kikuyu community's lack of formal claims to a Misri origin as opposed to the Kisii community's assertion of a migration from Misri—an enigmatic land steeped in historical records resembling an intricate art gallery. This incongruity piques scholarly interest. Moreover, the reluctance of certain Western scholars to acknowledge the relevance of ancient Egyptian records within the broader African context raises inquiries regarding the alignment of the "Misri" depicted in African myths with the historical Misri of the Pharaonic era. Furthermore, the comparative analysis of artistic expressions between ancient Egypt and various Kenyan communities remains largely unexplored. Despite the dismissive treatment of origin narratives as mere mythology, anthropological insights posit that myths often carry kernels of historical truths. These converging issues form a focal point for rigorous exploration.

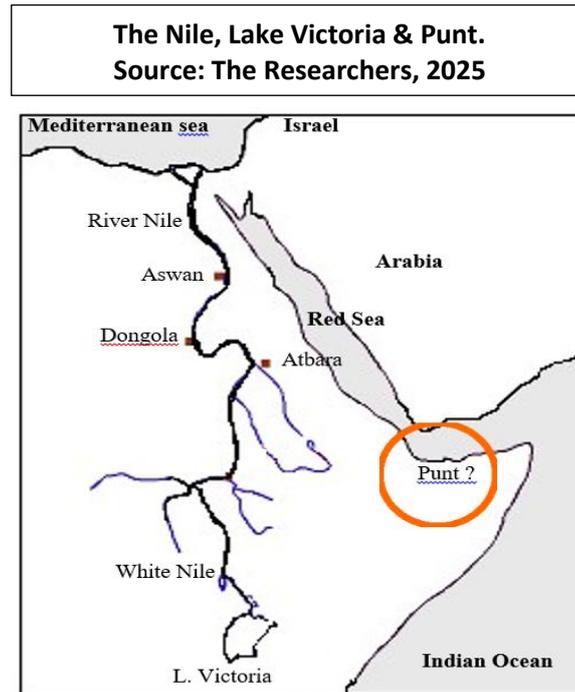
### **Research Questions**

This research sought to address three pivotal questions:

1. To what extent do specific aspects of Egyptian art, language, and material culture indicate potential interactions with the cultural expressions of pre-colonial Kikuyu society?
2. How do discernible features of Kikuyu art, language, and material culture hint at potential encounters with the artistic and cultural facets of ancient Egypt?
3. To what extent can individuals with a minimum formal education decipher shared visual messages conveyed through ancient Egyptian and pre-colonial Kikuyu artworks?

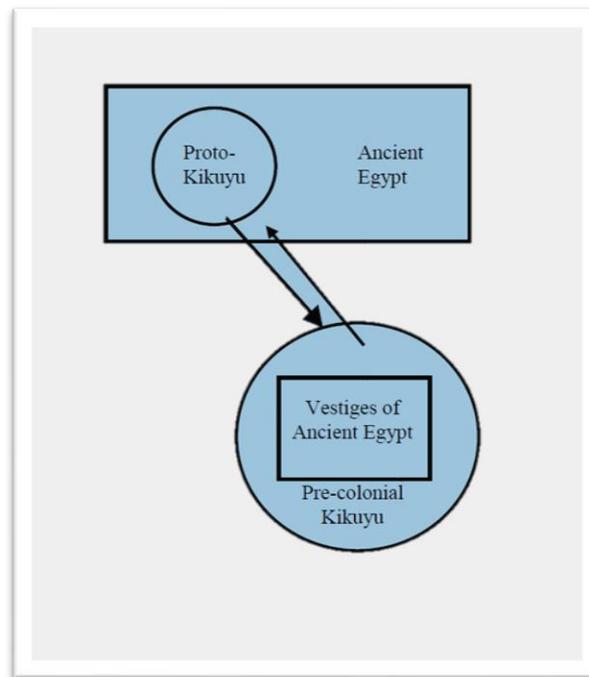
### Hypothetical proposition

Preliminary investigations unveiled intriguing coincidences between the culture of ancient Egypt and the cultural practices of pre-colonial Kikuyu. This observation prompted the formulation of the following hypothesis: Elements of Kikuyu language, myths, and material culture suggest plausible contact with the cultural milieu of ancient Egypt.



### Justification of the Research

In light of the Kikuyu community's silence on a Misri origin, this research serves to highlight fascinating parallels between their cultural expressions and those of ancient Egypt. By discerning and analyzing these parallels, this paper forms the basis for future studies that may definitively establish ancient Egypt's artistic heritage as a pivotal facet of Africa's historical narrative, encompassing regions often categorized as "sub-Saharan." In addition to enriching the comprehension of Kikuyu culture, this study contributes to the growing body of scholarly literature. Moreover, it underscores the significance of Egyptology in comprehending the historical trajectory of Kenyan societies, museums, and educational institutions. Ultimately, this research aspires to cultivate mutual understanding and collaboration between modern Kenya and Egypt, united by their shared stewardship of the Nile's waters and enriched by a deeper appreciation of their shared cultural heritage.



### Methodology

This study employed a qualitative methodology to investigate its research objectives. Primary data was drawn from the National Archives, the National Museum, and interviews conducted face-to-face or via questionnaires with respondents. Secondary data was sourced from books, magazines, and online resources related to Egyptology and pre-colonial Kikuyu culture.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research contrasts Eurocentric colonial perspectives on Kenyan people with Afrocentric viewpoints. Afrocentric historical methods, pioneered by scholars like R.B. Lewis and R.C. Winters, diverge significantly from Eurocentric viewpoints. The schematic representation in Figure 1 visually depicts the proposed model of cultural continuity between Ancient Kikuyu, Proto-Kikuyu in Egypt, and Ancient Egypt itself.

### Importance of Kikuyu Language

The significance of the Kikuyu language in this study is evident. The language displays monosyllabic characteristics akin to Ancient Coptic. This structural similarity allows for simplified analysis of Kikuyu words. Language, as a historical resource, remains underexplored in African historical studies, despite its potential to complement hieroglyphics, art, and historical texts. The study of language aids in documenting and comprehending cultural nuances and transformations.

### Importance of Hieroglyphics

Hieroglyphics play a dual role in this thesis. They serve as both pictorial symbols with interpretive significance and phonetic symbols that can be read as text. Additionally, Kikuyu

inscriptions collected by Routledge are treated as a form of hieroglyphics, contributing to the comparative analysis.

## Variables

This research centers on a comparative exploration of Egyptian and Kikuyu cultures through multiple variables. Egyptian artistic expressions, encompassing sculptures, paintings, and reliefs, are examined, while Kikuyu cultural artifacts are more limited, primarily observed on shields. Additional variables encompass hieroglyphics, Kikuyu inscriptions, cultural adornment practices, sculptures, reliefs, paintings, and vegetation. These variables are harnessed to uncover potential relationships and coincidences between the two cultures.

## 2.0 THEORY

### How Art Communicates

Every language has a vocabulary and this includes art (Mittler and Ragans, 1992). Art is very important to the human species. "Humans are the only creatures in the world that can tell one another about imagination in words and pictures," in a form of visual communication. Communication through art is universal because people possess an artistic faculty (Janson, 1997, p.16). It follows that art, as a form of language can be learned. This leads to a 'development' in artistic representation and eventually to sophistication of both the artist and the viewer. This sophistication is important for the completion of the 'communication cycle.' (Janson, 1997)

Art has a producer and a patron who pays for the production. Often however the kind of art that is produced is dependent on the material that is available. Willet (1971) implies that wood sculpture is abundant where forests and woodlands abound. While patrons may influence choice of material, the environment plays a major role. Willet suggests that it is pastoralists who painted the Sahara rock art, and that the images were painted when the people regrouped there probably for initiation ceremonies. The society then was the patron of the art in that case as well as in the case of agriculturalists, whom according to Willet use initiation ceremonies to express their unity due to weak central political institutions (Willet, 1971). Where the art of a people has developed to a very high degree, this has usually happened due to 'patronage' by those in power who have the resources to pay for the labour of good skilled artists.

### Elements of Art and Design

The following section defines important terms in Art. Art has both 'elements' and 'principles' which when applied creatively define styles and increase the aesthetic value of a work of art. Art can be two-dimensional (2D) on a flat plane like paintings on paper, or three-dimensional (3D) with several planes such as sculpture or architecture.

Stewart (2002, p.10) states that the elements of two 2D design<sup>7</sup> are lines, shapes, textures, values (the effect of light or shadow) and colour. 2D art is done on paper or any flat surface such as a wooden or a wall. When the design is cut in the wall it is called a 'relief' (see the discussion on Egyptian art). The elements of 3D design are lines, planes, volume, masses, space and colour (Steward 2002, p.).

**Line** – A line is the path traced by the moving point of a pen, brush crayon or other instrument in the hand of the artist. Lines can be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curved or wavy, zigzag, parallel, converging, thin, thick or dotted (Adams 1999).

**Shape** - Artists use shapes, lines, texture or colour to express ideas and emotions. Mittler and Ragans (1992) state that shape is an area that has been defined by one or all the other five elements of design such as texture or colour. In 3D designs, a variety of materials such as wood and stone can be used to make shapes. Shapes may be open or closed, positive or negative (Mittler and Ragans, 1992).

Voids or holes in sculpture are also negative. Shapes create forms, which can be described as: Regular shapes - geometrical such as triangles, squares, circles etc.; Biomorphic – organic forms that are irregular and may resemble living biological material such as viruses and bacteria (Adams 1999); Anthropomorphic – these forms give the impression of human beings. Shapes have expressive Qualities. The square evokes stability. Adams (1999) states that the circle was seen to be divine in the Roman period. The Kikuyu built circular huts. A square hut was the product of colonialism as none of the early writers has reported such a hut. Open shapes, such as letter ‘G’ according to Adams (1999, p.19), produce a better sense of movement than closed shapes such as letter ‘O.’

**Form** – Mittler and Ragans (1992, p.67) define form as three-dimensional. The visual elements of an artwork’s composition, arrangement or structure are its general form.

**Light and colour** - Colour is a product of light, and the absence of light causes darkness. This interplay of light and dark is used as an element to enhance a work of art. This lightness or darkness in a picture is called ‘value’ (Adams 1999, p. 21). The primary colours of the pigments are red, blue and yellow. Works whose values are in a gray scale are called achromatic and those with a variety of colours are chromatic (Adams 1999). Colours reflect light with yellow reflecting more than blue for example. (Adams 1999). Colour can evoke a sense of warmth or coldness.

**Texture** - Texture is the quality of the surface as conveyed by the colour, lines or shapes on the work of art (Adams 1999). The texture can be rough, smooth, furry, wet or dry. This texture may be either the real surface, or an illusion created by the artist. (Mittler and Ragans 1992).

**Plane** – A plane is a flat surface having a direction in space (Adams 1999). It can also be defined as a two-dimensional shape in a relationship with three-dimensional objects (Craig 1996). Three-dimensional objects may also be the result of illusions on a two dimensional surface.

### Principles of Art and Design

There are rules that govern how a language is organised which in English for instance are the grammar. In art, Mittler and Ragans (1992) state these rules as the principles of design. They are balance; variety; harmony; emphasis; proportion; movement and rhythm. Balance in a work of art ensures that “no one part of a work overpowers, or seems heavier than, any other part (Mittler and Ragans, 1992, p.80)”. Symmetrical balance can be termed “formal balance” while Asymmetrical balance is “informal balance.” Other kinds of asymmetrical balance are radial

and approximate balance. A blooming flower with its petals spread outwards is an example of radial balance (Mittler and Ragans, 1992).

Variety is the combining of two or more elements to create interest. Mittler (1992) continues to explain that Variety increases a work of art's visual appeal. In harmony, the elements of art and design are organised around each other in a way that creates order.

The principle of emphasis is used when an element or object in a work of art is made to stand out from the rest. Proportion is the relationship between the various parts of a work of art to each other. Colour can be used in differing proportions to enhance a work of art. Artists repeat certain elements to create rhythm and pattern (Mittler and Ragans, 1992). The arrangement of elements in a work of art can create a path for the eye of the viewer to follow.

In conclusion, a feeling of 'completeness' is created in a work of art when there is a pleasing arrangement of the elements. This unity is "...an unseen glue" (Mittler and Ragans, 1992, p.94) that can be sensed as present or missing. Technique is the consistent methods used to create a work (Home library encyclopedia, 1965). Perfection of technique leads to craftsmanship.

### **The Values of Art**

Works of art are made due to the value that society attaches to them. Great human achievements have tended to be associated with an abundance of art on a grand scale (Adams 1999). Art collectors have increased the value of art by internationalising it, making the stealing of art objects a business today, much as it was in the tomb raiding days of ancient Egypt. Adams (1999) has identified five 'Values' of art - material value, intrinsic value, Religious value, Nationalistic Value and Psychological Value.

Art can be treasured because of the material that has been used to make it. This is Material value. Intrinsic Value depends on the artist" who made the art, and the aesthetic character of the work of art regardless of the value of the material. This value may not be recognised until after the death of the artist - Vincent Van Ghogh was largely unnoticed in his lifetime (Adams 1999).

Art was valued in ancient Egypt and other ancient civilizations for its religious significance (Religious Value). Art made God accessible to man. The pyramids were the final resting places of 'gods' and each pyramid had a temple for continued worship of the cult of the dead pharaoh (Adams 1999).

Many cultures attach great significance to Image and magic. African sculpture was essentially for the purpose of representing spirits or gods who lived in the sculpture of mask. Harm done to an image of someone can hurt the actual person according to some cultures. Art is used in magic and witchcraft due to this perceived quality to capture or as an abode of spirits. (Adams, 1999)

Works of art with a nationalistic value are national monuments and statues of heroes. The statue of Jomo Kenyatta at the KICC and the 2007 statue of Dedan Kimathi on Kimathi Street are two examples. Adams (1999) gives Psychological Value as the last symbolic value of art. Pleasure, fright, amusement, avoidance and outrage are some human reactions to art. Art has

also been used to speed up the recovery of patients, and for “catharsis.” Adams (1999, p.17) explains how Sigmund Freud pioneered the use of art to treat mentally disturbed patients.

Representation techniques in Egyptian Art. Before man developed an alphabet communication was by pictures of birds, animals or human beings. For details on hieroglyphs, see the evolution of writing below. Besides architecture, three other main forms of representational art have been identified in Egyptian art; Sculpture in the round, Reliefs and Painting. The convention used to arrive at the proportions of the different characters, based on their religious importance is called the ‘canon of proportions’ and is discussed in detail in the following section.

### **Canon of Proportions**

Egyptian art used a canon of proportions in their art (Iversen, 1975). Adams (1999, p.89) defines these proportions as “commonly accepted guidelines for depicting the ideal human figure by specifying the relationships of the parts of the body to one another and to the whole.”<sup>8</sup>

In the palette of Narmer, the proportions of each figure depend on the importance of the person represented. These proportions were first plotted in a grid by the artist, some of which have survived to this day. Aldred (1985) gives instances where grids have survived from the eleventh dynasty (2081– 1938B.C.) and later. Adams (1999, p. 89) states that the grid was based on the “fist” and the whole figure was eighteen fists from the ground to the hairline. Human and animal figures in Egyptian art stand on horizontal lines called baselines and may or may not represent the ground. The main points on the canon of proportions from Eversen (1975) are summarised below.

1. Each unit on the grid was equal to a fist of the hand.
2. A standing figure contained eighteen equal units from the baseline to the top of the head.
3. The knee fell on sixth grid line from the base.
4. The lower buttocks fell on the ninth line.
5. The small of the back fell on line eleven.
6. The elbow fell on the twelfth line.
7. The junction of the neck and shoulders fell on the sixteenth line.
8. The hair-line was on line eighteen
9. Seated figures used a grid of fourteen squares.

These standardized ratios applied even to those smaller human figures of the Pharaoh’s officials. Adams (1999, p.89) attributes the continuity of the Egyptian style of art to the “persistence of such canons.” Fig 2.21 at the end of this chapter shows the canon of proportions as applied on the palette of Narmer.

### **Symbolism in the royal crowns**

Another form of standardization that is evident on the palette of Narmer is the use of the royal crown. On one side the king wears the cone-shaped White Crown of Upper Egypt. Illustrations of the two crowns (Millard A. 198) show the red one with a projection that is shaped like an elongated ‘comma.’ The combined crowns (white and Red) symbolized the unification and

were worn by kings of periods later than Narmer's (Menes). Adams (1999) dates the palette of Narmer to 3000 B.C.

### **Lack of perspective in Egyptian art**

Egyptian representation lacks foreshortening and therefore perspective. A single unified viewpoint for an entire picture is not possible in this style of representation (Baines 1984). The style is diagrammatic while the background surface remains a neutral element. Outlines contain most of the important characteristics of an object. The artist sometimes found it necessary to show a part of the object that may not otherwise be seen - a "false transparency" (Baines 1984).

**Egyptology – The culture of Ancient Egypt** It is recorded that frequent contacts between the North and South across the expanse now occupied by the Sahara took place for several thousand years. Trade goods and a variety of cultural material influences were exchanged in both directions along routes still marked by ancient rock paintings of horses and chariots (Clarke 1998). Collier, (1970) includes Ivory as one of the significant imports from areas of Southern, in particular from the lands of Nubia and Punt. Territories to the South of Nubia are vaguely referred to as Punt, Kush and Zinj in ancient texts. One expedition that is reported in hieroglyphics was made by one, Herkhuf, who took a pygmy back north with him, much to the excitement of the Pharaoh (Save-Soderbergh 1987). In Greek and Roman times, the kingdom of Meroe South of Egypt flourished, at times putting pressure on the northern Egyptian kingdom for 250 years. Around 350 A.D, this kingdom disappeared from "historical record" (Save-Soderbergh 1987, p. 40).

The Nile, which has its source in Lake Victoria, is the lifeline of Egypt. The East African countries share the waters of the lake, which fed the ancient civilization of Egypt, for thousands of years. Andrews (2006) confirms East Africa's importance in the history of Egypt. "...As a general principal ... that people of East Africa probably migrated towards the rest of the Old World about 1.8 million years ago, and therefore crossed Egypt, where some of them probably settled."

### **Rock art**

At one time, the Sahara was home to fishermen, hunters and herdsmen in separate epochs (Willet 1971). This is evident from the scenes depicted in the rock art in the mountain ranges of the Sahara Desert. The Tasili N'Ajjer is among the important galleries of this art. Half of all the occupation in the Tassili are 5450 + 300 BC.9" Willet gives the dates for these periods as follows: The Bubalus Period [3460 + 300 BC]; Cattle Period [2610 + 250 BC]; Horse Period [1720- 1550 BC]; The horse period is further divided into the Chariot, Horseman and Horse and Camel sub periods.

In it is believed that the horse made its first appearance in Egypt around 1200 BC (Willet 1971) having been introduced by a people referred to as 'the Sea people' from Crete (Millard 1981 p. 60), however Collier (1970) credits the Hyksos from Palestine who administered Egypt for more than a century, with bringing the horse and chariot to Africa. This was during the 2nd Intermediate period of Dynastic Egypt (Aldred 1996). From then on the horse and chariot became an integral part of Egyptian warfare. Pharaoh Akhenaten (of the 18th dynasty in the New Kingdom) was depicted in several wall reliefs performing a ritual ride on his chariot

with his queen. The horse period was followed by the latest phase – the Camel period from around 700 BC (Willet 1971). For details on these periods, see Willet (1971).

### **Pre-dynastic Art**

Egyptian history has two major divisions - Pre dynastic and dynastic. The pre-dynastic period is further divided into Badarian, Amratian and Gerzean. Gerzean is generally accepted as the archaic periods when writing was invented (Millard 1980). Amratian is also called Naqada I and is a “small-scale village culture” (Baines 1984, p.30).” Gerzean is also called Naqada II and is a ‘late pre-dynastic’ period. It has been discussed in its own section below as an intermediate epoch between the Gerzean and the Pharaonic era. Domestic animals were tamed and the basics of agriculture adopted in the predynastic period. Significantly Millard reports that the Badarian farmers were from Upper Egypt, a term used to refer to the southern parts of Egypt (Millard 1981).

Badarian (4500 BC) is the earliest known agriculturalist culture to produce art in Egypt and the first known stone axes and arrowheads. They made black topped rippled pottery with white designs on a dark red background, later in red on a light background; soft steatite beads with green Amazon stone and copper beads (Millard 1981, Baines 1984).

The Badarians buried their dead and threw in pots as well. Some pots have images of a boat with a palm branch at the bow, which indicates influence from boating on the Nile. Badarian sites (also called Tasian) are in the middle of Egypt somewhere between the 26- and 28-degrees latitude (Baines 1984).

The Amratian (Naqada I) period is also referred to as Naqada I after a presumed King where the pottery was found. One Amratian characteristic is the absence of social stratification Pottery has cross line patterns and sometimes human and animal motifs. Some outlines can be interpreted to represent man in a boat (Baines 1984).

Gerzean (Naqada II) there is evidence of contact between the Gerzean people and the culture of Mesopotamia (Baines, 1984) as evidenced by shared terminology and art.

There is also social stratification and concentrated settlements around Hierakonpolis (Kom-el-Ahmar), Koptos (Quit), Naqada and Abydos. Baines (1984) has drawn parallels with Sumerian, Palestinian and Elamite art, implying diffusion. Sir Flinders Petrie sketched the four pots shown in Fig 2.4, in the 1800s. 11

### **Late pre-dynastic period**

Not much is known about this period. Baines (1984) devotes only a paragraph to note that the period experienced rapid change with a culture that was not uniform throughout Upper and Lower Egypt. An example of art from this period also referred to as Naqada III is an ivory knife handle with scenes of the hunt; battle and procession, now in the Louvre Museum, Paris (Davis 1989). The fighters depicted on the knife handle as noted by this writer wore a triangular garment that was similar to one worn by Akhenaten’s servants. Another example is the so called Oxford Palette that depicts lions, a leopard, a wild dog, a mythical flesh eater with a long neck and a winged animal with a beak, each attacking either an ibex, goat, giraffe or a buffalo.

A jackal headed man is blowing a flute (Davis 1989). This is probably the earliest depiction of a priest of Anubis, the funerary god.

## **Dynastic Egypt**

An online encyclopaedia states that Egypt is Misr “pronounced Masr in Egyptian Arabic” which is a word of Semitic origin from Mizraim - the Hebrew derivative. The name was first used for Egypt in Akkadian and that the original meaning was a “city”. In Turkish, the name is Misir, which is closer to the Kiswahili word Misri for Egypt. Giles (1970) attributes an inscription to Queen Hatshepsut that gives the name of Egypt as Ta Meri. In the Ethiopian dynasty, the country was called KMT (Khpera, Jan. 2001), land of the blacks which has been spelt as Kimit by ben- Jochannan (1971).

A dynasty was the hereditary rule by a family before it was overthrown by another lineage. The art of the periods has been significant in identifying the dynasties and recording their most visible characteristics. The dynasties have been grouped into twelve periods, starting with the Archaic Period and ending with the Greek Ptolemaic dynasty that was conquered by the Romans in 30 BC. Table 2.1, below gives the chronological number of the Dynasty, the name of the period and the approximate dates in the era before Christ.

### **1 Early Dynastic period**

In the first Dynasty, King Menes achieved Unification of Upper and Lower Egypt at about 3118 BC (Millard 1981). According to Baines (1984) Menes was also called King Aha 12. From the reign of Menes, Petrie’s history of Egypt (vol. II) confirms that a continuous record of the history of Egypt is maintained. One side of the palette of Narmer shows relief representation of the King in procession after the victory. Ten beheaded bodies with their hands tied and the heads between the legs are arranged vertically. Two men are each handling a mythical animal with a long neck. At the lowest level, a buffalo is trampling a man underfoot. The top of the palette has a symmetrical design of bulls with a fish in the centre. The King is now wearing the double crown that came to be associated with a unified Egypt. Abu Bakr (Mokhtar, ed. 1981) lists the other kings of the dynasty as Djer and Udimu.

The second Dynasty kings moved their burial grounds from Abydos to ‘Saqqara’ the first king was Peribsen who had changed his name from Sekhemib; the second is Khasekhemy; the third one is King Ninetjer (Baines 1984). Abu Bakr (1981) has only two, ‘Khasekemui’ and Hotepsekemui. The third dynasty was ushered in by King Zanakht who ruled between 2649 and 2630 BC. He was also probably also called Nebka (Baines 1984). The famous Djoser who built the step pyramid at Saqqara succeeded him.

### **2 Old Kingdom**

This was a relatively peaceful period with no invasions from outside (Millard 1981). Snofru built two pyramids at Dashur and probably a third one at Maidun with mastabas associated with his reign at Maidun and Saqqara (Baines 1984). It is recorded that he made a major attack on Nubia and what is called the Nubian settled ‘A group’ disappeared in between the first and fourth dynasties probably due to attacks or bad climate (Baines, 1984). The solar religion took

root between the 4th and 5th dynasties with the appearance of the true pyramid (Baines 1984). The Pyramid was symbolic of this religion and Kings added the title 'son of Ra' to their name.

Snofru, first King of the 4th dynasty, was followed by the famous Khufu (called by others Cheops), 2551 - 2528 who built one of the largest pyramids. He was followed on the throne by Khephren (Chephren) and Menkaure also called Mycerinus. This list by Baines (1984) agrees with Abu Bakr's. These three kings placed their pyramids in proximity to each other. The pyramids had the following heights; Khufu - 146 meters<sup>14</sup>. Khephren – 143.5 meters; Menkaure – 65.5 metres high. These form part of the group of pyramids at Giza (Baines 1984 , p.140). Fine sculpture was produced; fragments of gold objects from the 5th dynasty are known and stone vases from Khephren have been found in Syria, an indication of the trade routes (Baines 1984). Abu Bakr (Mokhtar, ed. 1981) lists the Kings of the 5th Dynasty as Weserkaf, Sahure and Unas. In the 5th and 6th dynasties, the pyramids decreased in size, a sign of decline and decentralization of political power (Baines 1984) The last Kings of the 5th Dynasty did not build temples to the sun god, which Baines (1984) gives as further evidence of the lessening of the importance of the solar religion. A Nubian 'C group' developed in this period. Baines mentions that inscriptions imply that relations with Egypt continued to deteriorate as the Nubian settlers became established.

According to Abu Bakr, (Mokhtar, ed. 1981) there were only four kings in the 6th dynasty – Teti, Pepi I, Merenre and Pepi II. Central control in Egypt appears to have worsened further between the late 6th and 7th to 8th dynasties (Baines 1984) with the Nubians gaining some control over their affairs. Save- Soderbergh (1987) however implies that the Nubians were in a subservient position. Save- Soderbergh quotes one inscription which glorified King Merenre who "came to Nubia and the chieftains of Medja, Irtjet and Wawat (lower Nubian districts) kissed the earth and praised him greatly." King Pepi II, the last king of the 6th Dynasty is reported to have led an expedition to Nubia from Aswan and caused a massacre "in Irtjet and Wawat and brought back to Egypt their royal children and nobles as prisoners together with cattle and booty" (Save-Soderbergh, p. 34). In the 6th Dynasty, an official called Herkhuf recorded travels to find "ivory, ebony and frankincense from Nubia" from where he brought back a pigmy (Save-Soderbergh, 1987, p. 34). Abu Bakr indicates the 7th and 8th dynasties are unknown by name and that the 9th dynasty can be attributed to only one king – Khety. Uah-Ka-ra was a King who ruled in one of the dynasties between the 7th and the 10th, which had all been grouped together by Petrie. He was also called Khety II (Petrie 1924). Petrie stated that this king's name appears to have started a fashion of adding to their names the phrase Uah-Ka, "may the Ka flourish" and frequently the phrase "Maot Kheru". His First Intermediate period starts with the 7th dynasty unlike Baines', which starts with the 9th below.

### 3 First Intermediate period

The weakness of the kings resulted in a divided Egypt with capitals in Herakleopolis and Thebes in the 9th and 10th dynasties (Baines 1984). There were clashes between the two divisions, with Nubians being conscripted as mercenaries. Abu Bakr (Mokhtar, ed. 1981) lists the Kings of the 10th dynasty as Neferkare, Khety III, Merikare and an unknown one indicated with an 'X.'

### 4 Middle Kingdom

The first King in the eleventh dynasty was Antef who was followed by Mentuhotep. Baines (1984) credits Mentuhotep I 15 with defeating the North and re-uniting the country. Reliefs and sculpture of Mentuhotep were recovered from the temple he built at Deir-el-Bahri. He was honoured as one of the founders of Egypt in later years (Baines 1984). Another Mentuhotep Nebtawyre ruled in the 11th dynasty but was ignored in King lists perhaps because he was seen as illegitimate (Baines 1984). His vizier, Amenemhat who continued with campaigns in Nubia, succeeded him on the throne. This was the first instance where a king compounded his name with Amen, the god of the state religion.

This researcher finds Amenemhat to be comparable with Akhenaten of the 18th dynasty; He moved his capital from Thebes to Memphis where he “founded a new city” Baines (1984, p. 40). Akhenaten moved his capital from Thebes to Akhetaten. Amenemhat is credited with the starting of co-regencies, which continued into the 18th dynasty (Baines 1984). His co-regent was his son Senwosret I. Senwosret III (1844 – 1797 BC) is noted for moving the frontier further south to Semna in an effort to subdue the Kerma rulers. In later periods he was worshipped as a god as was his successor, Amenemhat III (Baines 1984).

The 13th dynasty had in the span of 150 years, about 70 different kings (Baines 1984) but Abu Bakr (Mokhtar, ed. 1981) lists only five – Ucaf, Sebek-Hotep, Amenemhat, Sekemres and Khendjer. The invasion of the Semitic Hyksos is supposedly before the 10th Dynasty (Millard 1981) but Baines (1984) moves the invasion to a later date in the 13th dynasty where they continued as foreign rulers into the 16th dynasty. A native 17th dynasty survived in Thebes and the Kerma kingdom took over much of lower Nubia, resulting in an Egypt that was divided into three parts; the delta held by the Theban kings; middle Egypt held by the Hyksos, and Nubia under the control of Kerma (Baines 1984). Bronze working technology developed at this time, which Baines attributes to the Hyksos invasion; an improved potter’s wheel and a vertical loom also made their appearance. One of the more important importations was the horse and Chariot and armour (Baines 1984). Abu Bakr lists the Kings of the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th dynasties as follows:

**14th Dynasty** – Semenkare; Sebek-hotep; Neferhotep; Merkare; Uaibet; Menthu-Emsaf; Didumes and Nehessy.

**15th Dynasty and 16th Dynasties** – Kyan; Apophi I, Apohis II and Akenenre.

**17th Dynasty** – Rahoted; Antef; Sebekemsaf; Taa; Sekenenre and Kamose. Seqenenre of the 17th dynasty started the process of expelling the Hyksos, which was continued by Kamose, the last king of the dynasty (Baines 1981).

## 5 The New Kingdom

The New Kingdom ushered in an era that was ruled by the relatives of Akhenaten. Kamose of the 17th dynasty was succeeded by Ahmose, who pushed the Hyksos out of Egypt and all the way to Palestine (1550 –1525 BC). His campaigns included pushing the Nubians further south and by the time he handed over to his son Amenhotep II, Egypt was unified again and prosperous (Baines 1984). The Kings of this era started a new tradition – they did not build pyramids. Instead, the royal family was buried in rock-hewn tombs, whose workmanship developed into a fine art.

Two new forces developed because of Egypt's warring activities - a large standing army and a powerful priesthood. One of the important personalities in this period is Thothmes III who had to wait for 22 years (Baines 1984) before he could rule. Queen Hatshepsut had usurped the throne when she was regent because Thothmes was too young. She retained Thothmes as Co-regent. Hatshepsut made a trip to Punt that was recorded on her monuments. Ben Jochannan (1971, p.478) who spells Pharaoh as Pharoah suggested that Punt was near East Africa. Ben Jochannan actually includes Kenya when he says Punt is "... modern Somaliland and part of Kenya." The Queen's journey is recorded on her temple at DEIR-EL-BAHRI.

Several detailed pictures to commemorate the visit were sketched by Petrie from the monuments (1924). During the visit she imported Sycamore trees, leopard skins, baboons and ostrich eggs among other items (Petrie 1924). Baines mentions musical instruments and new dances as shaping the 18th dynasty as a distinct period of dynastic Egypt.

The 18th dynasty is the most significant dynasty to this study. The reign of pharaoh Akhenaten that lasted from about 1378 to 1362 (Collier 1970) is part of it. This Pharaoh and his co-regent, Smenkhare inspired this study due to the similarity of the endings of their names (suffixes) to the words for long ago in Kikuyu, 'tene' and Ki-Meru, 'kare' respectively.

### **Deities and their origins**

The most visible art objects of ancient Egyptian are the pyramids, which were tombs. Pyramids had secret tunnels that led underground to chambers that contained the mummy of the dead pharaoh. In these tombs, paintings and text have been found and translated to get the story of the interred person. Referred to as pyramid texts, they rank as "among the oldest known religious literature in the world (Ions 1973, p. 16)." The earliest are preserved in the Fifth and Sixth dynasty pyramids. Save-Soderbergh (1987, p. 44) estimates that as early as about 12,000 BC, the Nile and its basin were rich in fish with the surrounding areas that are now desert, teeming with much of the wildlife "nowadays typical of, for example Kenya and Tanzania". The gradual development of the desert since the times of the rock paintings of Tasili, made the waters of the Nile and its fertile banks to be accorded more respect as sustainers of life by early settlers. The people learned to construct dykes and channels. Later appropriate technology such as the manually operated shaduf for lifting water from the deepened ditches to the farmland was invented. It may be noted here that the Kikuyu, with whom the culture of ancient Egypt is being compared, are believed to have had some knowledge in irrigation (Leakey 1977). Floods frequently destroyed the protective dykes, overran the villages and destroyed the lives of people and cattle (Save- Soderbergh 1987).

The settlers in prehistoric times invented the first gods and ascribed to them the roles that continued in dynastic times; their gods became local gods associated with agriculture (Ions 1973). The sun became the deity Ra and was worshipped as the rising sun, which died in the west every evening. Prayers were said to the sun every day to beseech Ra to come back in the morning. Here, the Kikuyu word 'Riũka' when deconstructed is seen to be two words – Riũwa –ũka (the sun come). In Kikuyu, the word means 'resurrect17.'

All agricultural peoples, according to Ions, performed primitive rites to ensure that nature continued to favour them. "The emphasis on ritual is the reason for some of our difficulty in

understanding the Egyptian religion..."(Ions 1973, p.11-12). Like ancient Egypt, ritual was a major part of Kikuyu culture.

Ritual was part of pre-Christian communities with hardly a division between politics, religion and ordinary everyday life. Modern man is not freed from ritual either and modern religions are replete with acts of ritual. The Holy Communion in the Christian mass and is an act of ritual.

The Egyptian deities were depicted as animals, birds or humans and sometimes, humans with animal heads. The sun god Ra was at times symbolized as a disk on a boat but often as a falcon-headed man due to his association with Horus. The words "Huru miri – toui" from Hieroglyphics, have been translated by Maspero (1903 p.25) to mean, "Horus friend of both lands." The ruling Pharaoh was associated with Horus (Ions 1973).

The falcon was associated with the sky god Horus. Collier (1970) gives the Arabic word for falcon as Huru. The Kikuyu have a bird by the name 'Ihuru' which some respondents likened to an eagle while others likened it to a crow. In Egypt, Horus was worshipped next to the followers of Ra the sun god. Ions (1973) states that Menes was a follower of Horus.

Ellison T. R. (2006) states that Ra was associated with the Sycamore tree. Ions (1973, p.41) adds that "at the beginning... Ra himself ruled on earth over the universe he had created. His reign was a sort of golden age, known to the Egyptians as the 'First Time', when men and gods lived together on earth". Collier (1970) has emphasised the importance of Ra whose name, when compounded with other gods totalled seventy-five different names including Amun- RA, Aten-RA and Atum-RA. The first unification of Egypt, served to have Ra "permanently associated with the concept of supreme rule with the sun cults (Ions V., 1973, p. 14)."

Horus the falcon bird or a human with a falcon head, was said to be the right eye of Ra, the sun (Ions V., p. 45). Thoth on the other hand was depicted as a human being with an ibis head. At other times, he was depicted as a baboon. When a deity had a human body, the depiction was that of a priest performing some ritual. An example is Anubis who was depicted as a jackal and many scenes show his priests with a 'jackal mask' performing a ritual, such as the 'opening of the mouth ceremony' discussed in chapter four. In real life, the priests of Anubis probably wore such masks to conceal their identities in the manner of the 'egwugwu' ancestral spirits in Chinua Achebe's (1958) Things fall apart chapter ten, who were real men in disguise.

There were hundreds of gods, the exact number of which cannot be established. This was before and during the reign of the 'heretic' Akhenaten who upset religious matters by outlawing all other gods except Aten-Ra, manifested in the rising sun. Akhenaten composed two hymns to Aten, which have been translated. Giles (1970, p.21) terms them "... among his [Akhenaten's] most remarkable feats."

Anubis was the funerary god of Abydos in Upper Egypt. He was lord of the Westerners. To the Egyptians, 'the West' was the home of the departed. It was also home to the setting sun. The 'westerners' were therefore the dead (Ions 1973). Ions also states that this god's other name was Kenti Amentiu.

The emergence of Atum “Great He-She”, often regarded as bisexual, was the first event in the creative process. He was the god of Heliopolis. He had only one detachable eye. This eye inspired the Udjat19 design or Eye of Ra, which is shown in Chapter Four (Ions 1973).

Osiris judged the dead person’s soul, which was balanced on a scale against the feather of Maat who stood for truth<sup>20</sup>. If it balanced the soul went with him to heaven. Pharaohs became Osiris upon death (Ions 1973). He was associated with the willow tree according to Ellison, (2006).<sup>21</sup> Isis was one of the ‘nine gods of On’, referred to as the ennead<sup>22</sup> and a daughter of Thoth (Collier 1970). Seth the god of chaos and destruction was also one of the nine gods of On. According to legend, Seth murdered Osiris. Ions (1973) uses the alternative spelling of ‘Set’.

Nephtys was Nuts’s daughter and friend of the dead. She was also married to Seth. She bore Anubis with Osiris who was not her husband (Ions 1973). The legend goes that Nephtys ran away to join Isis. Together they looked for Osiris’ body, which had been dismembered and thrown into the marshes. They found the body and embalmed it. The rites of the dead caused the resurrection of Osiris, God of the dead pharaohs (Ions 1973). Maat was the goddess of truth, divine order and justice and is also spelled as Mayet (Ions V. 1973). She was depicted with a feather on her head. Mut was Amun’s chief wife and is claimed to be separate from Maat. The Thebanprincess Mutemwaya, who was Akhenaten’s grandmother on his father’s side, was named after Mut (Collier 1970). Min was the god of fertility and harvest. He took care of crops and animals. He was depicted with an erect phallus (Millard 1981). Thoth was god of wisdom, letters and the scribe of the gods (Ions 1973). Thoth was the suffix of the names of four Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty, an indication that he was the official god of those Pharaohs. Sekhmet the Lioness and goddess of war was wife of Ptah (Millard 1981).

Khnum was the potter god of creation and human fertility. He formed children on a potter’s wheel (Collier 1970) and give them a ka (soul). Hathor was the protector of women. Hathor was also called "Lady of the Sycamore," the tree being “the only native tree of useful size and sturdiness in Egypt” (Ellison 2006).<sup>24</sup> Amun the chief god of Thebes and is also spelled as Amon. Akhenaten’s father’s name ‘Amenhotep III’ was compounded with Amun, as was Akhenaten before he changed his name, which was originally ‘Amenhotep IV.’ Amun, just like Aten, was Associated with the sun as Amun-Ra. Amun was depicted as a man wearing a hat with a tall double plume on the head (Desroches-Noblecourt 1963). Sacred animals of Amun were the ram and the goose (Adams 1999).

There were hundreds of gods in Egypt. The above 23 gods are among the important ones (Ions 1973). The list is therefore not exhaustive since a dead Pharaoh was deified upon death further adding to the list of gods.

### **The Pharaoh as a divine being**

The Egyptians believed that the Pharaohs were divinely appointed to rule (Ions 1973). The divine pharaoh was referred to as ‘good god’ (Ions 1973, p. 16) with the gods whom the pharaoh represented on earth being referred to as ‘great gods. Ra in particular was identified with the Pharaohs, and was considered their protective deity. The Pharaoh was believed to be Horus, the son of Ra and when he died, he was believed to become Ra himself (Ions 1973).

The pharaohs were believed to be descended from gods with divine qualities of gods. The pharaoh was the chief priest of his god with powers over the forces of nature (Ions 1973). Finally, as if to stamp their divine origins in the minds of their subjects, Pharaohs frequently suffixed or prefixed their names with that of the god to whom they paid allegiance. Amenhotep and Tutankhamun had the Amen prefix and suffix respectively. Thothmes had the Thoth prefix and Akhenaten had the Aten suffix.

### **Trees in Egyptian religion**

Some Trees were of special significance to the Egyptians. Queen Hatshepsut is known to have imported Sycamore trees from Punt (Petrie, 1924)<sup>25</sup>. Apparently ‘the only native tree of useful size and sturdiness in Egypt’ was the Sycamore (Ellison 2006)<sup>26</sup>. Ellison further states that Osiris the god and RA were identified with the willow and the Sycamore tree respectively. Ellison tells of one picture where Tuthmosis III, “is shown being nursed at the breast of ‘his mother Isis’ in the form of a Sycamore tree.’ It is significant that Hatshepsut<sup>27</sup> who imported Sycamore trees was the regent for Thothmes III, who was at the time a juvenile.

On a tablet found in Akhetaten, now Tel el Amarna, with Akhenaten’s names, Giles (1970, p.68) reports that it had the following words; “the book of the Sycamore and the Olive.” It can be surmised that perhaps the Sycamore was Akhenaten and the Olive was his wife Nefertiti. A Sycamore is a Müküyü tree in Kikuyu – called *Ficus sycamora*<sup>28</sup> by Leakey (1977) who stated that the Olive tree was the female in the family of sacred trees. The Sycamore’s leaves had the power to provide the Pharaoh with immortality (Collier 1970). However, Maspero (1903) is categorical that the date palm and the Sycamore were not native to Egypt but had been imported from central Africa.

### **The evolution of writing**

Writing was held in very high regard in Egypt. It started about 3000 BC (Baines, 1984) and defined the beginning of Egyptian history concretely than any other occurrence. This ability to record information in writing opened possibilities in social organisation besides the transmission of an ever-increasing body of knowledge (Baines 1984). Writing was invaluable in recording religious beliefs, myths and the story of the dead person in tomb walls. Surviving texts transmit all genres of literature, from fiction, philosophy hymns, to love and poetry (Baines 1984).

The Egyptians early attempt at recording their thoughts was in the form of pictures. The earliest category of symbols represented real objects as they are seen and known and are termed pictograms or pictographs (Adams 1999). These pictograms developed into ideograms, symbols that represented ideas and concepts such as walking, kingdom and ‘foreign land.’ Adams refers to the third set as ‘phonograms’, which represented sounds of one or more consonants. The script did not have symbols to indicate vowels. It however had some ideograms now called ‘determinatives’ which according to Adams (1999), helped to establish the real meaning of a word that had been spelled phonetically. A male’s name for example would end in a symbol for ‘man’ or a symbol for ‘woman’ as the case may be. Baines (1984, p. 200) refers to determinatives as ‘semograms,’ translated as ‘conveying meaning’. The term ‘determinative,’ is preferred in this Thesis since every symbol conveys some meaning.

This complex writing system is called hieroglyphics – “from the Greek hieros, or ‘sacred’ and glypho, ‘I curve’ (Adams 1999, p. 82). Writing in hieroglyphics was a very slow business. Eventually a form suited to writing quickly developed. This cursive form was called hieratic. Baines (1984, p. 199) says that the hieroglyphic text was reserved for “monumental and ornamental purposes” while the hieratic form was for “everyday purposes.” An even simpler form according to Adams (1999) developed for ordinary people in the seventh century BC and is known as Demotic, from the Greek word demos. These three forms of writing existed together up to the Christian era when they were replaced by the Greek alphabet to write in Coptic (Adams p. 82). According to Adams, the Greek alphabet was inadequate to write Coptic. Seven demotic signs therefore supplemented the script but between the fifth century and 1822, knowledge of reading this script was lost. Table 2.2, is a selection of glyphs with their phonetic values in the Roman alphabet. The sound produced by uttering a grapheme is the phoneme. Usually if a glyph represented an object whose first syllable was ‘t’, that glyph represented the phoneme ‘t’ within a set of phonetic symbols. The first syllable in the ancient Egyptian word for bread was the phoneme ‘t’ which was represented by the glyph for bread. The Egyptian writing system had only consonants<sup>33</sup> and no vowels<sup>34</sup> except in some rare cases. The system had ‘consonantal (Baines 1984 p. 200) skeletons.’

Today, Egyptologists can only guess the vowels, leading to a variety of spellings for the same name. For example, Akhenaten has also been spelt as Ikhnaton (Giles 1970). A symbol could represent only one consonant (uniconsonantal), two consonants (biconsonantal), or three consonants (triconsonantal). Some single symbols represented an entire word and are called ‘logograms’. An example of a logogram is the ‘ankh’ symbol for life (spelled as “nh” by Baines (1984 p.200). The Ankh, the cross forms with a loop at the top, which has now become a widely used symbol of Afrocentricity, (Clarke 1998). It was the symbol of life and the breath of life and for the vital properties of both air and water.

A royal name was enclosed in a cartouche.<sup>35</sup> Fig 2.5 is an example of a royal cartouche belonging to Amenemhat I (1991 to 1962 BC), the first pharaoh of the 12th dynasty.<sup>36</sup> In this Cartouche, the feather stands for, “y”, which stands for the vowel “a”, one of the few instances when a symbol represented a vowel. The glyph that looks like a comb is a biconsonantal representing “mn”, while the eagle represents “M”. The front part of a lion represents the consonant “h” and the dome shaped glyph for bread represents the consonant “t”. Thus the name Amenemhat is spelled and the cartouche identifies it as a royal name. Baines (1984, p.200 – 201) gives a comprehensive collection of glyphs to guide in the transliteration of Egyptian text.

The writing system of the Egyptians had glyphs to represent numerals. These glyphs were seven symbols. A process of repetition could write any number. According to on-line information<sup>37</sup> the symbol representing the larger number was placed in front of the one for the smaller one. Number one was represented by a single stroke. A repetition of the stroke represented two, three or four, depending on the number of repetitions. Ten was represented by an inverted ‘U’ shape. A coil represented number ‘one hundred’.

A lotus plant represented 1,000 and a finger represented 10,000. A tadpole or frog represented 100,000. Lastly, the number 1,000,000 was represented by the figure of a man with his arms raised above the head.

The numerals are shown in Table 2.7, with a sample of number '2006' in Egyptian hieroglyphics. The system had conventions for indicating fractions, but the details are beyond the scope of this Thesis. The Egyptians were able to do complex calculations using hieroglyphic numerals. Millard (1981, p. 52) shows sums "involving triangles". Further, Cook (1997) states that the Roman system had an earlier symbol for numeral 4 that had four strokes<sup>38</sup> probably carried over from Egyptian. From the foregoing, the importance of the hieroglyphic script has been established.

## Architecture

Besides the variety of art objects, Egyptians also made many architectural wonders such as the pyramids of Giza. The architecture of Egypt can be categorised into mastabas, pyramids, stelae, palaces and workers' houses. The last two have not been widely covered by Egyptologists and will therefore be mentioned very briefly.

### 1 Mastabas

Mastabas were the precursors of pyramids as tombs for the pharaoh. They were a square "[rectangular] mound faced with brick or stone, above the burial chamber which was deep underground..." (Janson 1997, p. 64). A shaft linked the tomb to the mastaba. A chapel was included in the mastaba "for offerings to the Ka [soul of the departed]" and another small chamber contained a statue of the departed. Initially, mastabas were made of mud-brick, "later faced with cut stone" (Adams 1999). A stela which is shown in Fig 2.8 was placed on the mastaba to identify the deceased.

### 2 Pyramids

By the third dynasty mastabas had evolved into step pyramids to serve as pharaonic tombs. Janson (1997, p. 64) suggests that the step pyramid of third dynasty King Djoser was "built over a traditional mastaba" and was probably the first one.<sup>39</sup> Eventually around the fourth dynasty, step pyramids developed into true pyramids with a number of buildings around them (Millard 1981 p.51). Djoser's architect, Imhotep, is said to have built a Mastaba over another, six in total, in decreasing size (Adams 1999, p. 86). The result was the step pyramid, which Adams says, was "faced with limestone", is now almost totally eroded. The site of the step pyramid became a cult centre for the worship of both Djoser and Imhotep who were deified after death (Adams 1999).

The true pyramid evolved from Imhotep's design with four triangular sides, faced with limestone and slanting from a square foundation to the top of each triangle (Adams 1999). The apexes of these four triangles met high up, at the centre of the square foundation. The Egyptians had already developed proficient surveying skill to make the four corners of the pyramid coincide with the compass four points. From then on, pyramids took on their true pyramid form (Baines 1984). The top of the Pyramid had a capstone that reflected the sun's rays to signify the pharaoh's oneness with the solar deity.<sup>40</sup> Adams (1999) states that about eighty pyramids are known with the pyramid of Khufu at Giza (c. 2500 BC) being the largest of them all at 146m high and over twice the height of Djoser's. On-line information<sup>41</sup> states that there are over one hundred pyramids in Egypt.<sup>42</sup> In the eighteenth dynasty, pyramids gave way to rock tombs.

### 3 Rock tombs

The New Kingdom kings stopped building pyramids. Instead, they were buried at Thebes, in the Valley of Kings, in rock cut tombs. Baines (1984) speculates that Amenhotep I (whom Petrie calls Amenophis I) was the first pharaoh to have a tomb built in this new rock-cut style, though he admits that its location is not known. By the time of Baines writing (1984), sixty-two rock cut tombs had been discovered. Tutankhamen's tomb was the sixty-second. Unlike the Pyramid design, where the temple and the tomb were attached, Baines states that in the new design, they were separated. Giles (1970, p. 81) makes reference of "cutting rock tombs" dating to year 30 and 36 of Amenhotep III for the burial of kings. This was Akhenaten's father.

In the Rock tombs, treasure was buried with the King, as was the custom in the pyramids. Evidence of this custom was found with the discovery of the undisturbed rock tomb of Tutankhamen, in 1922 By Howard Carter (Baines 1984). The rock-cut tombs consisted "of a long-inclined rock-cut corridor with one or more halls (sometimes pillared), terminating in the burial chamber" (Baines1984, p. 100). In the beginning of rock tomb construction, the corridor turned to the right or left often at a right angle. By the end of the 18th dynasty the corridor was straight with paintings of religious significance (Baines1984).

### 4 Obelisks

These are tall, four-sided shafts of stone, inscribed with text, usually tapered and rising to a pointed pyramidal top, which Baines (1984) calls a 'paramidion'. Numerous examples of obelisks survive today in Axum in Ethiopia. Petrie (1924) reports Thothmes I and Thothmes III (Petrie's Tahutmes) to have put up some Obelisks. The ones by Thothmes III were dedicated to the god Amun as Petrie gathered from this text in a tomb. Petrie mentions two obelisks at Deir el Bahri, which were about 185 feet high.

### 5 Stelae

Baines (1984, p. 62) describes stelae<sup>43</sup> as gravestones and shows an example of one royal stela from the first dynasty, round topped, bearing only the name of the king. A stela was usually symmetrical<sup>44</sup> and according to Baines, identified the deceased "by name and titles..." The inscriptions represented the deceased as being in the company of gods, which is what Egyptians wished for their Ka (soul). In the middle kingdom, stelae were either round topped or rectangular. In the New Kingdom the more elaborate ones had both hieroglyphic text and illustrations of Osiris in their main scenes (Baines 1984).

The precincts of Akhenaten's city called "Akhetaten were marked by a chain of stelae surrounding the area on both sides of the river" (Baines 1984, p123).

From the above, it is clear that kings of the eighteenth dynasty departed from building pyramids and developed a rock cutting technique for their tombs. This method developed into a highly polished art.

### 6 Workers Houses

Egyptian workers lived in very ordinary houses made of mud bricks (Millard 1981). The earliest houses known according to Millard were round huts.

The early round huts of the Egyptians look like Zulu huts shown in the 'Cultural Atlas of Africa'. On the other hand, the rectangular Egyptian brick house resembles the Dogon houses shown online.<sup>45</sup> The Zulu huts and Dogon house.

### **Accompanying Art installations 7 Sculpture in the round.**

The main forms of sculpture in the round covered in this section are sphinxes or rams, ushabtis, model humans in action and colossi. Sphinxes are mythical (half lion-half human) sculptures. Ushabtis are model servants that were included in a tomb to serve the departed Pharaoh. Colossi (sing, colossus) are larger than life sculptures of Pharaohs, sometimes depicted with their wives. An example is the statue of Menkaure and his wife (Adams 1999, p. 90).

Other sculpture examples are the ram sculptures that lined Amun temples, images of Anubis the Jackal and human representations of Pharaohs, nobles, priests, scribes and favoured officials. Figurines that represent ordinary folk forming complete scenes were also made for inclusion in the tombs. Almost all available sculpture from ancient Egypt was "originally created for tombs or temples Adams (1999, p. 88)."

All forms of sculptures, including reliefs followed the Canon of Proportions described above (2.1.2.1). Seated pharaohs were depicted in an erect position described by Adams as a "regal posture...right fist clenched and his left hand lying flat on his knee." The description is of Khafre's statue (Adams 1999, p. 89) c.2500 BC. Menkaure whose pyramid is at Giza has a good example of a standing statue. In the standing statue, Menkaure is depicted with his wife Khamerenebty (Adams 1999, p. 90). Menkaure is looking straight ahead, hands straight down with clenched fists. His left leg is a step forward. By contrast, his wife's hands are bent, one arm around him, the other bent at right angle and resting on his upper arm. Her left leg is also a step forward but not as far forward as her husband's. According to Adams (1999, p. 90) the statues were placed in their temples "to embody the ka [soul] of the royal personages they depicted and to receive food and drink brought by worshippers."

Another example of sculpture in the round is the statue of Rahotep and his wife Nofret (Adams 1999, p. 91). The porous limestone, c. 2610 BC, has preserved the original paint, which shows the Egyptian convention of brown paint for men, while women were painted yellow. The convention of painting women a yellow colour has led some skeptics to argue that Nefertiti was a white woman. The well-known bust of Nefertiti, Akhenaten's queen, is in the Berlin Museum (Adams 1999).

Other sculptures in the round worth mentioning are masks that were placed on the mummy. An example is Tutankhamen's solid gold mask (Adams 1999, p. 103) "inlaid with blue glass." Very precious objects such as furniture, usually belonging to the Pharaoh or noble person were inlaid with a plaster, glass, gold or precious stones. Baines (1984, p. 56) explains that, in the art of the new kingdom, glass and coloured stones were used for inlaying, chiefly on small objects, and to supply details in elaborate reliefs, a method of the Amarna period (Baines 1984, p.56).

Royal coffins were sculpted into a human form. In the case of Tutankhamen, there were three coffins, one inside the other, with the outermost holding the first two. While the two outer coffins were made of “gilded wood” the one inside was made of pure gold. Akhenaten’s reign is the source of sculptures and reliefs of the pharaoh in a style known as ‘the

### **8. Amarnan style’**

In this style, the sculptures of Akhenaten broke with tradition to show elongated features. Adams (1999, p. 101) calls it breaking with “artistic convention.” An example of non-royal sculpture is that of the seated scribe, in a cross-legged pose with a papyrus on his lap (Adams 1999, p. 92).

### **9 Reliefs**

Reliefs were either raised or intaglio and incised on limestone, walls, pillars, obelisks and commemorative palettes. In a tomb relief attributed to the end of the 18th dynasty (Baines 1984, p. 148-149) the overseer of the craftsmen, Amenemone, with his wife and sons are shown offering flowers and papyrus to Sekhmet, a lion headed god.

During the reign of Akhenaten, numerous limestone reliefs were cut to portray the royal family worshipping or offering to the rising sun. Adams (1999, p.101) attributes this representation of Akhenaten in prayer, as due to his wanting to be seen as a “priest of Aten.” His elongated features are also reflected in his family on limestone reliefs, which always feature the sun and its rays reaching out to them. Often the rays end in a hand that holds the ankh, symbol of life (Clarke 1998). In this Amarnan style referred to in the section on sculpture above, Adams states that the “king and queen are rendered with a naturalism unprecedented for Egyptian royals”. The king and his queen are portrayed playing with their children, eating or having a ride in a chariot. In one relief, Akhenaten is kissing one daughter, while Nefertiti holds two others who are animated in “childlike character” (Adams 1999, p. 102). The intimacy in this scene is a sharp contrast to previous depictions of royal couples.

Relief art achieves its contrast when light highlights or causes shadows on parts of the design. Raised relief was most suited indoors while sunken relief worked better in the open where it was accentuated by the rays of the sun. Most reliefs were not painted. Examples of a combination of relief and painting however exist. Baines (1984, p. 205) shows a relief of Mereruka’s wife playing for him a harp. The painting is in the Egyptian convention of the man being in a darker shade of colour - brown, and the woman in a lighter shade - yellow. A picture of one of Akhenaten’s sculptures (Adams 1999, p. 101) shows a cartouche with his name just above his belly button. Not all reliefs were inscribed on stone. The tomb of Tutankhamen revealed reliefs that were embossed on gold foil.

### **10 Painting**

Painting is the use of lines and texture through the application of colour. The basis of colour is pigment, a word whose origin is “Latin pingere, meaning ‘to paint’ (Adams 1999, p. 27). Adams groups pigment powders into two main categories, organic from “plant and animal matter” or inorganic from “minerals and semiprecious stones.” A liquid binder also called a vehicle holds them together. Cave artists used “animal fats and vegetable juices,” blood or even

plain water as a binding medium (Adams 1999). The surface that holds the paint is called a support which could be paper, canvas, wood and in the majority of cases in Egypt, walls.

Like all forms of Egyptian art, painting also followed the canon of proportions discussed above. Adams (1999, p. 99) described most Egyptian paintings as “frescoes, painted using the fresco secco, or dry fresco technique.” In this technique the plaster wall was dry when the pigment that had been mixed in water was applied, leading to flaking. The other fresco technique is “buon fresco” or true fresco, where the paint was applied to a wet plaster thereby causing a strong bond as the paint and plaster dried together. A good example of fresco secco is the fragment of the painting of Nebamun hunting birds (Adams 1999, p. 99), c. 1400 BC. One break with convention, also noted by Adams, is the painting of Nebamun’s wife a brown shade just like her husband instead of the conventional lighter skin of Egyptian women in art.

**Table 1: Comparison of Egypt and Kikuyu Dress**

Pre-eighteenth dynasty Pharaonic attire	Wananga’s wife’s attire	Eighteenth Dynasty soldier	Queen of Punt’s soldiers attire	The Mwengū from Ethnography
 <p style="text-align: center;"><u>a</u></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><u>b</u></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><u>c</u></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><u>d</u></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><u>e</u></p>

Painting was also done on papyrus with flat colours in what would be termed today ‘spot colours,’ and not continuous tone. However, Adams (1999, p. 100) points out to the fact that the fish in Nebamun's painting have been shaded to create a three-dimensional effect while the birds “turn more freely in space than the human figures.” This researcher also noticed that cattle on a papyrus painting had been shaded a lighter brown on the under belly for the same reason. People however were always rendered with flat colours. Painting was applied to sculpture as well. Egyptian art used the element of repetition to create rhythm. This is also true of painting, where plant and geometric motifs were used in such a manner. Much of what is known about ordinary Egyptian life is from reliefs and paintings in the tombs of the royals (Baines 1984). Egyptian civilization has recorded an invaluable history that will give art historians a pastime for many years to come.

### 11 Dress in ancient Egypt

Egyptian men commonly wore a knee-length skirt with a knot on the waist and a bottom line that was apparently straight. All males, royal and non-royal in the old Kingdom often did not have upper garments. Ions described the dress worn by pharaohs “throughout historic times”

as a “kilt and tail” with priests preferring the archaic style of a leopard’s skin. Goddesses on the other hand were depicted wearing “ankle-length dresses” (Ions 1973, p. 17).

Women wore a full dress with straps starting under the breast to the shoulders. This caused the breast to be depicted sometimes sticking on the right or left of the strap, depending on the direction she was facing. (Barocas 1973). The soldier from punt shown in Fig 2.11 is wearing a 'wrap around' with a long triangle sticking out (Petrie 1924).

From the foregoing, painting is the use of lines and texture through the application of coloured pigment. Egyptian painting also followed the canon of proportions in a technique described by Adams as “fresco.” Painting was done on walls as well as on papyrus in a flat colour technique. Birds, animals and fish were however shaded to create a three-dimensional effect. Adams also noted that, birds were drawn with more freedom of movement than was possible with humans. Painting was applied to sculpture as well and the same colour coding applied – Males in a darker shade than women who were often yellow.

## 12 The Hebsed Festival

Sometimes called a jubilee by Egyptologists the Hebsed festival was celebrated every thirty years. A similarity is apparent between the Egyptian Hebsed and the Kikuyu Ituika.

Petrie (1924) believed that the ceremony was cyclical with fixed dates that were determined by the observation of the star called Sirius (Alpha Canis Majoris’). Also called the Dog Star, it was the brightest in the sky and rose at about the time of the festivals. In a King’s long reign, the festival may have been celebrated twice but only once in a reign spanning slightly over thirty years. Petrie (1924) gives the reign of Tutankhamen as an example. Tutankhamen reigned for only nine years, yet it is recorded that a feast of thirty years took place in his reign. The star reappears exactly 365.25 days after the last appearance. Egyptian tradition expected the Nile flood to start around “19 July of the Julian calendar” which was about the time when star Sirius was seen for the first time in a year, just before sunrise. These two events - the sighting and the flooding marked the beginning “New Year’s Day” (Save- Soderbergh 1987, p. 43). The Egyptians used the star to regulate their calendar. They had discovered that an extra four days needed to be added to their 360 days that resulted from a 12-month year with 30 days per month<sup>47</sup>. The Egyptian lunar calendar caused religious events to fall on different months after a number of years.

In the 18th year of Pepy I; the 2nd year of Mentuhotep II; the 16th year of Hatshepsut; the 33rd year of Thothmes III and the 2nd year of Merenptah, the festivals were celebrated with astronomical accuracy as recorded on the monuments (Petrie 1924), which implies a departure from reliance on the lunar calendar.

It is assumed that feasting, dance and music followed this festival. Giles (1970) states that the depiction of a King in a bull’s tail was evidence of a Hebsed. Petrie further attributes the origin of this feast to the reign of King Menes at the beginning of dynastic rule in 3118 BC (Millard 1981). Collier (1970) conjectured that the festival was a ritual re- enactment of the death of a senile king who was replaced by his son. It appears to this researcher that the Hebsed and the Ituika of the Gikūyū served the same purpose - to signify the handing over of power to a new generation. The Kikuyu ceremony when translated into English means ‘becoming’, or ‘being’.

Hebsed has been translated on the Internet as ‘the appearing.<sup>48</sup>’ Petrie was so certain of the Hebsed’s regularity to the point of predicting that reference to the festivals of Sety I and Ramesses II will one day be found in an inscription somewhere.

### 13 The Myth of Isis and Osiris

When Osiris, son of Geb was born, a voice came from the temple to announce that a king was “entering into light.” Osiris had a sister with whom he fell in love with while still in the womb. When Osiris and Isis were mature, they married and Osiris succeeded to the throne. Osiris was a good King who did not rule by force but by tact. He decided to go out to teach good ways to the world. He went out with musicians and minor gods, leaving Isis in charge of the throne, Isis was assisted by Thoth to govern but her brother Set coveted the throne and her as well.

Set Killed Osiris and put his body in a coffin, then set it to sail. Isis heard about it and went out to search for her husband all the way to Byblos. There, she found that the King’s wife had just given birth to a son. Isis befriended her maids. Apparently, at one time, as Isis was attempting to make the child immortal, her singing caused the baby’s death. Isis then revealed her identity as a goddess, and the king gave her the pillar with her husband’s coffin. Isis immediately cut the tree to expose the coffin. The king provided Isis with a ship for the return trip to Egypt with the coffin.

When Isis touched Egyptian soil, she hid in the Nile delta from the evil eye of Set. The soul called Ka or Ba depended on the proper preservation of a human body. Osiris however now belonged to world of the dead. Osiris symbolized the triumph of good and bad creatures on earth and was venerated as god of agriculture.

Eventually, with Osiris out of the way, Isis married her brother Horus and helped him to continue civilising the world “by instituting marriage and teaching women the domestic arts of grinding corn, spinning flax and weaving.” Every ten days, Isis visited her husband’s funeral mound to pour libation and maintain the tomb, crossing the river on a sacred bargue. Isis is often portrayed with outstretched wings.

### 14 Akhenaten

In the previous section, an overview of life and art of dynastic Egypt was discussed. This laid a foundation for pharaoh Akhenaten who inspired this study due to the coincidences stated in Chapter One. More details of this Pharaoh are reviewed in this section.

Akhenaten was the ninth Pharaoh in the eighteenth dynasty. This dynasty was started by Akhenaten’s ancestor, Ahmosis in 1559 BC (Collier 1970). Negroid features are identifiable in a sculpture of Akhenaten in Chapter Four. The Kings of the eighteenth dynasty who reigned before Akhenaten are listed as follows (Collier 1970, p. 252):

1. Amosis (1559 – 1531).
2. Amenhotep I (1534 – 1504).
3. Thothmes I (1514 – 1502)
4. Thothmes II (1504 – 1489). Hatshepsut is said to have started her reign in this, her husband’s reign.

5. Thothmes III (1590 – 1496). Hatshepsut continued to rule on behalf this son of her husband, Thothmes I until her death. She made the often-quoted trip to Punt and built a temple at Deir el Bahri.
6. Amenhotep II (1444 – 1412).
7. Thothmes IV (1414 – 1412).
8. Amenhotep III (1405 – 1367). His mother was Mutemwiya (Giles 1970)
9. Amenhotep IV (1378 – 1362). He later changed his name to Akhenaten and ruled in a co-regency with Smenkhare.

The list above indicates that Akhenaten was the ninth pharaoh in the eighteenth dynasty. 51 The original name given to Akhenaten was Amenhotep IV. A Pharaoh had several titles, the first one being a pre-nomen; a son of Ra title, a Horus title; a two ladies title; a golden Horus title and a coronation title (Collier 1970). Akhenaten's coronation name was Neferkheperure (Collier) and his reign according to Giles (1970) lasted for about seventeen years. Giles gives Akhenaten's prenomen as Neferkheperure Uanre. Akhenaten's father was Amenhotep III, who is said by Giles to have named his "royal barge Tehen Aton (the Aton gleams)". In Kikuyu, the word 'henia' means shine. Akhenaten has been translated by Adams (1999, p.101) to mean "servant of Aten." Akhenaten's Grandmother, mother of his father, Amenhotep III was called Mutemwaya, (Collier, p.51) a name that is very close to the word Mütumiya for woman in Kikuyu. In the book 'Ikhnaton'<sup>52</sup> the name is spelled as "Mutemwiya" (Giles 1970, p. 65).

Akhenaten was crowned king at about the age of twenty-six (Collier 1970). His reign presided over a period that is commonly known as the Amarna period, and is also acknowledged as the one of the most peaceful period in the dynasty. Amani means peace in Kiswahili and it can be noted that Amenhotep is a compound word – Amun and Hotep, indicating allegiance to the god Amun. Collier (1970) implies that the last major war campaign before Akhenaten's reign was during the reign of his grandfather, Thothmes IV when a revolt in Kush was crushed and many captives taken to Thebes. This was about half a century before the reign of Akhenaten.

Every Pharaoh proclaimed a god to whom he paid allegiance. The prefix or Suffix of Pharaoh's name indicated his official God. Thothmes (Akhenaten's Grandfather) subscribed to Thoth. Amenhotep III, (Akhenaten's father) subscribed to Amun as Akhenaten did at the point of taking over the leadership. He later paid allegiance to Aten and proclaimed him the only god. Akhenaten is therefore credited with starting monotheism and making great efforts to enforce it. This brought him into conflict with the priests of Amun, which led him to create a new capital to escape their influence (Adams 1999). Akhenaten's official god was manifested in the rising sun as Aten-Ra. In his religious fervour, Akhenaten presided over a peaceful reign, concentrating more on matters of religion (Giles 1970). The other pharaohs had allowed polytheism. Like all pharaohs, Akhenaten was also divine. "Akhenaten's henchmen refer to their king as 'the god who made them', and the vizier Rekh-mi-re declares that Thutmosis [Thothmes] III was 'a god [through] whose guidance men live, the father and mother of mankind, unique, peerless" (Aldred 1968 p.27).

An early mention of Aten is placed in the reign of Hatshepsut from text translated from her temple at Deir el Bahri. "Hail to thee sovereign of Ta Meri (Egypt) female Re [Ra] who shines like the Aton (Giles 1970, p. 115)." Hatshepsut was Akhenaten's great-grandmother. Akhenaten's own father had named his boat "Teheh Aton" (Giles 1970, p. 32). Akhenaten may

have popularised Aten worship but he did not invent it. Mohammed Osman (2006)<sup>53</sup>, a modern Egyptologist, believes that Akhenaten was Moses.

Upon establishing Akhenaten's only god, Akhenaten supposedly sent workmen to hack way at the names of other pharaohs and their Gods including his own father's name which was prefixed with Amun (Giles 1970). According to Giles, Akhenaten composed two hymns to Aten, which are among the outstanding feats of his reign. Only Aten would be worshipped.

Dethroning Amun as the national god, rendered Amun's priests jobless and friction between the Pharaoh and the powerful priesthood of Amun was inevitable. Akhenaten moved his capital from Thebes to an uninhabited place where he built another city – Akhetaten, dedicated to Aten and translated as “Brightness of Aton” (Giles 1970, p. 16). The location of this city is today's site of ‘Tel el Amarna,’ where the clay tablets in cuneiform text called the ‘Amarna letters<sup>54</sup> were found. These letters record communication between the Egyptian state and its vassals in Palestine. One of the Amarna tablets had Akhenaten's prenomen besides those of his father and the words “the book of the Sycamore and the Olive” (Giles 1970, p. 68). Perhaps the “Sycamore” was in reference to Akhenaten's father and the “Olive” to Akhenaten's mother, since Giles attributes the find to the reign of Amenhotep III, besides the fact that queen Tiy, Akhenaten's mother, is also mentioned.

By the ninth year, Akhenaten had six daughters with his wife, Nefertiti (Giles 1970). Many of depictions show Akhenaten surrounded by women. Jimmy Dunn (2005) however finds that the women around Akhenaten are portrayed usually in “a cult- ritual or state ceremony” carried out by Akhenaten in honour of the sun god. Regarding this closeness with women, Dunn (2006) notes that Nefertiti was not the only queen to be treated well. Each of the royal women had her own sanctuary, which was frequently called a sunshade temple.” According to one early Egyptologist, “Since the 12th Dynasty, female power in succession matters had increased perhaps due to a time when all males of a family had perished (Collier p. 40)<sup>56</sup>”. Akhenaten was depicted on reliefs accompanied by the women of his household - his wife Nefertiti and their six daughters. Aldred, (1968, p.138) wondered why Akhenaten's daughters were always associated with their mother in texts. In the picture where Akhenaten and Nefertiti are riding a chariot, two of the people running ahead of the horses are women. Giles F. J. (1970) also supports the view that Akhenaten, Smenkhare and Tutankhamen were brothers, sons of Amenhotep III and queen Tiy. This researcher has not found evidence to support ‘a failing health’ proposition for Akhenaten.

The city of Akhetaten was eventually suddenly abandoned in Akhenaten's seventeenth year (1970, p. 190-191) and the Pharaoh disappeared. Collier implies that the disappearance was with “startling suddenness”. The end of Akhenaten's reign culminated in the rise to power of young Tutankhamen, a boy of about nine years old (1970). While Collier suggests that the city of Akhetaten was abandoned suddenly, Giles (1970, p.150) suggests that the departure was not hurried because; “...Archaeologists have found that the population made preparations for their departure and closed up their houses, as though they were uncertain whether they might not be coming back one day.”

Young Tutankhaton, the boy who took the throne upon the disappearance of both Akhenaten and Smenkhare, changed his name to Tutankamen (Giles 1970) as an indication that he had switched his allegiance from Aten to Amun. From hieroglyphic texts interpreted by Giles

(1970, p. 208-209), the disappearance of Akhenaten and his co-regent Smenkhare caused a breakdown of law and order.

The recent discovery of a new tomb KV 63, in the Valley of Kings may shed light or add to the controversy on the whereabouts of Akhenaten's tomb (reported in the online edition of the *Archaeologist* (2006). This, according to the on-line publication is the only tomb to be found there since Howard Carter discovered Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922. Ertman, a University of Akron archaeologist maintains that KV-63's design points to the 18th Dynasty. He has noted that the tomb is also similar to two other tombs of the period, KV-46 and KV-55. The latter is believed by some scholars to belong to Smenkhare. Ertman like Aldred maintains that KV-55 is Akhenaten's (*Archaeologist*, 2006). Giles was aware of Aldred's supposition when he said that that such a deduction (that KV – 55 belongs to Akhenaten) is 'an excursion into fantasy [because Aldred does not explain how the body found its way to Thebes and into] ...a miserable uninscribed little tomb... (Giles1970, p. 106).

KV-46 was the tomb of Yuya and Tjuyu, parents of Queen Tiye. This Queen was the wife of Amenhotep III and the mother of Akhenaten. *Archaeology* (2006) reports that seals from KV-63 bear an image of "the jackal and nine captives, the sign of the necropolis priests." These symbols were, according to Collier (1970, p.209) also found in the tomb of Tutankhamen.

As explained in "Archaeology," the contents of the coffins in KV 63 had not been established at the time of writing due to the painstaking job in progress. They however have "yellow-faced" images curved on them, which in Egyptian convention depicted females, the yellow skin implying "no sun exposure." This colour for depicting females is explained in the section on painting. Males were depicted with reddish skin to mean 'with sun exposure' (*Archaeology*, 2006). Other writers have called this colour brown.

## 15 Smenkhare

As stated in the previous section, Pharaoh Akhenaten and Smenkhare are supposed by many Egyptologists to have been co-regents in the 18th dynasty, during the Amarna period.

More is however known about Akhenaten than Smenkhare. The supposed tomb of Smenkhare was found with "the necropolis seal of the jackal [Anubis] and nine captive" (Collier 1970, p. 209). Anubis as explained in the section on gods above was the god of embalming. What Smenkhare had to do with Anubis is unclear from Collier's description. Baines (1984, p. 140-141) shows that all known royal tombs and pyramids without exception are on the west side of the Nile. Ions (1973, p. 128) says that the West is where the Egyptians interred the dead. West was also associated with the setting sun, and the term 'westerners' was a synonym for the dead. It has been explained above that reliefs indicate Akhenaten was a priest of Aten therefore his area of priesthood would have been the East. With Smenkhare as the priest of the west, the co-regency made political sense.

Some Egyptologists insist that Smenkhare and Tutankhamen were Akhenaten's sons while Giles (1970, p.94) supports the view that Akhenaten, Smenkhare and Tutankhamen were brothers. All Egyptologists referenced so far seem to agree that Smenkhare and Tutankhamen were Akhenaten's sons in law, having married his daughters.

Gathigira (1966, p. 1-2) suggests that the tenth daughter of Gīkūyū was excluded as a leader of a clan because she had a child through an incestuous relationship, causing her to remain in her father's homestead. Gathigira (1933) does not state who the father of the incestuously conceived child was. This information by Gathigira advances the theory that incestuous relationships were likely among the Kikuyu in ancient times. Egyptologist may however have overplayed the 'incest' in Egypt. A text from the tomb of Maya (on-line, 2006) in Tel el Amarna, the location of Akhenaten's city, shows that Egyptologists may be taking royal incest literally. An official wrote, "I was a poor man...but the Ruler built me up...he fed me ... when I had no property. He made me acquire people in numbers, and my brothers and sisters became numerous." This official shows that the term sister or brother cannot be taken literally but was often used in the current African context of kin by blood or adoption. It was customary for the Pharaoh to reward his officials with both material things and captives, perhaps in the same way that Shaka rewarded his generals with wives from his seraglio. In the Rule of fear (Decker 1964, p. 67), one of the reasons why Dingane plotted to kill Shaka was because he had held many women in the "seraglio" and denied his Indunas to marry.

At this stage Dingane described the regime he envisaged in place of Shaka's tyrannical rule: the traditions of the forefathers, ... would be restored and respected as they were in the days of Senzangakhona - the Rightful Doer. All men would be free - free to marry and beget children, ... the thousands of concubines kept in bondage by Shaka - the pick of Zulu womanhood - would be released from the seraglios in order to become the wives of the indunas and elders of the land.

In the same book (p. 27), Shaka's capital, Bulawayo is said to have had "one hundred huts for Shakas concubines". Clearly, these concubines were for rewarding his henchmen. Smenkhare and Tutankhamen may have been allowed to marry any of the 'sisters' in the harem. Maya having thus been rewarded could claim that his "brothers and sisters became numerous."

The Nine daughters of Mūmbi in the Kikuyu story of origin may not be biological daughters of Gīkūyū either. It was shown above that the seal found in the tomb that is supposedly Smenkhare's (KV-55) had the seal of the jackal (symbol of Anubis also called Amentiu) and nine captives. What is important about Smenkhare is his relationship with Akhenaten and the coincidences that have so far been associated with the two- Tene and Kare as words that mean long ago; Tene in Kikuyu and Kare in Ki- Meru (not to be left out is 'kale', the Kiswahili derivative with the same meaning). According to Muriuki in 'Kenya before 1900' (Ogot ed. 1970, p. 10) a type of pottery now called 'Kwale type pottery' was discovered at Gatung'ang'a. The two hundred and thirty shards of pottery found at Gatung'ang'a are said to have been similar to kwale ware. Posnansky (Ogot, ed., 1974, p. 88), states that Bantu expansion is associated with Iron Age cultivators who "made and used distinctive styles of pottery, known...as 'dimple-based', 'Kwale'. The significance of this information is that this study associates Gatung'ang'a pottery with the Kikuyu and therefore with Kwale. Muriuki (Ogot, ed. 1970, p. 110) states that the same type of pottery was reported from, "Gatare forest (Nyandarua Ranges), Karen Nairobi, Kyambondo and Kyanga in Machakos, Chyulu hills, Kantana in Laikipia ...." and Carbon dated to between the 12th to 14th century AD. Sirianen, the discoverer of the pottery argued that "The population that made the pottery found at Gatung'ang'a, ... and sites mentioned above was probably, ethnically the same as that making the Kwale ware." Giles (1970) reports that when Horemhab, the last king of the eighteenth dynasty prepared a king list, he omitted

Akhenaten, Smenkhare, Tutankhamen and Aye, putting himself the immediate pharaoh after Akhenaten's father, Amenhotep III.

To show that Smenkhare was not blessed with a child, neither male nor female, Collier (1970, p.188) describes an image where Smenkhare's wife is offering him Mandrake fruits which were apparently identified as 'love-apples', with "aphrodisiac qualities and to produce fecundity in woman!" Collier goes on to describe a text that refers to a "baby princess named Meritaten the – less". From this name, Collier concludes that the aphrodisiac worked but the infant did not survive and no other children were born to the royal couple." The Angare clan of the Kikuyu is called 'Aithe kahuno'. Kahuno is a term associated with a 'still birth.'

In conclusion, Egyptologists are not agreed on whether Smenkhare and Tutankhamen were Akhenaten's sons though it is agreed that they married Akhenaten's daughters. The following section will shed light on African art as a prelude to a review of Kikuyu culture.

### **African Art**

Africa with a square area of twelve million square miles (Willet 1977) has diverse cultures and therefore multiplicity of art forms. African art was 'functional' within the tribe and not outside it (Fagg 1965).

Was the Art of Africa influenced in any way by the outside world? Willet (1977, p.10) states that any direct external influences to African art was limited to the coastal trade centres except "...the Cretan ones in the late second millennium B.C. and those resulting from the Assyrian invasion of Egypt in 666 B.C." Willet (1977, p. 109) however admits that influences of Egypt on African art have been noticed but are hard to prove. He adds that the influence may easily have been the other way round – from black Africa to Egypt. Pre-dynastic art shows "essentially African characteristics." The cave paintings from around Lake Victoria, have motifs of boats similar to the one seen on a pre-dynastic bowl dated 3100 BC (Willet, 1977, p. 110).

Hobley (1922), a colonial District Commissioner agrees with Willet, when he attributes the similarity of the Akamba word for spirits with the Assyrian one as pure chance. Hobley observed that the Assyrian word Edimmu (whose root is immu) is the same as the Kamba for the same concept attributed the similarity to chance. Hobley also noticed similarities of certain Kikuyu and Kamba customs to Egypt and Semitism. He dismissed them as due to 'parallel development.' Frazer (Hobley, 1922, p.9) who wrote the forward however contradicted the writer in the same book. Frazer, regarding the Semitic vestiges in the Kikuyu and Akamba supposed, "...recent investigations in this part of Africa, particularly with regard to the native veins of iron and gold, tend in the opinion of some competent inquiries to show that East Central Africa, including the region of the great lakes, was an extremely ancient seat of a rudimentary civilisation, the seeds of which may have been carried whether by migration or contact of peoples, to remote parts of Europe and Asia.

Fagg (1965, p.p.11-18), sees African art as a "principal criteria for the identification and delimitation of tribes" within black Africa. Nowhere in his work on Tribes and Forms does he see African art as belonging to a wider circle that might include Egypt.

As can be seen from the foregoing, texts on the history of Africa in general have tended to downplay any Egyptian connection. In an effort to de-link black Africans from the North, their territory has been given several tags, among them 'Africa south of the Sahara', 'Black Africa' and 'Sub-Saharan Africa'. The term 'Sub Sahara' is in itself demeaning and was intended to separate Black Africans from the Mediterranean and by extension Europe.

Clarke (1998) notes that trade between Egypt and its southern neighbours flourished with Ivory being the main import. Nubia and Punt are mentioned as the source of that Ivory. Punt has been identified as a territory on the Somali coast. One of the breakaway Somali states has actually adopted the name. Besides the exchange of trade goods, Clarke includes "a variety of cultural material influences." The evidence is apparently on ancient rock paintings, which depict horses and chariots.

Having reviewed the falsification that continues to this day in regard to Egypt's common cultural identity with the rest of Africa, the next sections define the Kikuyu and discuss their art and culture.

### **The Kikuyu**

The above section has indicated that Egypt is already removed from the culture circle of Black Africa. The Kikuyu are a part of Black Africa and by inference, they too have been de-linked by previous writers from Egyptian culture. Hobley is one such writer.

This section defines the Kikuyu within the theoretical framework of the study; their mythical origins; their origins based on scholarly work and their material culture. More emphasis is placed on the material culture because art is an integral part of culture.

The Kikuyu, an agricultural community lives in central Kenya. Kenya which bestrides the Equator, according to Ojany (Ogot, ed. 1980) has a landmass of 569253 km. As an East African state, Kenya shares the waters of Lake Victoria with Uganda and Tanzania. This lake is the source of the White Nile, which is the main tributary of river Nile - the lifeline of ancient and modern Egypt. While a cultural link has been denied as seen in the previous section, Kenya and Egypt are linked geographically. The other major tributary of the Nile, the Blue Nile, has its source in Lake Tana, in the Ethiopian highlands. Historian Prof. Mutu wa Gethoi who was interviewed by this writer, said that his own respondents in earlier researches mentioned Abyssinia (Ethiopia) as a place of origin which is corroborated by respondents of Muriuki (1974), and Kabeca's undated thesis on the Embu.

The Great Rift Valley runs through Kenya into Tanzania, forming one of the most important features of the Region. Some of the important Kenyan prehistoric sites within the Rift Valley are Lake Turkana, Kariandusi, Gamble's cave and Olduvai Gorge (Ogot, ed. 1980). Some rock art was sighted on Mount Elgon and the Turkana areas (Ogot, ed.1980). It is probable that the Rift Valley offered a natural 'highway' for migrating peoples to and from the North.

The earliest known Stone Age tools in the world were discovered in Kenya in 1969 by Richard Leakey at Koobi Fora, east of Lake Turkana (formerly Rudolf) in Kenya. They were dated at 2.61 million years old, using the Potassium Argon method (Ogot, ed. 1980). A National

Geographic study on DNA60 has implied that genetic evidence shows that all of mankind came from East Africa. This firmly establishes East Africa as the cradle of Mankind.

Kenya has 42 communities the majority of whom are classified as Bantus. Two more classifications are Nilotes and Cushites in the west and north east respectively. Of these 42 communities (irrespective of their classifications) it is only the Luo who do not practice circumcision (and the only Nilotes in Kenya not to perform the rite)<sup>61</sup>. The Maasai, Turkana and Kalenjin among others practice the rite. When Father Cagnolo (1933 p.82) recognised the importance of circumcision to the Kikuyu, he made a comparison with the Egyptians but was quick to add that “The Egyptians deemed it to be simply a distinguishing mark of the ‘Retu’ - The Egyptians from other ... peoples”. While downplaying the coincidence, he supplied another clue that will be dealt with in chapter four- that a circumcised girl in Kikuyu is a Mũiretu, which, by inference is a compound word - Mũ and Irete the second morpheme being similar to the Egyptian word retu. Mũ is a suffix to personify first class nouns of things with a spirit (Leakey 1989, p.2). Girls then and not boys were associated with an inclusive term to mean belonging to Egypt or being of an ‘Egyptian kind’. According to Middleton and Kershaw (1965 p. 32), Boys were called Muma (a word that signified ‘those who had come out’) upon circumcision and thereafter, ‘anake.’ As is apparent, it is a compound word that can be broken down to the following morphs: Ana –children, Ake- belonging to him/ her. Perhaps ana is an archaic form of the current ciana – plural for children.

As stated in Chapter One in the definition section, the language is Gĩkũyũ, but as Muriuki (1974, p.25) rightly observed, the anglicised form of Kikuyu for the language and people has “gained wide currency in modern usage.” Kikuyu will be in reference to the people but Gĩkũyũ will be used to refer to the language or the mythical father of the tribe.

A brief definition of the Kikuyu (the tribe), Gĩkũyũ (the language and name of a patriarch ancestor) have been given in Chapter One. It was also stated that the, Ndia, Embu, Mbeere, Gichugu and the Tharaka, Chuka and Ameru sub tribes will be assumed to be Kikuyu and to have subscribed to a Kikuyu state in the distant past. Mutu wa Gethoi (2018), a cultural historian, agrees with the proposition that the above are Kikuyu. He however believes that only the Ndia, Chuka and Gichugu may be included with absolute certainty, the rest having developed an identity that may cause them to resist association with the Kikuyu. One reason for this resistance was the choice of the Kikuyu dialect by missionaries and administrators as the ‘standard’ form of Kikuyu to communicate state and biblical matters to all Mount Kenya peoples. For purposes of clarity, the Ameru will be frequently referred to as a distinct subgroup of the Kikuyu due to the importance that this study has placed on their version of the migration from a mythical place called Mbwaa. Their account is more believable from a historical point of view than the creation story of ‘Gĩkũyũ and Mũmbi’ narrated within the Kikuyu ‘tribe’.

The Ki-meru language (of the Ameru) in particular is very different from Kikuyu when compared when compared to Embu for instance.

Middleton and Kershaw (1965), including Leakey (1977) differentiate between Kikuyu sub-tribes<sup>63</sup> and Kikuyu proper – those from Murang’a, Kiambu and Nyeri. They seem to be all connected “in physical, character culture and language... Their social organization is similar...” to that of the Kikuyu (Middleton and Kershaw 1965, p. 11). Indeed, where Middleton is not sure about the nature of one rite or the other regarding the sub- tribes, whom he has labeled

“northern tribes”, he assumes what is known about the Kikuyu to be true for all of them. He therefore highlights the differences.

The Kikuyu were neighbours of the Maasai and had some practices in common such as the war regiments. The Kikuyu regiments were divided into two; a right hand Tatane called in Maasai “Tatene” and a left hand - Gitienye, called in Maasai Kedianye (Muriuki G, 1974). Mwaniki Kabeca on the other hand stated that Tigania were known to the chuka and a few other neighbours “either wholly or in part as ‘kiriene’ or ‘kiri ene’ (Kabeca nd. p.121).

### **Kikuyu Seasons and the Lunar Year**

The life of a Kikuyu tribesperson was regulated by traditional religion which required the performance of many rituals if one was to avoid the effects of thahu due unclean act or omissions (Leakey 1977). The word “thahu” is similar to the Polynesian word ‘taboo’, which has been borrowed by the English language (Hobley 1922, p. 9).

One of the traditional regulations, regarded how many days a Kikuyu could continue on the same duty. The Kikuyu did not perform the same duty for more than six days. On the seventh day one had to take a break. The seventh day of the week is called kiumia, because a person had to ‘come out’ from the duty that had continued for six days (Leakey 1977, p. 23). The word kiumia is also used to refer to ‘a week’ and it is not clear if this meaning was imposed by the missionaries, or it was a vestige of a time when a seven-day week with the last day being a Sabbath was known to the Kikuyu. Number seven is called mūgwanja which translates to ‘drop outside.’ This further reinforces the concept of taking a break from work.

The Kikuyu had a lunar year, with twelve months. The twelve months were related to seasons; the weather conditions observed and the plants that grew in a particular season. Each one of the months had a name. Below is Cagnolo’s (1933) list of Kikuyu months, twelve in all, with paraphrased explanations from the same source.

1. January – Mūgaa 2. February – Mūratho 3. March – Kīhu 4. April – Mūratho 5. May – Mūgiranjara 6. June – Gathathanwa 7. July – Gathano 8. August – Mworianyoni 9. September – Mūgaa 10. October – Kīhu 11. November – Kanyuahūngū. 12. December – Gatumu

Pre-colonial Kikuyu and the Modern Kikuyu A distinction needs to be made between present day Kikuyu, who are mainly westernized and Christianized, and the pre-colonial Kikuyu who were traditional in all aspects including dress and religion. Wherever the word Kikuyu appears, it will mean pre-colonial Kikuyu unless stated otherwise. This is in recognition of the fact that a culture has a historical and a present form. The present form of the Kikuyu in this study will be all those elements of culture observed at the onset of colonialism up to the 1930's. The historical part is that which existed before arrival at their present location, at the foot of Mount Kenya. After the 1930's, the Kikuyu will be assumed to have been westernized sufficiently to have lost all but the least important elements of culture. This is in contrast with any form that may be identified as having existed in more ancient times.

### **Anthropological methods in the study of African culture**

Schmidt (1973, p.25) quotes ‘the father of Anthropogeography,’ Fr. Ratzel of Leipzig who said that all peoples were historical. According to Ratzel, the history of preliterate consisted mainly

of ‘migrations’ where cultures came into contact and mutually influenced each other. In his opinion this mutual influence has been ‘the cause of new creations and modifications of culture, and wherever positively established, it makes the assumption of ‘independent origin untenable and superfluous’.

Ratzel emphasized the importance of migration leading to his migration theory which, according to Schmidt (1973, p. 26), was applied for the first time on the West African and Melanesian bow. In these comparative studies, similarities between the bows in the “cross section of the bow shaft...material ... fastening of the (bow) string and the feathering of the arrow.” While Ratzel is showing a connection between cultures which two continents apart, this study was about peoples who share the resources of the same lake and river system on the same continent, in one corner of Africa – the North East. And yet a connection between these peoples has been previously underplayed. Studies by another of Ratzel’s pupils, Frobenius makes the cultures within this study look like people separated by a mere valley.

Schmidt (1973, p. 26) reports how Frobenius, supposedly showed that there was much more congruence between West Africa and both Indonesia and Melanesia. Frobenius found “...not only agreements between the bow and arrow... but also between masks, houses, drums, clothing, shield form, etc.” Apparently similarities were not just in “single elements”. They were visible in entire culture circles. From this discovery, Frobenius was able to improve on the theory, which he now called ‘theory of culture circles’. This echoes the findings of modern Afrocentric historian, Clyde Winters. Levi-Strauss (1968), states that Boas explained how the structure of language, was unknown to the speaker before scientific grammar was introduced. Levi-Strauss (1968, p.21) quotes Boas thus; “... the language continues to mould discourse beyond the consciousness of the individual...”. According to Levi-Strauss we must seek the information carried by this characteristic of language, otherwise it is not available to us. In the same vein, this researcher is of the opinion that the information embedded in the Kikuyu language and its myths must be sought, using structuralist methods, otherwise they will never be available to us.

When an artist uses the structural theory the aim is similar to that of the anthropologist – to explore ‘that which humans hold beyond the conscious.’ According to Strauss “limitations resulting from the absence of written records, are ‘often overcome by oral traditions (so rich among certain African and Oceania peoples) thus making any barrier less rigid than it seems’ (1968, p.24).

The people of Kenya are no exception when it comes to rich oral traditions. Besides lacking in written documents, most of them lack art movements that can be used like written records to give us a historical interpretation. Traditional Kikuyu culture is particularly lacking in painting, sculpture, masks and figurines (though this researcher came across two samples illustrated in Fig 2.12, of unfired clay figurines attributed to the Kikuyu, now held in the British Museum. This ‘absence’ has been overcompensated by rich oral traditions, and other forms of art such as ornamentation, Bead and metal jewellery, scarification and the design of items of clothing. The study of material culture falls in the realm of anthropology.

Briefly, art and design are a part of anthropology as components of culture which also includes oral traditions. Structuralists believe that works of art do not have an “Ultimate” meaning which means that they can be re-interpreted over and over. In this study, deconstruction methods have

been used to interpret the hidden meaning of words and the structure of Myths has been analysed in the Kikuyu language. The next section explores the nature of the Kikuyu language.

### **The Gĩkũyũ language**

This writer identified “language” as an important variable where actual comparable variable were absent in one sample. For example the Egyptian sample is rich in Hieroglyphics, which are decipherable. On the other hand, the images that were called hieroglyphics by Cagnolo (1933) are very scant among Kikuyu artifacts and almost all of them are indecipherable. However some hieroglyphs seem to carry meaning similar to that carried by some Kikuyu words. The words used to count from one to nine, were found to correspond with Egyptian hieroglyphic numerals. Language then was identified as a medium that was capable of illuminating on past experiences that are lost today, when a pictorial counterpart could be found in another culture. For this reason, several coincidences have been identified in this method supported by a pictorial element in Egypt and a linguistic element in Kikuyu. In some cases the Linguistic element is from Egypt. An example is the name of Akhenaten that has been referred to on several occasions.

Leakey (1959, p. Vii) advances that the “Kikuyu is probably one of the most archaic of the Bantu languages and in consequence has a grammatical structure with fewer exceptions than in most of the others.” This would mean that Kikuyu resembles the ancestor of Bantu language (proto- Bantu), more than the other Bantu languages spoken today. At the time of Bantu migration all Bantu speakers probably, spoke something similar to Gĩkũyũ language than to any other Bantu language. This writer is of the same opinion, having identified archaic Kiswahili words that are no longer in use but are of everyday use in Kikuyu. This may imply that words that were in current usage in both Kikuyu and Kiswahili, long became archaic in the latter but continue to be used by the former – the Kikuyu.

The Kikuyu are classified linguistically as Highland Bantus together with the Kamba, Kuria and Gusii, Embu, Kurya, Tharaka, and Meru of Kenya (Ogot ed. 1980, p. 82). The latter have been classified as Kikuyu by this researcher as indicated in the definitions. The other Highland Bantus in East Africa are the Meru (Tanzanian), Segeju, Sonjo, Ikoma, Chagga, Gweno, Shashi, Zanaki and Nguruimi of Tanzania<sup>64</sup>. They are all of the Benue- Congo language division of the Niger Congo family (Ogaot ed., 1974).

Kikuyu proper has three main divisions. These are Gaki (Nyeri), Metumi (Muranga) and Kabete or Kiambu Kikuyu (Muriuki 1974). Van den Berghe (1975, p. X) in his book on race and ethnicity in Africa sees an ethnic group as ... “socially defined in terms of cultural uniformities within it (such as common customs, religion or language), and cultural differences between itself and other groups.” Gĩkũyũ was not only a language but also the name of a patriarch ancestor.

Gĩkũyũ is similar to Arabic in its syllable structure. Arabic is a CV syllable language where “C” stands for a consonant and ‘V’ for a vowel (Cook 1997). Kikuyu however also allows for a VCV structure. The rule is that the word must end in a vowel. In Gĩkũyũ a dog is called Ngui (CV) and Uga (VCV) means “say.” In Phonemics, “NG” is a single phoneme rendered with two graphemes. The English CVC structure is not possible in Kikuyu but can work in Luo. An

example of the word dog is given in the two languages: English - Dog (CVC); Luo – Guok (CVC).

Gĩkũyũ is written with seven vowels (Leakey 1959, p. vii). Leakey compares the pronunciation of these vowels with the English language as summarized below:

a – like the vowel in “hut”

e – like the e in “hen”

ĩ – as the i in “it”. This writer suggests that a

in “ate” is closer to the real pronunciation.

i – like the e in “he”

<b>Material culture of Egypt Paintings</b>	<b>Reliefs</b>	<b>Sculpture</b>	<b>Hieroglyphics</b>
1. Image of a Sycamore sacred tree 2. Images of deities 3. Images of royalty 4. Clothing, hairdressing and jewellery on deities and royalty 5. Activities of the ancient Egyptians 6. Architecture	1. Images of deities 2. Images of royalty 3. Clothing, hairdressing and jewellery on deities and royalty	1. Images of deities 2. Images of royalty 4. Architecture 5. Models of human activities of the ancient Egyptians	1. Various symbols for: a. Water (muy) b. “string basket” c. wineskins d. hill e. Numerals from one to nine f. utterance; symbol for the sound Ms g. Menes symbol for fish. 2. Transliteration of Myths, festivals and history of Egypt by Egyptologists.

o – like the au in author. This writer suggests the o in “only”

ũ – like the oo in “good.” This writer suggests the oh in “oh dear.”

u – like the u in “who”

Before the Kikuyu language is tackled, below are the main English consonants (Cook 1997), for comparison with the Kikuyu consonants discussed in this section from Leakey’s book on the Kikuyu language. Some of the parts of the mouth involved in articulating the sounds have given in the top row; Voice; Lips; Teeth; Teeth ridge; Soft palate. Others that have not been given in the table are; Labial; Dental; Alveolar; Velar<sup>65</sup>. The consonants have been indicated using international phonetic symbols. Plosive sounds are made by briefly interrupting a stream of air and then releasing it in an explosion (Cook 1997). On the other hand, fricative sounds are made by allowing the air to escape through a narrow opening such as when ‘F’ if uttered. In nasal consonants, air is blocked in such a way that it escapes through the nose. Lastly, ‘-

voice’ stands for instances when a sound does not need the vibrations of the vocal cords. ‘+ voice’ is the opposite, requiring the vibrations of the vocal cords. Cook gives the example of /g/ in gate as ‘voiced’ while the /k/ in kate is ‘voiceless.’

**Conclusions according to the research questions**

This study has shown that several aspects of Egyptian culture show contact with Pre- colonial Kikuyu. Aspects of Art that helped to underline the possibility of contact were paintings, reliefs, sculpture and hieroglyphics. Language as transliterated from hieroglyphics also supplied significant amounts of data. This data helped to answer the research questions whose conclusions follow below.

**1 What aspect of Egyptian art, language and material culture suggest contact with the culture of pre-colonial Kikuyu than earlier thought?**

Paintings, reliefs and hieroglyphics suggest this contact. Sculpture that was available in photographs also added to the data. The one that shows Akhenaten’s hair and earlobe is an example. The material culture of Egypt was seen in the paintings, reliefs and sculpture. Below is a table to summarise the information that was supplied by the different media.

**2 What aspects of Kikuyu language and material culture suggest contact with the culture of ancient Egypt?**

Aspects of Kikuyu culture that suggest contact with the culture of ancient Egypt were noted as the language, items of clothing, found to be the same as those of ancient Egypt. Data that indicates correspondence between the two samples is shown in the table 3.

<b>Table 2: Material Culture of Egypt</b>			
<b>Material culture of Egypt Paintings</b>	<b>Reliefs</b>	<b>Sculpture</b>	<b>Hieroglyphics</b>
7. Image of a Sycamore sacred tree 8. Images of deities 9. Images of royalty 10. Clothing, hairdressing and jewellery on deities and royalty 11. Activities of the ancient Egyptians 12. Architecture	4. Images of deities 5. Images of royalty 6. Clothing, hairdressing and jewellery on deities and royalty	3. Images of deities 4. Images of royalty 6. Architecture 7. Models of human activities of the ancient Egyptians	2. Various symbols for: a. Water (muy) b. “string basket” c. wineskins h. hill i. Numerals from one to nine j. utterance; symbol for the sound Ms k. Menes symbol for fish. 2. Transliteration of Myths, festivals and history of Egypt by Egyptologists.

Which messages in the pictures from ancient Egypt and pre- colonial Kikuyu are also perceivable by others with a minimum of formal education? The messages in the pictures were not perceivable to a majority of the respondents. As seen by the researcher. Some training or interest in Egyptology is necessary.

Conclusion on the Analysis of the myth of Isis and Osiris Like the nine daughters of the Kikuyu, the family of Osiris has nine members with Osiris as the benevolent brother and Set as the barren and evil one. Osiris and Set seem to echo the findings in this research that associate Akhenaten with ‘kindness’ and Smenkhare with ‘meanness,’ if the two are assumed to represent Osiris and Set. The story of origin of Egypt and that of the Kikuyu are however not comparable.

**Conclusion on the analysis of the Myth of Gikūyū and Mūmbi**

If the Gikuyu the founder of the tribe was an Egyptianised ruler, then his daughters were also daughters of the sun. The man marrying one would then be raising his status and not the other

**Table 3: Myths and traditions of origin**

Myths and traditions of origin Kikuyu language	Religion	The lost script	Myths and traditions of origins	Clothing and hair dressing
Kikuyu morphemes either as whole words or deconstructed to the basic Morphemes were compared with Egyptian transliterations of hieroglyphics for: a) Deities b) Trees c) Hieroglyphic symbols d) Numerals e) Names of royals	The circumcision rituals, dances and words associated with ear piercing were found to be religious. The main Sacred trees were identified as two varieties of figs and an olive tree: a) Mūkūyū, b) Mūgumo c) Mūtamaiyū	The following symbols were evidence of a lost script: 1. The <i>Anjirū</i> clan symbol. 2. The <i>Athiegeni</i> signs on beehives. 3. Symbols on the <i>gīchandī</i> gourd.	There were several myths of origin including the main ‘Adam and Eve’ story listed as ‘1’ below: 1. Gikūyū and Mūmbi. 2. Tradition of Meru origin from <i>Mbwaa</i> . 3. <i>The Ituīka</i> handing over ceremony. 4. The story of the daughter of sun	The following aspects were found to be comparable with the culture of ancient Egypt: 1. The traditional woman’s dress 2. The traditional fighting dress of the Tigania; the triangular garment used by initiates; the triangular garment used to dance around the sacred. 3. Male hairdressing and ear piercing.

way round. A Kikuyu folk tale collected by father Cagnolo (1933, p.237) is entitled “the daughter of the sun.” where young boys want to marry the daughter of the sun in order to raise their status from the “degenerate sons of the stock of the ichagatae.” In conclusion, the myth of Gikuyu and Mumbi was crafted from ideas and concepts of Ancient Egypt.

**Conclusion on the analysis of the names of ‘Akhenaten’ and ‘Smenkhare’**

As discussed in previous section, the names of Akhenaten and Smenkhare can be associated with the concept of long ago in several languages – Tene (Kikuyu); Kare (Meru); Kale (Kiswahili). Some place names seem to echo the two names –

- Smenkhare - Kwale (coast);
- Akhenaten – Kantana (of Merutraditions), Tana (river, district).

In general, it is therefore plausible to conclude that there is significant correlation between kikuyu and Egypt culture and that the duo are not unrelated.

### **Summary List of Contribution to Knowledge**

This research has confirmed Afrocentric writer's assertions on the importance of ancient Egyptian art and culture to the so- called "sub-Saharan Africa". Below is a list that summarizes the contribution to knowledge.

1. A comparative method of investigating the folklore claims of communities that claim a Misri origin has been established.
2. Twenty-one (21) Egypto-Kikuyu coincidences have been identified for further research.
3. The importance of the inclusion of the deconstruction and analysis of language, names and myths in comparative studies has been confirmed.

The above are the three most important contributions identified in this research.

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