

The Originality of Egyptian Churches Interior and Its Role in Maintaining Values of Ancient Egyptian Human

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Abstract— The stability of the inherited values of the Egyptian man, from thousands of years until this day, calls for thinking in the mechanism of recording and preserving them where it was reflected on the Egyptian architecture that includes all arts. The Coptic churches had an essential role in maintaining these values in a period in which the features of the most ancient civilizations of the world obliterated – the ancient Egyptian civilization –in a way that reflects the inherited human values from predecessors such as the social values in terms of reverence of the daily life, the social relationships among individuals in the community, and also the artistic and aesthetic values represented in showing beauty in all the elements in the space and using different arts like drawing, sculpture, and engraving. The Coptic artist inspired the design of the church from the old Egyptian temple depending on the basics of the design like balance, symmetry, harmony, unity, and proportions, etc. The problem of the research represents in searching about the origins of the Coptic art and the interior design of the Coptic Church and the roots that derived from it its values, so that it has an impressive print distinguishes it from all the churches in the world. What are the artistic features in the Coptic churches that affirm the inheritance of the values of the Egyptian man? How does the interior design of the churches witness on anchoring these values? How this reflected on the design of the Coptic Church?

The objective of this research is to monitor the elements of the interior design that show the artistic and values inheritance derived from the ancient Egyptian art and its impact on the design of the Coptic Church through doing an analytical descriptive study.

Keywords— *Coptic church; Human values; Ancient Egyptian; Egyptian temple; Interior design of the church*

INTRODUCTION

The transfer of the ancient Egyptian values to the old Coptic Church after entering Christianity Egypt and converting the Egyptian people from the worship of the pagan deities to Christianity was not a complicated matter. The spiritual values of the ancient Egyptian agreed with the new religion in its essence; the belief of the existence of one deity exists in the faith of Akhenaten. Moreover, the Coptic Church means the Egyptian church, so the word “Coptic” is a short form of the name Aegyptus. The Byzantines called this term on the people of Egypt when it was under the Byzantine rule, and this word was called on the Egyptian people, and it has not any relation with the determination of the religion (1). When Islam entered Egypt, the name was limited only to the Christians in Egypt.

The Coptic Church is characterized by a unique print that carries its origins and human values. As well it was noted that the worship rituals in the Coptic Church followed many traditions in the ancient Egyptian religion following its spiritual practices and did not differ with its doctrinal essence of doubt it. The religious rituals are any repeated behavior in a fixed pattern are determined or linked to a religious institution or belief or custom, and often by the intention of communicating with Allah and the rituals may be performed insole or in groups during certain previous times as a sole daily prayer or the regular group prayers in houses of worships (2).

As well this shows the effect of the inherited human and artistic values on the design of the Coptic churches. (3). Plato sees that the higher values encompass the idea of absolute right, good, and beauty, and these values are the reason for existence and the ideals, and these are the measure of everything. Besides, human values can be defined as the standards of moral, social, and behavioral traditions and principles on which the individual arises and rules on what is essential in life. It is practiced spontaneously and naturally in daily life, which works to move his behaviors. (4).

I. ORIGINALITY OF THE INTERIOR DESIGN OF THE EGYPTIAN CHURCHES

The Christianity as a religion is not far in its values from the ancient Egyptian beliefs which paved the way for the acceptance of the new religion, so the Christianity took the spiritual, social, and artistic values of the ancient Egyptian as an entrance to building on it the factual basis to know Allah. The ancient Egyptian civilization moved to the Copts of Egypt in a tangible and literary image in terms of moving the values and rituals as the following:

A. Civilisational inheritance in early Christian times:

The Copts were the legal heirs of the civilization of their predecessors of the ancient Egyptian that includes institutions, temples, and others. After Christianity enters Egypt, many temples or parts from it converted to churches after a significant number of the Egyptian left the pagan gods worship and entered Christianity. So, they re-allocate and reuse the same place after engraved on it the crosses on the walls as it ultimately appears in Philae as in the picture no. (a) (5)



a. The existence of other crosses engraved in different places in Philae Temple (6)

Times This period had a significant impact in shaping the first features of the church inconsistent with the spirit of worship that they established in the temples. During this stage, the following values have been transmitted: the importance of the Egyptian morals and the values of originality, belonging to the roots, loyalty to the place, and the amount of right where the right of human in reaching a place to practice his worship, and preserving the ability to change as the ability to adjust or adapt to different circumstances.

B. The right of worship as one of the inherited values from the ancient Egyptian and methods of its practice:

The Coptic Church has taken from the preceded rituals what is consistent with the spiritual values and not differ with its doctrinal essence of doubt it, which affected to create a unique print for the Coptic Church rituals from other churches. The moral values of humanity and the religious institution and its reflection through the worship rituals practice in the temple and church were represented in the following items:

- Establishing the Mass on the altars and putting the sacrifices on it; to anchor the value of good, gratitude, thanks, and appreciation to God.
- The Usage of incense in prayers and devotional practices; on its depth. The value of sacrifice appears which is leaving something in exchange for something else that is considered more critical where incense burns to belch out smoke to glorify the god and the sanctuaries.
- Accompanying the hymns and musical instruments to the mass; this reflects the value of encouragement to do something or practicing prayers as well. The importance of participation by saying the kept hymns by individuals to take part in prayers together, as well it also shows the value of joy and happiness derived from inner peace.
- The Belief in the judgment day and eternal life inconsistent with the idea of resurrection after death, eternity and the day of reckoning, scale, heaven, and

hell; this confirms the value of justice between individuals, so good and evil are not equal at the end.

- Honoring the bodies of saints and martyrs, embalming them, and preserving them in the church influenced by the custom of embalming to keep the bodies of kings of the ancient Egyptian, this reflects the belief in the value of loyalty and gratitude to influential people in life as well as the worth of an excellent example to take it as a model and the encouragement of perseverance in adhering to the path of a person, belief or purpose. (7)

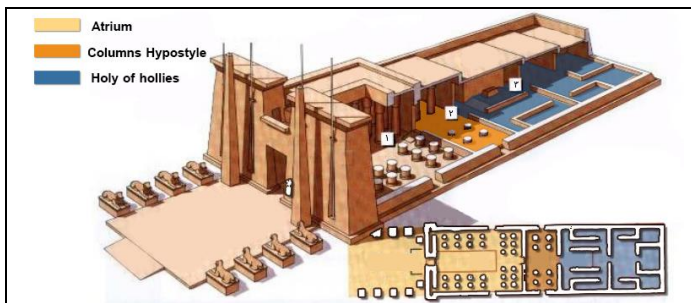
II. REFLECTION ON THE IMPACT OF INHERITED VALUES ON THE DESIGN OF THE COPTIC CHURCH.

Before The impacts of the ancient Egyptian inheritances showed on the design of the Coptic churches and not only its rituals. Hence, we find that the Christian man derived many things from the components of the ancient Egyptian temple and its values later to suit the new religion. From the natural when the Copts started recently in establishing churches for them, the designers made the churches match in its shape as the ancient builders do in terms of shaping the space of the worship and the aesthetic values followed on this. (8).

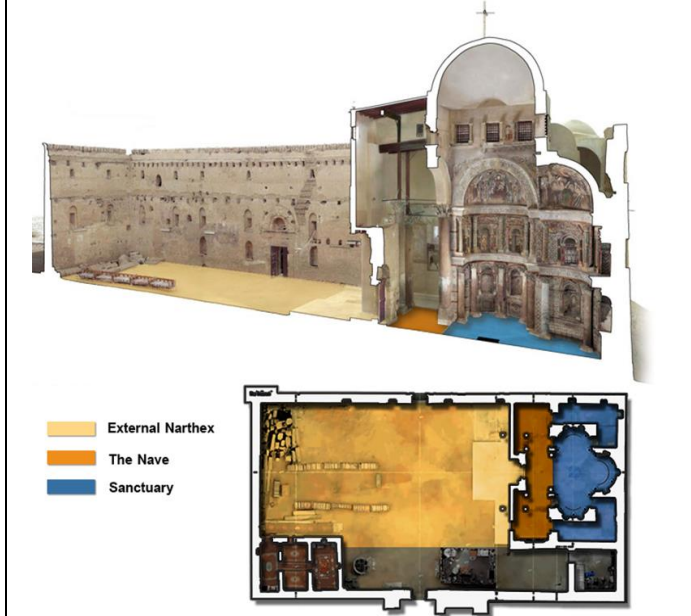
A. Floor plan and place configuration:

The Topography of the ancient Egyptian temple has three sections, as shown in figure (b) and (c):

- **First Section:** the external gate and it leads to an open hall surrounded by two lines of pillars with a narrow ceiling of stones.
- **Second Section:** Behind the vast entrance specified for worshipers is a hall with a ceiling supported by pillars. This place is crowded with posts in close rows that form a considerable stone ceiling prescribed for the ruling family and aristocrats. Here, it is faced by the nave of the church in which the pillars are also lined up. It is specified for the believers at the time of prayer, this specialization emphasizing the value of justice and equality between individuals where everyone stands in one place without discrimination to perform the prayer together, as well as stress on the importance of participation for the group.
- **Third Section:** It comes at the end of the temple, is a small closed room, rather mysteriously illuminated surrounded by a great wall, containing internal holy or holy of holies, for them as a place or the presence of Allah and only the high priest or pharaoh can approach it. In the Coptic Church also, the internal department is behind the iconostasis, which is the structure, and only the priests and deacons are allowed to enter it to perform the rituals of prayer. This reflects the value of right where scholars and high powers are allowed to enter places without others to honor them as well as the importance of respecting the superiors. It is recognized the value of the individual and his dignity and the cost of sanctifying the place where prayers are held and blocking it with a wall of secrecy so that it is not exposed to all people. (9)



b. The Temple diagram of Khonsu in Karnak – the departments of the temple are shown on it (10)

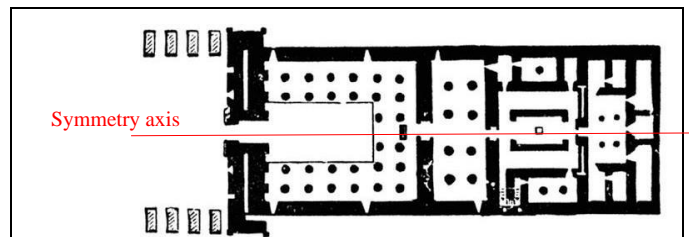


c. Perspective section and floor plan of the Red Monastery which backs to the fourth century A.D, explains the departments of the church. (11)

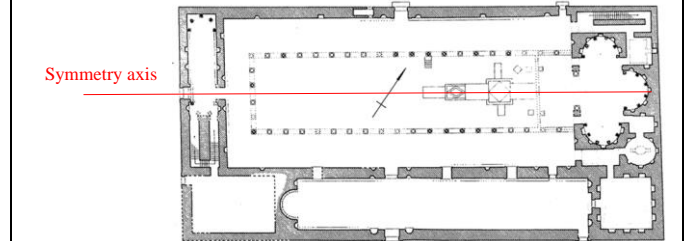
B. Axial symmetry

The interior design of the ancient Egyptian temples featured with symmetry around its axis whether in the horizontal projections as the horizontal projection of the Temple of Khonsu, figure (d). (12)

The Copts have found this designing solution suitable for the Coptic Church, as shown in the horizontal projection of the White Monastery in figure (e). That is affirming the inherited aesthetic and artistic values where the axial symmetry and balances and useful guidance as well as the harmony through repetition. And we see it in the alignment of pillars, so they designed churches around a symmetry axis that starts from the entrance through the nave and ends at the main structure, which is the holiest of the holies of the church and the place of God's presence with his people. (13)



d. The diagram shows the symmetry of the horizontal projection of the ancient Egyptian Temple around the longitudinal axis – Temple of Khonsu (Karnak) (14)



e. The horizontal projection of the white Monastery back to the middle of the fifth century, shows the symmetry around the longitudinal axis. (15)

C. The art of painting and sculpture in the temple and church:

Many ancient Egyptian artistic impacts extend with the Egyptian man until converted to Christianity. According to this, he practiced it in his life and artistic works as it existed in his worship places; the painting and drawing for Copts were an extension to their predecessors, where it aims to worship and argue the believers to know Allah. This type of artwork that expresses the Christian religion was represented historical aspects and events in this reign as known in the ancient Egyptian civilization. (16)

The most important aspects of influence of the Coptic painting art by the painting of the ancient Egyptian and its impact on the inherited values:

The ancient Egyptian interested in drawing the stories of the life of gods in the temple as in picture (f) as well the art of Coptic painting influenced by it, the wall art is not a separate or freestanding art but it was related closely with the interior design as one of its artistic elements and became a part and parcel from it. In the early stages, it was used as a painting for walls and cladding for domes and friezes on churches' walls. The murals represent the value of good represented in appreciating the life of Saints or the Christ to take it as a model and the ambitious to imitate them such as the wall drawing of the Virgin Mary and the Christ in picture (g). (17)

As well as, the Coptic painting followed the same pattern of the ancient Egyptian painting, in addition to the same style of implementation and the type of theme such as the painting of the justice values in a photo of scale of good and evil as shown in both figures (h), (i), as well following the same artistic and symbolic style for expressing the victory on evil as in the figures (j), (k). (18)



f. The wall drawing in the tombs of the nobles in Luxor (19)



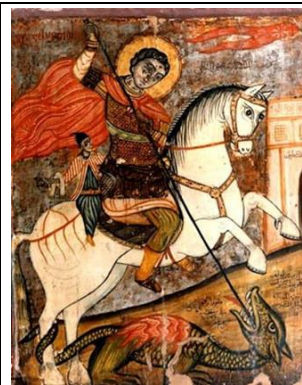
g. The wall drawing from Bawit backs to the sixth century AD (20)



h. The part of the book of the Dead by "Hunefer" (1275 B.C) shows the process of weighing the heart of Hunefer in the scale and comparing it to the feather of Maat (truth and justice) which is performed by the God Anubis. (21)



i. The icon of Michael, archangel holding in his hand the scale of justice, showing the Coptic artist's inspiration of the symbolic elements and themes of ancient Egyptian art, preserved in the Egyptian Museum. (22)



j. The archaeological icon of Saint Gerges as he stabs the snake, as a symbol of the devil, with his spear, showing the Coptic artists inspiration of the themes and the way they are expressed in ancient Egypt art.(23)



k. The sculpture relief on the walls of the Temple of Hibis in the Kharga Oasis, showing the God Horus as he stabbed the great serpent that symbolizes the evil god 'Set' with his spear.(24)

The reverence of the moral and social values of the Egyptian family and the reflection of this on the ancient Egyptian painting art as well the Coptic, this shown in the photo of the Virgin Mary as she sits reverently and carries the Christ on her knees as in picture (l), which historians see it as a copy of the image of Isis carries Horus as in picture (m). (25)



¹The archaeological icon of the Virgin Mary Carries the Christ, the child, placed in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, it illustrates the inspiration of the Coptic artist to the moral and social issues from the ancient Egyptian art. (26)



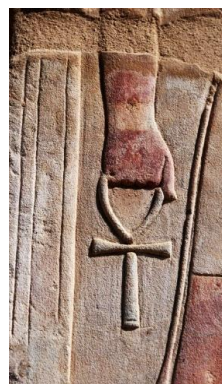
^mThe statue of the Goddess Isis on the throne carries her child Horus, it illustrates the reverence of the social and family values for the ancient Egyptian, placed in the Walters Museum.(27)

The Coptic painting art gained some features from ancient Egyptian art, such as the feature of portraying the Coptic faces in the murals and icons, as they reflect the Egyptian features represented in the wide round eyes. As well as the shape of the nose and the color of the Egyptian skin, this shows the transfer of the value of beauty in the artistic work with the flexibility in using it in line with the change in daily life.

The Copts used some religious elements to express their beliefs, this appears in painting the shape of the cross in an image that resembles the ankh or the key of life for the ancient Egyptian, The ankh was the first appearance of a figure resembling a cross as in picture (o), and the Copts considered it a reference to the cross of the Christ which represents the source of the life in the Christianity as in picture (n). (28)



ⁿThe cross has the shape of the key of life, the Ankh in the ancient Egyptian, engraved in the stone, located on a tomb to symbolize the other life after death. (29)



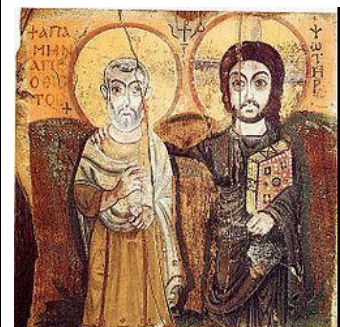
^oThe Relief sculpture represent a hand holding the ankh or the key of the life, Temple of Hatshepsut, eighteenth dynasty. (30)

The Coptic art directed also to simplifying and duping down the drawn elements where the Coptic print is characterized by the presence of only two dimensions in the paintings and there are no attempts to make the figure three-dimensional as shown in picture (q) of a Coptic icon of the Saint Mina and the Christ back to the sixth century AD, following in this the same aesthetic values of the painting art in the ancient Egyptian where dumping down and simplicity were the most important characteristic of this art as shown in the wall painting of the Queen Nefertari in picture (p). (31)

The Copts used a special language which is the Coptic language and it is considered the last stage of the development of the hieroglyphic language of the ancient Egyptian. The Coptic artist used this language in writing on his painting as in figure (q) and it is the same artistic style that followed in the temples where the hieroglyphic writing is used on the wall painting as in figure (p). (32)



^pThe Wall painting of the Queen Navaratri with the pharaonic writings. (33)



^qThe Coptic icon for Saint Mina and the Christ from Egypt back to the sixth century A.D. With writings in Coptic language (kept in Louvre Museum in France). (34)





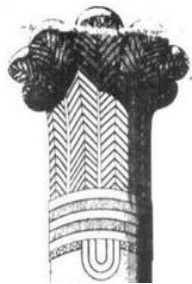


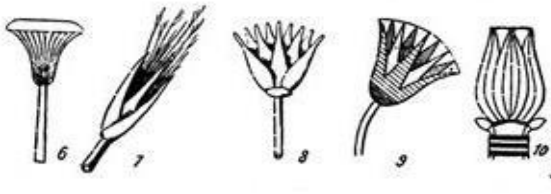


III. THE INHERITED INTERIOR DESIGN ELEMENTS FROM THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ART.

A. Ancient Egyptian Columns:

The columns in the temple those are similar to their counterparts in the nave with the difference in number, while the columns in the temple are not related to a certain number. It is limited to twelve columns as a symbol of the number of the twelve students of Christ. Taking into consideration the theory of the church that the prophets are the columns of the church, the columns in the church are lined up regularly, emphasizing the value of balance and repetition.

The Coptic was inspired some of the columns' capitals of their churches from the ancient Egyptian capitals to emphasize the value of beauty were belonging to the surrounding environment and borrowing the aesthetic elements from it, with doing partial development as done for the use of the palm form pillar and merely adding a cross or one of the Christian symbols (such as dove or sheep or .etc.) (35)

Here, we will illustrate comparatively the examples of this influence between the capitals of the ancient Egyptian pillars and the capitals of the pillars of the Coptic churches.

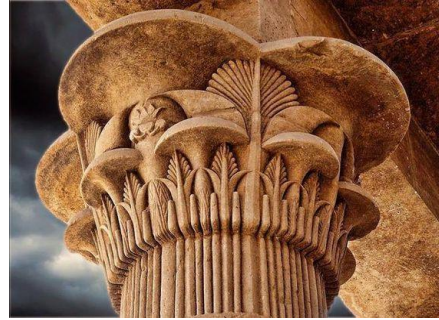
Models of similar Coptic pillars capitals	Models of ancient Egyptian pillars capitals
<p>The derived shape of palm branches in the design of the pillars with the addition to crosses</p>  <p>r. (36)</p>  <p>t. (37)</p>	<p>The shape of palm branches in the design of pillars</p>  <p>s. (38)</p>  <p>u. (39)</p>  <p>v. (40)</p>
<p>The Coptic column capitals influenced by the plant elements but they took shapes derived from the local environment and doctrine symbols as acanthus and vines papers.</p>  <p>w. (41)</p>  <p>y. (42)</p>	<p>The use of the plant elements, especially the lotus flower inscriptions, in the design of different shapes of the capitals of the Egyptian pillars.</p>  <p>x. (41)</p>  <p>z. (46)</p>  <p>aa. (47)</p>



bb. (43)



cc. (44)



dd. (48)



ee. (45)



ff. (49)

Replacing the faces with pillars with animal formation and birds such as the lamb and eagle that have religious symbols

The Hatorique column and the use of human faces to create a distinctive capital.



gg. (50)



hh. (51)



ij. (52)



kk. (53)



ii. (54)



ll. (55)



mm. (56)

The capitals of conical Coptic pillars resemble the bell shape and decorated with vines or adding animal formations.

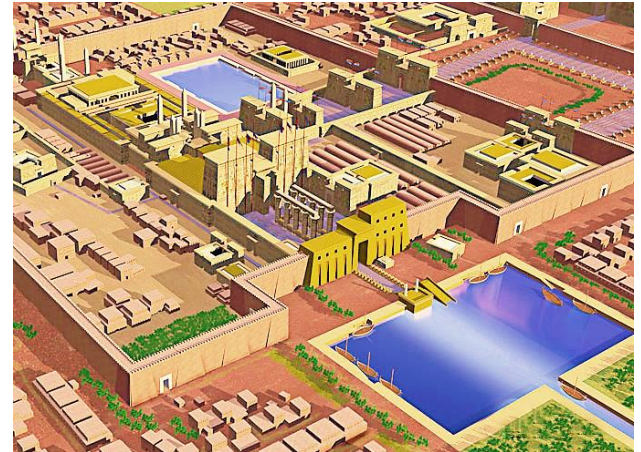
The bell-shaped capital of the Temple of Thutmose – Karnak



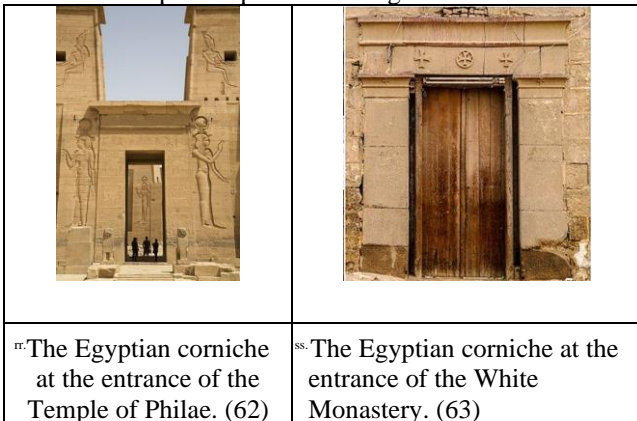
B. Ancient Egyptian Gorge:

The ancient Egyptian cornice appeared which is crowned the temples in design of some churches above the building as well as at the entrances on the external wall of the churches such as the white Monastery Church in Suhag as shown in pictures (rr) and (ss). (61)

Therefore, this shows influence of the value of beauty of the ancient Egyptian through emphasizing where the entrance is distinguished from the other building on the cornice as well the value of intellectual and material commitment in as an artistic work path or persons belongs to them.



"The holy lake at the entrance of Karnak. (65)



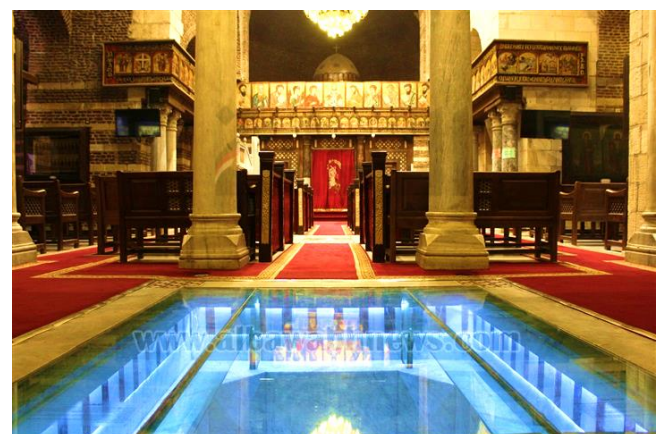
"The Egyptian cornice at the entrance of the Temple of Philae. (62)

"The Egyptian cornice at the entrance of the White Monastery. (63)

C. The holy water and The Epiphany Tank

The ancient Egyptian temple has a sacred lake at the entrance as in the picture no. (tt). This is necessary to the one who enters to purify before entering the places of worship as the two lakes in Abydos Temple and the lake in the Ramisi Temple as well we find it in the designs of the great temple in Amarna.

Likewise, the purifying bathtub or Epiphany Tank in picture no. (uu) was found in the Coptic churches at an early age, and it was near the entrance as well. Rarely, we may accept the idea that Epiphany Tank in Coptic churches without others was a product to the Egyptians influence with the religious values of the concept of purification required before entering the holy places. The cost of good, when cleansing from the outside before entering the sacred sites; besides, it reminds the man to purify from evil and sins before meeting God in prayer as well as affirming moral values such as commitment and decency to enter the holy places. (64)



"The epiphany Tank at the entrance of the archaeological of Abu-Seifen church. (66)

D. The Stone Ambon or Pulpit

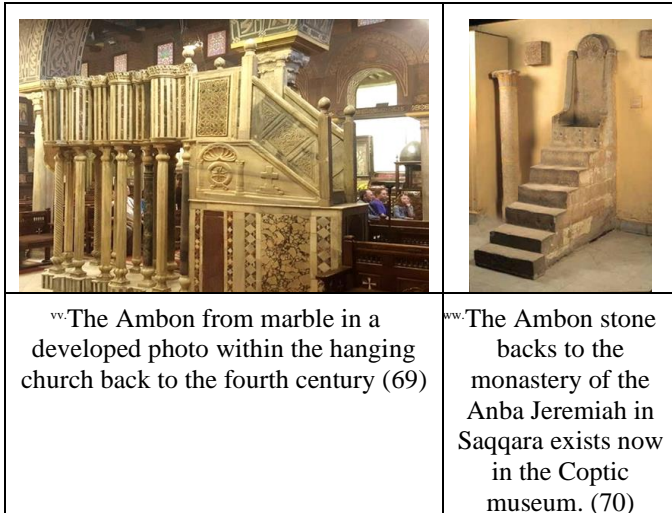
The Ambon is the pulpit, and it is a Greek word means the platform, the priest or the preacher ascends it to preach, and it is located in the northern side of the church bastion after the deacon's choir, and it was made in the past from stone then from wood or marble.

The Ambon was among the archaeological elements found in the ancient Egyptian civilization. Sometimes, it was made of bricks and placed in the back of the rib vault or vault; this method was known in the bygone pharaonic era, but it flourished in the Coptic period, but by the time, the use of Ambon became obsolete and no longer part of the church. So, it remains only in old churches as in the picture no. (vv). (67)

The Ambon was found in the monastery of Anba Jeremiah in Saqqara and the monastery of Anba Shinoda in Suhag in

the picture no. (ww) in the form of one piece of staircase topped by a chair like a platform that the pharaonic was sitting on it, and it is very similar to the Islamic pulpit. (68)

The presence of the Ambon emphasizes the value of right as the religious scholars and the rulers distinguish by the request of existence in a place higher than the rest of individuals as a sign of superiority, greatness, and leadership as well the value of power and glorification of rulers or scholars.



CONCLUSIONS

The interior design of the Coptic Church, with its details, anchor the inherited Egyptian values about the civilization of the predecessors. The stability of the inherited human values of the Egyptian man contributed to forming a unique print and an Egyptian identity that extended from the ancient Egyptian civilization until our age, represented in the values of the Egyptian man such as love of good, connection, and reverence of the social and family life.

The Coptic artist depends on designing his church on the artistic and aesthetic values inherited from the predecessors, that anchored the higher values as the right, good, and beauty represented in the elements and basics of the interior design of the church.

The reverence of the Egyptian man for his customs and traditions contributed to using some of the existing elements from the ancient Egyptian temples. And merging it in the design of churches such as Ambon, The Epiphany Tank, and Bell Towers because it reflects his culture and customs, despite there is no religious reference for their existing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The works of the interior design of the Coptic churches must be consistent with the inherited cultures and civilizations to anchor the high values and principles and maintain the prevailed beliefs in the worship houses, its originality, and inheritance from the ancient Egyptian civilization.

It is recommended to keep the Egyptian identity in the design of the Coptic churches and its sections. Not using patterns reflect alien civilizations differ on its nature from the local environmental history and culture without realizing

what the influence it adds that does not suit the inherited aesthetic values.

The interior designer should realize the added value of the used design print consistent with the life and the behavior of the group and its traditions and cultures; they influence in adding the feeling by belonging to the place.

Taking into consideration the differences and requirements of the period and the reverence that practiced in the position to develop the design elements that true the nature of the needs of worship houses without losing the inherited human value to contribute to upgrading the behaviors.

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