



## Revitalizing Heritage: Innovative Design of Tourist Souvenirs Using Ancient Egyptian Water Symbolism

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the potential of integrating water-related Pharaonic symbols into the design of tourist goods and souvenirs to enhance Egyptian cultural identity and promote heritage tourism. Focusing on the aesthetic and functional properties of these symbols, the research analyzes the representation of key motifs, including Hapi (the Nile god), the lotus flower (symbolizing rebirth), and fish (representing fertility). A rigorous selection framework, grounded in heritage tourism theory, was developed to identify representative objects from ancient Egypt based on authenticity, cultural significance in decorative contexts, usability for contemporary tourists, and relevance to sustainable tourism development. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines critical document analysis of academic literature on Pharaonic water symbolism with empirical research on the current market. Empirical data collection encompassed visual semiotic analysis of symbols, quantitative surveys of tourist preferences for souvenir designs, and qualitative semi-structured interviews with design professionals and cultural heritage experts. Statistical analysis using SPSS examined consumer aesthetic and functional preferences.

Findings demonstrate the significant potential of Pharaonic water symbols to inform the creation of culturally resonant and aesthetically compelling tourist products. The research proposes innovative design concepts that effectively integrate these symbols into functional and marketable items- including wooden sculptures, stone carvings, and metal artifacts, while rigorously preserving their cultural authenticity. These designs contribute to enhancing the aesthetic appeal of tourist goods, reinforcing Egyptian cultural identity, and fostering awareness of the Nile River's historical and ecological significance. The study offers a novel framework for the design and production of commercially viable yet culturally authentic souvenirs, contributing to the theoretical discourse on heritage tourism and providing practical implications for sustainable tourism practices in Egypt. Recommendations emphasize the importance of evidence-based design informed by Pharaonic heritage, strategic collaboration between cultural institutions and tourism stakeholders, and the implementation of targeted marketing strategies to promote culturally sensitive tourism products.

### KEYWORDS

Pharaonic symbols, water motifs, tourist souvenirs, Egyptian identity, cultural tourism.

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## إحياء التراث: تصميم مبتكر للتذكارات السياحية باستخدام رموز المياه في مصر القديمة

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### الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لبحث إمكانية دمج الرموز الفرعونية المتعلقة بالمياه في تصميم السلع السياحية والهدايا التذكارية لتعزيز الهوية الثقافية المصرية وتشجيع السياحة التراثية. مع التركيز على الخصائص الجمالية والوظيفية لهذه الرموز، يحل البحث تمثيل الزخارف الرئيسية، بما في ذلك حابي (إله النيل)، وزهرة اللوتس (التي ترمز إلى البعث وإعادة الميلاد)، والأسماك (التي تمثل الخصوبة). تم تطوير إطار اختيار محدد، يستند إلى نظرية السياحة التراثية، لتحديد العناصر الممثلة لأهداف الدراسة من مصر القديمة بناءً على الأصالة، والأهمية الثقافية، وقابلية الاستخدام للسياح المعاصرين، والأهمية بالنسبة لتنمية السياحة. باستخدام نهج متعدد الأساليب، تجمع الدراسة بين التحليل النقدي للوثائق الخاصة بالأدبيات الأكاديمية حول الرمزية المائية الفرعونية والبحث التجريبي في السوق الحالي. شمل جمع البيانات التجريبية التحليل البصري للرموز، والاستطلاعات الكمية لتفضيلات السياح لتصميمات الهدايا التذكارية، والمقابلات النوعية شبه المنظمة مع متخصصي التصميم وخبراء التراث الثقافي. فحص التحليل الإحصائي باستخدام برنامج SPSS التفضيلات الجمالية والوظيفية للمستهلكين.

توضح النتائج الإمكانيات الكبيرة للرموز المائية الفرعونية في إثراء عملية إنشاء منتجات سياحية ذات صدى ثقافي وجاذبة من الناحية الجمالية. يقترح البحث مفاهيم تصميم مبتكرة تدمج هذه الرموز بشكل فعال في عناصر وظيفية وقابلة للتسويق - بما في ذلك المنحوتات الخشبية، والمنحوتات الحجرية، والتحف المعدنية - مع الحفاظ بدقة على أصالتها الثقافية. تساهم هذه التصميمات في تعزيز الجاذبية الجمالية للسلع السياحية، وتعزيز الهوية الثقافية المصرية، وتنمية الوعي بالأهمية التاريخية والبيئية لنهر النيل. تقدم الدراسة إطاراً جديداً لتصميم وإنتاج هدايا تذكارية تجارية قابلة للحياة ولكنها أصيلة ثقافياً، مما يساهم في الخطاب النظري حول السياحة التراثية ويوفر أثراً عملياً لممارسات السياحة المستدامة في مصر. تؤكد التوصيات على أهمية التصميم القائم على الرمزية و المستوحى من التراث الفرعوني، والتعاون الاستراتيجي بين المؤسسات الثقافية وأصحاب المصلحة في قطاع السياحة، وتنفيذ استراتيجيات تسويق مستهدفة لتعزيز المنتجات السياحية الحساسة ثقافياً.

### الكلمات الدالة

الرموز الفرعونية، زخارف الماء، الهدايا التذكارية السياحية، الهوية المصرية، السياحة الثقافية.

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## Introduction

In an era of globalization, where expanding communication networks and open skies dissolve cultural and geographical boundaries, preserving national identity and heritage has become essential. As distinct civilizations and local traditions face increasing homogenization, safeguarding heritage—an invaluable cultural treasure—is imperative (Ali, 2014). The industrial achievements of today become the heritage of tomorrow. This necessitates preserving the heritage of the past while integrating contemporary defines the traditional heritage as “everything inherited that distinguishes the individuals of a society from others, is associated with the personality of the traditional society, expresses its essence, is passed down through generations, and is then adapted to suit the customs of its society and the environment in which it lives, reflecting many of the effects and history of the country in which it originated.” Just as languages diversified, so did symbols, their forms, and arts. Historical evidence suggests that ancient Egyptians conveyed their thoughts and beliefs through symbolic representations, using them as a means of communication and as a reflection of their relationship with the natural world. representations of life, earth, sky, and water. Thus, symbols became “the fundamental function of human consciousness in ancient Egyptian art,” expressing originality and distinction in their representation of the cosmos, life, and the afterlife. They were able to arrange and organize an infinite number of symbolic formulations, which are considered a discovery of the components and characteristics of nature. The symbol, with its mysterious power, embodied the power of the universe for them (Mohsen, 2017). Thus, the objectives of this research can be summarized as follows:

1. Determining the impact of Pharaonic water-related symbols on the enrichment and diversification of tourist goods and souvenirs.
2. Investigating the potential for the incorporation of Pharaonic water-related symbols within the design framework of tourist goods and souvenirs.
3. Analyzing the aesthetic and functional characteristics of Pharaonic water-related symbols in relation to the augmentation of Egyptian cultural identity.
4. Ascertaining tourist preferences concerning tourist goods and souvenirs that feature water symbols.
5. Analyzing the representational modalities of key Pharaonic water-related symbols, such as Hapi and the lotus flower.
6. Proposing innovative design paradigms for integrating these symbols into viable and marketable tourist products while upholding their cultural authenticity.

When heritage constitutes the foundation of a society’s offerings to visitors, its preservation becomes a fundamental necessity. Although Egypt possesses a vast heritage of artistic traditions and wide range of traditional visual symbols—particularly those related to water in ancient Egyptian civilization—their integration into the tourism industry continues to be overlooked. This persists despite water’s deep historical and spiritual significance in Egyptian culture, where it symbolizes life, resurrection, and renewal. The tourist goods and souvenir sector in Egypt faces a challenge of “design illiteracy”, resulting in stagnant product development, over-

reliance on a limited range of traditional designs, and an influx of imported products that lack cultural identity (Abdallah, et al., 2021). Consequently, this research seeks to explore how ancient Egyptian water symbols can be incorporated into the design of tourist goods and souvenirs, emphasizing their aesthetic and functional roles in reinforcing Egyptian identity. The research aims to analyze these symbols, understand their cultural connotations, and propose innovative designs for tourist goods that reflect these symbols, thereby enhancing Egyptian identity and attracting tourists by offering a rich cultural experience.

This matter has raised several questions, including:

1. How can water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization be utilized to enhance tourism identity by incorporating them into tourist goods and souvenirs?
2. To what extent are water symbols used in the design and decoration of tourist goods and souvenirs?

The significance of this research lies in its endeavor to fortify Egyptian cultural identity through the valorization and integration of symbols possessing profound historical and cultural salience within tourist products and souvenirs, thereby contributing to the revitalization of heritage tourism by offering culturally enriched and more appealing experiences. Furthermore, it underscores opportunities for the advancement of higher-quality tourist products via innovative and engaging designs and aims to enhance tourist awareness regarding Egyptian heritage and the Nile's significance. Moreover, the study posits a framework and recommendations to underpin sustainable tourism by emphasizing authentic cultural products, and both theoretically and practically to the domain of heritage tourism, while guiding intersectoral collaboration between cultural and tourism entities and fostering the development of targeted marketing strategies predicated on an understanding of tourist preferences

### **Water in Ancient Egypt: A Concise Exploration**

Throughout the ages, water has been the lifeblood of Egyptian civilization, intensely intertwined into its cultural, spiritual, and practical identity. The Nile served not only as an indispensable resource for agriculture and daily life but also as a divine entity that thoroughly shaped Egypt's historical and cultural path. By means of the Nile, the land flourished, the mythological narratives were inspired, and a foundation was laid for rituals that mirrored the Egyptians' intimate association with this critical resource (Bickel, 2005; Schenkel, 1965; Driaux, 2016). This relationship is still relevant today because modern Egypt faces challenges to its water security, most remarkably from the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD). To understand the enduring reliance of Egypt on the Nile, an exploration of the Nile's historical and cultural significance is inevitable.

In the Egyptian mythology, water was conceived as the primeval essence of existence, depicted in the form the chaotic waters of Nun, the primordial emptiness which gave rise to existence (Holger, 2015). The Nile was perceived as a worldly extension of this divine concept. From these waters emerged the lotus flower (*Nymphaea caerulea*), a distinctive symbol of life and rebirth (Price, 2022), often associated with solar gods such as, for example, Re and Nefertem (George, 2005). This relationship underlined

water's multifaceted role in Egyptian thought—both a physical necessity and a spiritual metaphor for regeneration and eternal life.

In terms of religious rituals, water played a significant role in both purification rituals (Bleeker, 1966), and funerary practices. Water from the Nile was used in purification rituals to imply spiritual renewal and initiate individuals into the divine sphere (Assmann, 1989). The lotus flower, frequently represented in libations symbolizing harmony and rebirth, was depicted alongside the papyrus to represent the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. In funerary contexts, water's regenerative symbolism was further highlighted, with the lotus represented in tomb art and texts such as the Book of the Dead, to represent transformation and eternal life. In the Pyramid Texts, water's regenerative role is seen in libations that aimed at rejuvenating the deceased king (Bickel, 2005). Thus, water was not just a physical substance but a sacramental one, which purified the deceased's body and associated it with the divine's eternality.

Besides its spiritual importance, water also impacted practical and technological advancements. Egyptians established experienced systems for controlling and managing water, including the digging of canals (Driaux, 2016), establishing irrigation systems, and building structures such as the Al-Kafara dam, which perhaps dates to the Third or Fourth Dynasties (Hodge, 2000). Also, tools such as the *shadouf* and *sakia* (waterwheels) underscored their innovative understanding of water engineering, ensuring the sustainable use of the Nile's resources for agriculture and daily life (Venit, 1989; de Miranda, 2004).

The annual inundation of the Nile was both a life-giving blessing and destructive. While it enriched the land with fertile silt, empowering agricultural prosperity, it also posed the potential destruction threats of uncontrolled floods (Bickel, 2005). This multifaceted symbolism of creation and destruction is mirrored in the catastrophic vision of returning to the chaotic waters of Nun (Piers, 2015). The regenerative power of water is further highlighted in the Tenth Hour of the Amduat, where Horus stands before twelve figures floating in the waters of the Netherworld, symbolizing regeneration (Hornung, 2007). Likewise, in the Book of Gates, water is represented as both a source of life and judgment, providing refreshment to the righteous (*m3'tyw*) and punishment to enemies (*hftyw*) (Hornung, 2014). Hapi, the personification of the Nile and patron of its annual inundation, was revered as the bringer of fertility, sustaining both gods and humans. Worshiped at the first cataract, he was depicted as a bearded man, often painted blue or green, with full breasts symbolizing nourishment and water plants sprouting from his head. Sometimes shown as a double figure, he represented both the Blue and White Nile. Hymns praised Hapi as a cosmic force guiding souls to the *duat* (Underworld) and expressed gratitude for the floods that enriched the land with fertile silt. Annual festivals honored his life-giving role in sustaining Egypt's agriculture (Bunson, 2002; Wilkinson, 2003).

### **Selection Criteria for Objects Used in the Campaign**

The objects chosen for this research were thoroughly selected to mirror how significant water was for Egypt's culture and history while also guaranteeing their practical use in a modern tourist campaign. Upon selecting these objects, the authors prioritized authenticity, functionality, and relevance to the campaign's goal of connecting tourists with Egypt's rich water heritage.

### **1. Authenticity and Historical Inspiration:**

The designs were directly inspired by documented water-related vessels from ancient Egypt, such as jars and cups. These objects were thoroughly selected to stimulate the essence of Egypt's dependence on the Nile and its cultural practices, incorporating ancient design into modern usage.

### **2. Cultural Significance in Decoration:**

Decorative motifs, including lotus flowers, papyrus reeds, and hieroglyphs, were chosen to mirror the artistic style of ancient Egypt. This commitment to genuine design guarantees that each object acted not only as a practical item but also as a symbol of Egypt's rich cultural and mythological associations with water.

### **3. Usability for Modern Appeal:**

Practicality was an essential factor in selecting ancient vessel designs for modern use. To put it in a cruder way, drinking bottles and cups were chosen for their functionality and attraction, guaranteeing these objects could function as everyday items while maintaining their ties to historical aesthetics.

### **4. Relevance to the Tourist Campaign:**

These objects were designed to draw tourists' attention by integrating cultural education into utility. The designs of these objects underlined the Nile's historical importance and the critical need for its preservation considering modern threats posed by the Ethiopian GERD.

By means of these criteria, the chosen objects can be seen as both cultural artifacts and practical tools, creating a meaningful connection between Egypt's heritage and contemporary advocacy efforts.

### **Selected Objects:**

#### **1. Water jar:**

This pottery water jar, now housed at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo, dates back to the New Kingdom (Fig. 1). It features a bulbous body, a slender neck, and a flared rim—an effective design for minimizing water evaporation (Atwa, 2016). The jar is decorated with horizontal bands of painted motifs in earthy, muted tones, incorporating stylized floral and geometric patterns that reflect the harmony between nature and daily life in ancient Egyptian society. This jar's design could serve as inspiration for contemporary eco-friendly water storage solutions utilizing natural cooling methods, emphasizing the significance of sustainable water management in arid environments.



*Figure1: Pottery water jar (Courtesy of National Museum of Egyptian Civilization)*

## 2. *ankh*-shaped libation vessel

The following object is an ankh-shaped libation vessel, symbolizing life. Libation was a significant ritual in ancient Egyptian society, involving drink offerings to honor and please various divinities, sacred ancestors, and both present and absent humans.

Temple rituals, often accompanied by incantations, were expressions of profound piety. The best-preserved texts detailing these practices are from Ptolemaic and Roman temples, although earlier references, such as the Pyramid Texts, provide foundational insights. These rituals emphasized purification, encompassing the cleansing of priests, temple grounds, and libation jars before offerings were made. Libation water was typically presented to deities in two ways: poured onto the ground or directly onto an altar or statue (Poo, 2010).

Water also played a vital role in the cleansing and revitalization of deity statues. For example, in the Roman Period temple at Tebtunis, daily rituals included six libation ceremonies symbolizing the Nile's rejuvenating power. One such invocation illustrates this symbolism: "Offering libation. Speaking of Words: this water shall rejuvenate your body; your majesty shall drink from the water" (Rochemonteix & Chassinat, 1987). These practices highlight the Nile's central role as a source of life and renewal in Egyptian religious traditions.

An excellent example of this vessel intertwined with the lotus flower comes from the temple of Seti at Abydos (Fig. 2). Here, Seti I is offering incense and libation to god Horus who is seated on his throne holding the ankh-sign and the *was*-scepter. The libation vessel is represented in the form of the sign for life (*ankh*). Water is coming out from the *ankh*-shaped vessel to pour over flowers neatly arranged below (Calverley, Broome & Gardiner, 1938). In several of the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts, the Osirian dead king is offered a libation of cool (*qbhw*) and fresh (*rnpy*) water. The purpose of this funeral libation was lustral, to revitalize the dead king, causing him to become youthful (*rnp*) again (Delia, 1992).

## 3. Lotiform Chalices

Chalices in ancient Egypt were shaped like an Egyptian lotus flower, a form commonly found in chalices from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-Second Dynasties (Fig. 3). The symbolic meaning of these lotus-shaped vessels could be associated with the water lily's pain-relieving qualities or its natural aquatic environment. (David, 2020; Bakr, 2019; Hepper, 1990).

Ancient Egypt was home to two native species of lotus flowers: *Nymphaea lotus* (white lotus) and *Nymphaea caerulea* (blue lotus) (Tackholm, 1976). While both continue to grow in Egypt, the blue lotus—often called the "Egyptian lotus"—was particularly renowned for its fragrance and was widely used in perfume production.

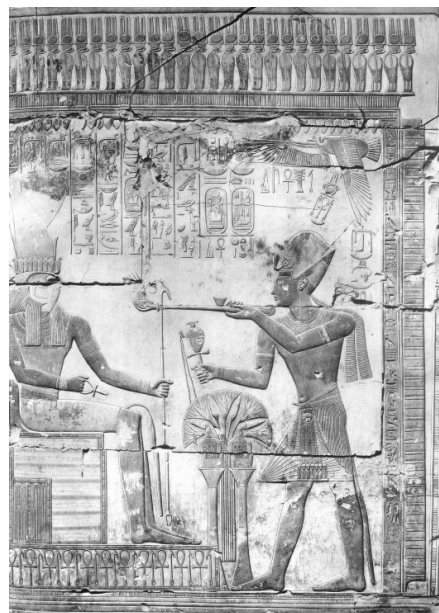


Figure 2: Seti I offering to god Horus with an *ankh*-shaped vessel in one hand (after Calverley, Broome & Gardiner, 1938)



Figure 3: A lotiform chalice dating to the reign of Thutmose III (Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Object no. 26.7.972))

Additionally, historical records indicate the presence of *Nymphaea nucifera*, a species likely introduced from India or Persia, expanding the range of lotus varieties associated with ancient Egypt (Sanchez & Benson, 2014).

The blue *Nymphaea caerulea* held special significance in Egyptian culture, frequently depicted in art as a symbol of life and rebirth. Beyond its symbolic role, it also had practical applications in medicine. Ancient medical texts, such as the *Ebers Papyrus*, reference the term *khau* (*h3w*), which may denote the lotus flower or specifically its petals (*Wb* III, 221.8–11). For example, *Ebers* 479 prescribes *khau* of the lotus for treating skin diseases linked to liver conditions (Nunn, 1996).

#### 4. Papyrus-shaped Bottles

Papyrus held significant importance in ancient Egyptian culture, acting as a cornerstone for both practical and symbolic purposes. Derived from the *Cyperus papyrus* plant, which thrived along the Nile, papyrus was used as writing material from around 3000 BC until the 10th century AD. This practice showcased Egypt's innovative use of natural resources and underscored the deep connection between the environment and cultural development (Parkinson & Quirke, 1995).

Symbolically, the papyrus plant was frequently depicted in Egyptian art, often alongside the lotus to symbolize the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. It also appeared in funerary contexts, highlighting its association with regeneration and the afterlife (Price, 2022).

The production of papyrus required exceptional skill and precision, involving the layering and pressing of the plant's pith to create durable sheets that were then formed into scrolls essential for record-keeping and knowledge dissemination (Parkinson & Quirke, 1995). While papyrus production was extensive, evidence suggests that state oversight may have played a role in maintaining its availability for administrative and trade needs. Thus, papyrus epitomized not only Egyptian craftsmanship but also symbolized the Nile's life-sustaining and unifying role in the civilization's identity (Leach & Tait, 2002).

This slender, elegant bottle (Fig. 4), featuring a flaring rim in the shape of an open papyrus umbel, was part of a cache of objects discovered in 1907 in a pit (KV 54) in the Valley of the Kings. It may have been used in purification rituals during Tutankhamun's burial or served as a container for spiced beverages at his funeral banquet.



Figure 4: Papyrus-shaped water bottle from the tomb of Tutankhamun (Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Object no. 09.184.83))

#### 5. Flax (Linen)

Speaking of the lotus and papyrus inevitably brings to mind another plant that played a significant role in ancient Egyptian culture: flax. Although not originally indigenous to Egypt (Germer, 1985), flax became deeply intertwined with Egyptian religion and tradition. Following the annual inundation of the Nile, flax seeds were sown. The plant's fibers were primarily used to produce linen, a material that was an essential component of everyday life in ancient Egypt. Most textiles were made from flax, and any fabric produced from this plant fiber is defined as linen (Catling & Grayson, 1982). Linen was often dyed, with each color carrying specific symbolic meanings. White, for instance, represented purity, supremacy, and happiness, and was notably associated with Osiris, the Lord of the Netherworld (Ladd, 2020).

## 6. Water Clocks (*Clepsydrae*)

Ancient Egyptian water clocks, also known as *clepsydrae*, exemplified by figure 5, were essential time measurement tools, especially during rituals and astronomical observations. Accurate timekeeping was necessary to ensure that ceremonies followed the divine timing and cosmic order which corresponds to the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians in Maat. In terms of astronomy, ancient Egyptian *clepsydras* were significant tools in tracking the movement of celestial bodies (Cotterell, Dickson & Kamminga, 1986). The earliest surviving example of *Clepsydra* dates to the reign of Amenhotep III and was found in Karnak temple (Shaw, Nicholson, 1995). The water clock was known as Sbt in ancient Egypt. The materials used for the manufacture of clepsydrae varied including basalt as the example in the British Museum which dates to the reign of Philip Arrhidaios who is represented offering to Min on the surface of the clepsydra.



Figure 5: The clepsydra of Karnak (after Schomberg, 2018)

## 7. Fish amulets

Fish played a significant role in the diet of Nile Valley inhabitants. Their nutritional and health benefits were highly regarded by the ancient Egyptians, as evidenced by references to fish in medical papyri (Tallet, 2015). Fishing scenes and depictions of fish are abundant from the dynastic periods, highlighting their presence in daily life (Keith, 2017). However, their role in Egyptian mythology influenced the development of consumption taboos, while their symbolic and magical significance was reflected in artistic representations. Among these, *tilapia* held a special place in Egyptian beliefs. Yet, fish had appeared as a symbol since at least the Predynastic period (Jurgielewicz, 2020).

Fish pendants, as exemplified in Fig.5, typically depict either the upside-down catfish or the *tilapia*. Also, *tilapia*, associated with the goddess Hathor, symbolized fertility and renewal, as they carry their eggs in their mouths until they hatch (Stünkel, 2015).



Figure 6: A fish pendant dating to the Middle Kingdom ((Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Object no. 09.180.1182)

## 8. Crocodile amulets

Crocodiles were formidable creatures, yet Sobek - the deity likely represented in the amulet below—was revered as a benevolent water god. According to myth, the Nile's waters were believed to flow from his sweat, sustaining the valley's fertility (Wyatt, 2019). As a god of regeneration, he was closely associated with rebirth in the afterlife (Fahmy & Aboelmagd, 2024).

Crocodiles frequently appear in ancient texts as instruments of divine retribution, reflecting their fierce nature. However, in Chapter 88 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased aspires to take on a crocodile form, signifying its spiritual significance: "Spell for assuming the form of a crocodile. To be said by N: I am Sobek within whom terror of him dells. I am Sobek, who carries off by violence; I am the fishes of Horus great in Athribis. I am Lord of obeisance in Letopolis" (Allen, 1974). In the New Kingdom tombs of Ramesses VII and Ramesses IX, a scene depicts a ram-headed sun disc emerging from a crocodile, further emphasizing the creature's role in creation and transformation (Hornung, 1990).

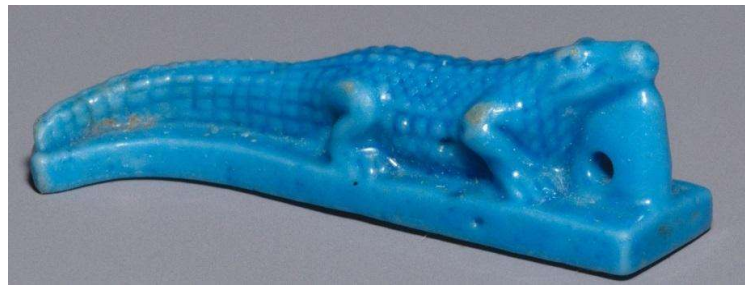


Figure 7: A faience crocodile amulet dating to the Ptolemaic Period (Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Object no. 1989.281.96))

## Tourist Commodities and Souvenirs

Tourism is one of Egypt's most vital economic sectors. Social and economic changes, coupled with the growing influence of tourism media, have driven a significant leap in the global tourism industry. As a result, tourist destinations have placed great emphasis on souvenir industries, recognizing them as a significant media tool that showcases their civilization. Consequently, traditional and craft industries have occupied a broad space in the tourism sector and have been considered part of the cultural tourism movement, given that these industries and products represent the identity of peoples and their human heritage, with their accumulated cultural roots. Therefore, traditional products should reflect the people, their art, and their civilization while also shaping a tourist's perception of Egyptian heritage (Bishr & Samir, 2021).

Recognizing heritage tourism as a driver of sustainable development, many governments support craftsmen to revitalize tourism and protect cultural heritage. By offering financial, moral, and recreational incentives, they encourage the purchase of traditional products that embody a destination's identity and civilization (Owaida, 2007).

The integration of water symbols into the design of tourist goods and antiquities undoubtedly enhances heritage tourism, contributing to national income growth. This impact is particularly evident in countries that have prioritized traditional industries, moving beyond a folkloric perspective to recognize them as a vital productive sector within tourism planning. According to Owaida (2007), heritage preservation is not about mere imitation but rather innovation that emerges from within heritage itself to align with contemporary needs. This highlights the urgent need for professional designers and effective design approaches in the

creation of tourist goods. The rich symbolism of ancient Egyptian civilization serves as a valuable resource for inspiring and enhancing the design and decoration of these products.

When tourists go on a tour, they acquire diverse souvenirs from the areas they visited, which express the specificity of that area and its culture (Bishr & Samir, 2021). Heritage elements in any country or region constitute one of the important tourist attractions that tourists are keen to know. Therefore, the motive for observing heritage is a common motive, whether for its preservation at the national level or at the tourism level (Khamis, 2014).

The tourists' desire to acquire items that document their visits and tourist trips has driven countries to place emphasis on tourist goods and antiquities in design, production, and marketing. This has given rise to what is known as "Bye-Buy," which is commonly observed in international airports and refers to the last-minute purchase of gifts and tourist souvenirs (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 2015).

Souvenirs and tourist goods serve as silent ambassadors, expressing the civilization of the destination (Al-Baradei, 2006). Souvenirs can be defined as "objects that enable the remembrance of specific places, occasions, or even individuals, as they prove a visit to a particular area and serve as a testament to the experience (Khamis, 2014). They encompass everything a tourist acquires from a destination in the form of tangible goods to remind them of their travel experience (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2015). Tourist souvenirs can also be defined as "small products that a tourist obtains as a memento from a visited country, through personal purchasing or as a gift. These products usually express the history, civilization, and culture of the producing country (Madin, 2010).

Furthermore, tourist souvenirs carry symbols and designs that express the civilization, culture, and antiquity of a destination (Al-Sawi et. al, 2022). These souvenirs are usually distinguished by their shapes, designs, and engravings, and they vary from one tourist destination to another (Fayoumi, 2023).

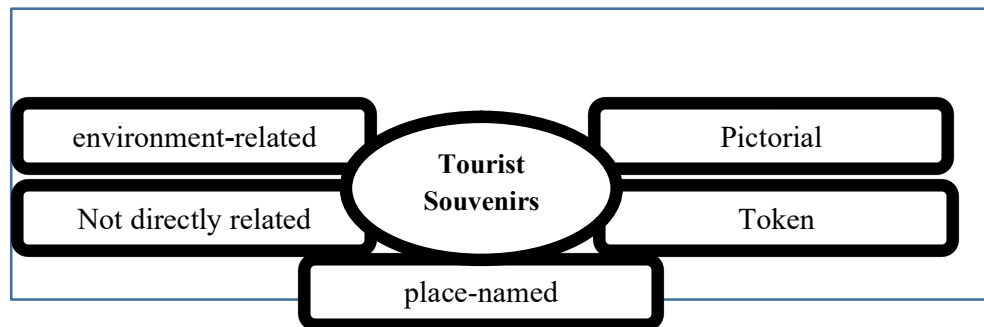


Figure (8): Types of Tourist Souvenirs

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on (Suhail, et., al, 203; Bishr and Samir, 2021)

The Egyptian Minister of Tourism's Decree No. 17 of 1993 and Decree No. 525 of 2011 define tourist goods and souvenirs as follows:

1. **Copper Products:** including engraved and non-engraved copper trays, whether inlaid with another metal or not, copper utensils, vases, candlesticks, and other copper artifacts.
2. **Leather Goods:** including as poufs, belts, wallets, leather bags of various types, pharaonic-style shoes. Additionally, wooden plates, and wooden products inlaid with shells or not, are also included.

3. **Wooden Products:** including *mashrabiya*s of various sizes and shapes, pharaonic-style chairs, wooden plates, and wooden products inlaid with shells or not.
4. **Gold Artifacts:** including gold and silver cartouches with a pharaonic style, gold jewelry inlaid with precious stones or not, imitating pharaonic shapes, silver jewelry, bracelets, and jewelry with pharaonic, Islamic, and Turkish styles, and other gold and silver artifacts.
5. **Artifacts and Jewelry:** including artifacts and jewelry made of metals, precious stones, natural stones, or synthetic stones.
6. **Cotton Products:** including T-shirts and *galabiyas* with pharaonic, oriental, or Egyptian shapes and colors, and various clothes with pharaonic, Islamic, Turkish, or Egyptian styles, whether embroidered or not.
7. **Handicrafts:** including those made of wool or silk, carpets made of pure or blended wool or silk, *kilims* of various types, paintings made of various fabrics such as Gobelin or serma, and needlework, whether embroidery or not.
8. **Glass Artifacts:** made of colored or stained glass, colored perfume bottles, and glass shapes such as statues, artifacts, and vases.
9. **Tourist Brochures and Postcards:** featuring Egyptian antiquities, beaches, and major tourist landmarks.
10. **Souvenirs and Artifacts:** including statues made of wood, ivory, alabaster, etc., provided they are not more than one hundred years old.
11. **Fishing and Diving Equipment:** including fishing rods, arrows, bows, etc.
12. **Perfumes:** including various types, especially those with an authentic oriental character made of musk or other various flowers.
13. **Papyrus Industry.**
14. **Handmade Carpets:** divided into handmade silk carpets and kilims, including woolen or cotton, and handmade silk carpets.
15. **Woolen Kilims:** often associated with the environment, whether Bedouin or coastal, and are handmade with spindles and handlooms, with women and children contributing to their making.
16. **Silver Artifacts:** mainly divided into two types: light silver artifacts, including jewelry, bracelets, pendants, medals, and cartouches, and heavy silver artifacts, including trays, plates, and incense burners.

### **The Role of Souvenirs in Affirming Identity and Promoting Tourism**

Tourist identity pertains to the unique characteristics of a destination that leave a lasting impression on the tourist's mind. It encompasses a set of human and cultural attributes that distinguish one tourist destination from another. Tourist identity is an integral part of the mental image of the tourist destination, including a set of characteristics such as the destination's identity, the tourist's image, and the features of the tourist product" (Asker, 1997). Tourist identity has become a subject of interest for researchers, particularly regarding its establishment and preservation as a key tourism component and a major attraction factor. This is especially significant in the face of globalization, which poses threats to diverse identities (Al-Sherbini & Abdallah, 2022).

The relationship between heritage and identity is gaining increasing importance due to the growing risks posed by globalization (including artificial intelligence) to the cultural and civilizational uniqueness of nations and peoples. The Egyptian nation has been exposed to a series of major and dangerous challenges throughout its long history (Halim, et al., 2023).

Handicrafts and traditional industries represent the creativity and innovation of Egyptian people, showcasing the harmony between their skills with and the natural environment in which they live. These crafts serve as a mirror reflecting Egypt's cultural heritage, embedding it within their artistry. In doing so, they preserve the historical legacy of the Egyptian people and reflect the identity of the Egyptian tourist destination (Hassan, 2013).

### **Importance of Tourist Souvenirs**

Tourist souvenirs play a significant role for travelers by transforming intangible experiences into tangible memories, serving as lasting reminders of their visit to a destination (Abdallah, et al., 2021). Beyond personal significance, tourist souvenirs contribute to the preservation of heritage, in addition to their role in marketing the tourist destination by highlighting heritage and cultural and play a vital role in promoting tourist destination. They also strengthen local cultures, and translate them into activities, businesses, and behaviors (Humaida & Al-Zaq, 2024).

### **Research Methodology**

This paper employs a descriptive analytical approach to examine the research phenomenon and analyze its dimensions. Additionally, a content analysis approach was used to prepare an illustrated guide for goods and products featuring water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization, available in bazaars and shops. The deductive approach was used to propose ideas and models for unique tourist commodities and souvenirs. Additionally, a professional graphic designer was commissioned to create a series of tourist souvenirs incorporating these water symbols. (Appendix1). To achieve this, 93 semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees at tourist commodity and antique shops in the Khan El-Khalili area from June 2024 to March 2025. During the interviews, the previously prepared guide was presented to them for feedback. Besides, a questionnaire was designed based on the Net Promoter Score Indicator (NPSI) to study the extent of tourists' satisfaction with Tourist Commodities (Laitinen, 2018), as well as their attitudes toward the use of water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization in tourist Commodities. A total of 403 questionnaires were distributed to tourists between October 2024 and February 2025; After excluding invalid forms, the researchers were able to analyze 283 forms using the simple random sample method.

### **Results of the study**

**The Result of the study is divided into two parts (Interview Analysis and Questionnaire Analysis)**

#### **Part One: Interview Analysis**

This phase aimed to assess the presence of water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization in the designs and decorations of tourist goods and souvenirs, 93 personal interviews were conducted with workers and owners of tourist bazaars in the Khan El-

Khalili area of Cairo. In addition to direct observation, primary data were collected through these interviews.

The personal interviews were conducted with workers in the bazaars of the Khan El-Khalili area, whose job titles varied, as shown in the following table:

- Nature of respondents' jobs based on interview responses:

Table (1) Respondents' Jobs

Job Title	Frequency	Percentage
Bazaar Owner	61	65.50%
Bazaar Manager	13	14%
Seller	19	20%
Total	93	100%

As shown in Table (1), the distribution of the respondents' jobs in the bazaars indicates that 61% of the sample interviewed were bazaar owners, 19% were sellers, and 13% were bazaar managers. This variation can be attributed to the fact that bazaars are small establishments, typically managed by their owners.

- Type of goods and antiquities sold in the bazaar or shop

Table (2) The activities of the tourist bazaars

	Papyrus	Copper	Leather	Gold	Silver	Wooden	Glass	Stones and Ceramics	Textiles	Clothing	others
Frequency	7	10	10	5	7	10	9	10	10	7	8
Percent	7.5%	11%	11%	5.5%	7.5%	11%	9.3%	11%	11%	7.5%	7.5%

As shown in Table (2), data were collected from stores specializing in various activities, including leather, Wooden products, Ceramics, textiles, copper products, each representing 11% of the sample. The remaining stores in the sample were distributed as follows: papyri, fashion and silverware stores 22.5%, (7.5% each), glass products represented 9.3%, and gold jewelry stores made up 5.5%.

Respondents were asked about the extent to which Pharaonic symbols are used in the design or decoration of the goods and products in their shops. Additionally, researchers conducted direct observations of the products displayed in the bazaars. Respondents were also questioned about the demand for goods and souvenirs featuring Pharaonic symbols, particularly those incorporating water symbols. The illustrated guide of goods and souvenirs bearing water symbols was then presented to identify which products aligned with each bazaar's specialty and which were suitable for tourists. The respondents' answers can be summarized as follows:

#### **Shops (Bazaars) Selling Wooden Products**

The majority of respondents (81%) indicated that the wooden products displayed to tourists in the sampled shops did not feature design or decorations with Pharaonic symbols. However, 15% of the shops confirmed that they offer products incorporating Pharaonic art and symbols.

The researchers observed a lack of wooden displays featuring symbols of Pharaonic civilization in general. This prompted further investigation into the demand for such products, particularly tourist goods designed or decorated with Pharaonic symbols.

The response was clear: there is a scarcity in the production of these goods, which explains the absence of wooden artifacts decorated with Pharaonic symbols. Seventy-one percent of the respondents confirmed that the demand for such goods comes from

foreign tourists who seek these artistic artifacts, especially when they find a clear translation of the inscriptions and writings in their language. However, this translation is typically only available verbally when sellers present their products to tourists. Additionally, 79% of respondents believe that these products should include an explanation of their artistic value and the meaning of their symbolism in English, at a minimum. This would help turn these products into effective publicity tools and tourist ambassadors in key markets. When the illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to the respondents in the wooden product shops, their responses varied between products that already bear water symbols and other products that could be redesigned for production using wood. The respondents in the wooden goods and souvenir shops confirmed that the products shown to them from the illustrated guide coded (Figure 26, Figure 27, Figure 34), are available and carry the same design. However, the respondents were unaware of the meaning or symbolism of the design. Additionally, when examining the illustrated guide of goods and souvenirs featuring water symbols, respondents in the wooden goods shops noted that many designs could be reproduced using wood, including the coded models (Figure 20, Figure 22, Figure 25, Figure 36, Figure 44, Figure 47)".

#### **Shops Selling Glass Products**

The respondents' answers varied significantly when asked about Pharaonic decorations in glass products and artifacts. Regarding the use of ancient Egyptian art in the artistic designs of glass products, the respondents confirmed that no more than 30% of the displayed products feature Pharaonic inscriptions and decorations.

When the respondents were asked about the demand for such goods, the answer was clear: Egyptians generally request glass products, while foreign tourists tend to seek small glass pieces with artistic and aesthetic value. The researchers observed the presence of glass souvenirs that lacking designs or symbolism related to Egyptian tourist destinations, and respondents confirmed that these items are imported. When the illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to respondents in the glass product shops, their responses varied. Some acknowledged the availability of products with water symbols, while others suggested that certain designs could be adapted for production in glass. Respondents in the glass goods and souvenir shops confirmed that the items presented to them from the illustrated guide coded (Figure 18, Figure 23, Figure 24, Figure 41, Figure 45), are available and share the same design. However, they were unaware of the meaning or symbolism behind the design. Additionally, respondents in the glass product shops noted that upon reviewing the illustrated guide of goods and souvenirs featuring water symbols, many designs could be produced in glass, including the coded models in (Figure 25, Figure 32, Figure 44, and Figure 51).

#### **Shops Selling Leather Products**

Most of the respondents gave positive answers, indicating that many leather products displayed to tourists in the sampled shops feature Pharaonic designs and decorations.

In response to the question about the demand for leather products featuring Pharaonic symbols, respondents indicated a growing demand, particularly from foreign tourists seeking items that symbolize ancient Egyptian civilization.

Respondents confirmed that Egyptians are the least likely to purchase handmade leather products due to their high prices. They also emphasized the need for the state

to focus on the design and decoration of tourist goods in general, especially leather products.

When illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to respondents in leather product shops, their responses varied. Some acknowledged the availability of such products, while others suggested that certain designs could be adapted for production in leather.

Respondents in leather goods and souvenir shops confirmed that the item presented to them from the illustrated guide (coded as Figure 48) is available and shares the same design. However, they were unaware of its meaning or symbolism. Additionally, respondents in leather product shops noted that after reviewing the illustrated guide of goods and souvenirs featuring water symbols, many designs could be reproduced in leather, including the coded models (Figure 11, Figure 20, Figure 21, Figure 22, Figure 31, Figure 36, and Figure 40).

### **Clothing and Fashion Shops**

Sixty-five percent of respondents gave negative responses, indicating the absence of Pharaonic designs or decorations in the clothing displayed to tourists in the sampled shops. However, 35% of fashion shops confirmed that they do offer products featuring Pharaonic art and decorations, though these are exclusively for women.

The researchers observed that fabrics featuring Pharaonic decorations and inscriptions are exclusively designed for women, with no similar products available for men. Respondents attributed this to the higher demand for clothing and fabrics among women compared to men.

Respondents identified two main challenges: first, the scarcity of artistic designs inspired by inscriptions and writings on the fabrics, which hinders effective product marketing.

When illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to respondents in clothing and fashion shops, their responses varied. Some acknowledged the availability of such products, while others suggested that certain designs could be adapted for production using fabrics.

Respondents in clothing and souvenir shops confirmed that the items presented to them from the illustrated guide (coded as Figure 8, Figure 13, Figure 15, and Figure 43) are available and share the same design. However, they were unaware of the meaning or symbolism behind the design.

### **Textile Shops**

Respondents confirmed that textiles are categorized into two types based on their use: the first type is used for floor coverings, while the second is intended for wall hangings or personal use. Regarding textiles used for floor coverings, researchers observed that wall textiles featuring Pharaonic symbols are highly prevalent, with little competition from other artistic styles in commercial shop displays. This led to an inquiry about the demand for such products, and the response was clear: tourists of various nationalities actively seek these wall hangings, considering them meaningful souvenirs and affordable gifts. Foreign tourists are also more likely to purchase them when the inscriptions are explained. Respondents believe that the abundance of designs incorporating symbols of ancient Egyptian civilization helps cater to the diverse preferences and tastes of tourists.

When illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to respondents in textile shops, their responses varied. Some acknowledged the availability of such products, while others suggested that certain designs could be adapted for textile production. Respondents confirmed that the items presented from the illustrated guide (coded as Figure 9, and Figure 14) are available and share the same design, though they were unaware of the meaning or symbolism behind it. Additionally, upon reviewing the illustrated guide of goods and souvenirs featuring water symbols, respondents noted that many designs could be reproduced using textiles, including the coded models in Figure 20, Figure 22 and Figure 32.

#### **Papyrus and Paper Painting Shops**

The majority of respondents (93%) confirmed that most available papyrus designs feature Pharaonic themes. They also noted that demand for papyrus and artistic paintings with Pharaonic decorations is higher among foreign tourists. Respondents suggested adding translations in foreign languages beneath the paintings, as this would significantly enhance their appeal and increase demand among international visitors.

When illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to respondents in papyrus shops, their responses varied. Some acknowledged the availability of such products, while others suggested that certain designs could be adapted for production using papyrus. Respondents in glass goods and souvenir shops confirmed that the items presented from the illustrated guide (coded as Figure 20 and Figure 22) are available and share the same design, though they were unaware of its meaning or symbolism. Additionally, upon reviewing the illustrated guide of goods and souvenirs featuring water symbols, respondents noted that many designs could be reproduced using papyrus, including the coded models in Figure 11 and Figure 32.

#### **Metal Product Shops**

**A. Gold Artifact Shops:** When respondents working in gold artifact shops were asked about the use of ancient Egyptian art, they immediately pointed to a dedicated section displaying numerous gold pieces adorned with symbols of ancient Egyptian art.

**B. Copper Artifact Shops:** Respondents confirmed that copper products are among the most distinctive tourist goods displayed in Khan El-Khalili markets, valued for their craftsmanship and uniqueness. They also noted that many of their designs predominantly feature Pharaonic motifs

**C. Silver and Metal Artifact Shops:** Respondents confirmed that the first request foreign tourists typically make is for a silver item inscribed with their name or the name of a loved one in ancient Egyptian. They also noted that their metal, silver, and bronze products feature diverse designs and uses. Additionally, tourists of various nationalities are keen to purchase these items, as they serve as meaningful souvenirs to commemorate their trips to Egypt.

When illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to respondents in gold, silver, and metal artifact shops, their responses varied. Some acknowledged the availability of such products, while others suggested that certain designs could be adapted for production using gold and silver. Respondents confirmed that the items presented from the illustrated guide (coded as Figure 10, Figure 12, Figure 21, Figure 28, Figure 29, Figure 31, Figure 33, Figure 37, and Figure 40) are available and share the same design, though they were unaware of its meaning or symbolism.

### Ceramic and Stone Shops (Bazaars)

The majority of respondents (73%) gave positive responses, confirming the availability of Pharaonic designs and decorations in the ceramic products displayed to tourists in the sampled shops. However, 27% of ceramic shop respondents stated that they were unsure whether their products featured Pharaonic art and symbols.

When illustrated models featuring water symbols were presented to respondents in ceramic shops, their responses varied. Some acknowledged the availability of such products, while others suggested that certain designs could be adapted for production using ceramics. Respondents confirmed that the items presented from the illustrated guide (coded as Figure 25, Figure 36, Figure 39, Figure 42, Figure 44, Figure 47, and Figure 51) are available and share the same design, though they were unaware of its meaning or symbolism.

**Part Two:** A questionnaire was designed using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) indicator to assess tourists' satisfaction with tourist commodities and their attitudes toward incorporating water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization into these products.

To ensure the study sample of tourists was representative of the population, the questionnaires were distributed randomly to male and female tourists of different nationalities and various age groups.

Table (3) Demographic data

Variable	Frequency	(%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	190	67%
Female	93	33%
<b>Age Group</b>		
Less than 25	40	14%
Between 25 and 50	209	73%
Over 50	37	13%
<b>Tourism market</b>		
European tourists	122	43.5%
Egyptians	40	14%
Arab tourists	83	29.5%
Southeast Asian tourists	19	6.7%
American tourists	12	4.3%
other	5	1.8%

Table 3 indicates that 67% of the respondents are male, while 33% are female. The majority of tourists (73%) fall within the middle age category of 25 to 50 years. The second-largest age group represents 14% of the sample. In terms of nationality, European tourists make up the largest segment at 43.5%, followed by Arab tourists at 29.5%, and Egyptian tourists at 14%.

### Descriptive statistics for the study sample about Pharaonic symbols and motifs related to water in the design of tourist goods and souvenirs

To determine the extent of satisfaction of the study sample of tourists with tourist souvenirs decorated with water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization, five

statements were used to measure the degree of popularity, distinctiveness, quality, variety, and reflection of the Egyptian tourist destination's identity.

Table (4) Tourists' level of satisfaction with tourist souvenirs and motifs designed with water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization

Statement	Frequencies\ Percent					mean	Std. Deviation
	Completely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Completely Disagree		
Tourist souvenirs and commodities decorated with water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization are fashionable.	25	94	63	22	79	2.872	2.452
	8.8%	33.2%	22.3%	7.7%	28%		
The aesthetic of tourist souvenirs and commodities decorated with water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization is distinct.	29	102	56	37	59	3.017	1.921
	10%	36%	20%	13%	21%		
Tourist souvenirs and commodities decorated with water symbols reflect the Egyptian tourist destination's identity.	39	91	24	46	83	2.848	1.418
	14%	32%	8.4%	16%	29%		
The quality of tourist souvenirs and commodities decorated with water symbols is appropriate.	17	22	38	77	129	2.014	1.311
	6%	7.7%	13.4%	27%	45.5%		
The wide range of tourist souvenirs and commodity exhibits designed with water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization caters to all tastes.	15	11	29	89	139	1.848	0.926
	5.3%	4%	10%	31.4%	49%		
<b>The Total Mean</b>						2.489	1.212

Table (4) reveals that the statement, *'The aesthetic of tourist souvenirs and commodities decorated with water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization is distinct,'* received a neutral level of acceptance, with a mean score of 3.017. However, the statement, *'The wide range of tourist souvenirs and commodity exhibits designed with water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization caters to all tastes,'* ranked as the most rejected, with a mean score of 1.848. Additionally, respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the statement, *'The quality of tourist souvenirs and commodities decorated with water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization is appropriate,'* which had a mean score of 2.014.

These findings suggest that tourists, as represented by the study sample, are generally dissatisfied with the current tourist products and commodities available in shops. This underscores the importance of leveraging water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization to enhance and enrich these offerings.

presents the results of a question posed to the sample members regarding their likelihood of recommending tourist commodities featuring water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization to their friends and colleagues

Table (5) Degree of willingness to recommend to others the acquisition of tourist souvenirs bearing water symbols

Scores	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequencies	9	4	7	11	36	13	39	41	67	59
Percent	3.1 %	1.4 %	2.4 %	3.9 %	12.7 %	4.6 %	13.7 %	14.5 %	24.4 %	20.8%
Detractors							Passive		Promoters	
	26.6%						28.2%		45.2%	

The rating scale ranged from 1 (*would not recommend at all, 0%*) to 10 (*would highly recommend, 100%*).

Scores (9 and 10) indicate positive customers who advocate and recommend tourism commodities, whereas scores (7 and 8) indicate negative customers whose pleasure with tourism commodities is average, and scores (1:6) indicate unsatisfied customers, according to the Net Promotion Score Index.

Table 5 also shows that 45.2 percent of the research sample are promoters who believe it is necessary to provide tourism commodities that include water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization, and 28.2 percent of the sample are negative clients who are satisfied with the integration of water symbols in ancient Egyptian civilization into tourism commodities but are less willing to defend and adopt the idea. Also, 26.6 percent of the respondents said they would not design tourism products, such as water symbols.

And regarding the question of which of the sample members would prefer the tourist commodities, the answers were as shown in the following:

Table (6) the tourist commodities would be preferred

Products	Papyri	Copper	Textiles	Glass	Wooden	Silverware	Gold works	Leather
Frequencies	109	117	98	68	77	120	88	82

The table (6) also shows that the participants of the research sample thought that tourist commodities and antiquities made of silver came in first place as the best products favored by tourists, followed by products made of copper, papyrus products in third place, and wooden products in fourth place. A preference indicated by the tourists, as in the study's sample.

Respondents' Suggestions to Activate **the Role of Tourist Goods and Souvenirs in Enhancing Tourist Identity**

Table (7) Role of Tourist Goods and Souvenirs in Enhancing Tourist Identity

No.	Statement		Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree	Mean	St. Deviation
1	Adding short stories or historical information on packaging or with products, especially those related to the beliefs of ancient Egyptians.	F	-	-	3	88	192	4.67	0.583
		%	-	-	1%	31%	68%		
2	Providing products that carry water symbols to suit all age groups and nationalities, such as products for children, women, and men.	F	3	5	48	117	110	4.15	0.928
		%	1%	1.8%	17%	41%	39%		
3	The necessity of using modern technologies such as 3D Printing to create unique designs based on symbols of ancient Egyptian civilization.	F	14	22	61	89	97	3.82	1.125
		%	5%	8%	21.5%	31%	34%		
4	Providing practical products that can be used daily, such as bags, cups, accessories, and tablecloths, reflecting the identity, beliefs, and heritage of the tourist destination.	F	-	2	73	208	-	4.72	0.617
		%	-	1%	26%	73%	-		
5	The necessity of adding interactive touches, such as QR Codes that can be scanned to access information about the product or Egyptian history, or its production story (in the case of handicrafts).	F	-	1	71	211	-	4.74	0.643
		%	-	0.5%	25%	74.5%	-		

6	The necessity of designing elegant packaging that reflects Egyptian identity, using colors and motifs inspired by heritage.	F	-	4	5	144	130	4.41	0.893
		%	-	1.2%	1.8%	51%	46%		
7	The necessity of offering limited-edition products or those linked to specific occasions, such as holidays or celebrations related to the Nile.	F	4	8	23	181	77	4.23	0.919
		%	1.3%	2.7%	8%	64%	27%		
8	Creating interactive experiences by offering small workshops in tourist shops to teach tourists how to make some handmade products.	F	6	10	22	132	113	4.18	0.958
		%	2%	3.4%	8%	46.6%	40%		
The general Mean								4.36	1.190

As evident from Table (7), the statement "The necessity of adding interactive touches, such as scannable QR codes for accessing product information, Egyptian history, or its production story (in the case of handicrafts)" ranked first among the most accepted suggestions by respondents, with a mean of (4.74) and a standard deviation of (0.643), indicating a high level of agreement among the sample members. The statement "Providing practical and daily-use products, such as bags, mugs, accessories, and mats that reflect the destination's identity, beliefs, and heritage" ranked second in importance from the tourists' perspective within the sample, with a mean of (4.72) and a standard deviation of (0.617), also indicating a high level of agreement among the sample members regarding the suggestion.

Furthermore, Table (7) shows that the statement "Adding short historical stories or information on packaging or with products, especially those related to ancient Egyptian beliefs" ranked third in importance, with a mean of (4.67) and a standard deviation of (0.583), indicating a high level of agreement among the sample members regarding the importance of the suggestion. Respondents also emphasized the importance of the statement "The necessity of designing elegant packaging that reflects the Egyptian identity, using colors and motifs inspired by heritage," which ranked fourth in importance, with a mean of (4.41) and a standard deviation of (0.893).

The suggestion "The necessity of offering limited-edition products or those related to specific occasions, such as holidays or Nile-related celebrations" ranked fifth in priority from the respondents' perspective, with a mean of (4.23) and a standard deviation of (0.919).

Tourists also emphasized the importance of creating interactive experiences by providing small workshops in tourist shops to teach tourists how to make some handicrafts. This was evident from the agreement among respondents, with a mean of (4.18) and a standard deviation of (0.958), indicating the respondents' consensus on the importance of the suggestion, ranking it sixth.

### **Discussion**

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the utilization of water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization in the designs of goods and tourist souvenirs displayed in the Khan el-Khalili area of Cairo. The field study was divided into three main parts: content analysis of tourist shops, personal interviews with bazaar workers, and a questionnaire to assess tourists' opinions on these products.

The analysis of tourist shops, bazaars, and online stores revealed a significant diversity in goods and souvenirs featuring water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization. This underscores the importance of water in the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, which aligns with the study by (Abdelal, 2022). Furthermore, 48 different tourist souvenirs reflecting these symbols were designed, indicating a substantial potential for using these symbols to enhance the Egyptian tourism identity, consistent with the findings of (Beshr & Samir, 2021; Abd Elrahman & ELbarbary, 2021; Mohsen, 2017). However, it was observed that many of these designs lack a clear explanation of their symbolic meanings, which may limit their cultural and touristic value.

Personal interviews revealed that a significant proportion (65.5%) of the respondents were bazaar owners, while sellers constituted 20%, and bazaar managers 14%. This distribution reflects the nature of small establishments directly managed by their owners, which may affect the ability of these bazaars to adopt more sophisticated design practices, a finding consistent with (Shokr, 2022). The most common goods were those made from copper products, leather, textiles, and paper, each accounting for 11%. Nevertheless, the results showed that many wooden and glass products lack Pharaonic designs, indicating an opportunity to enhance the use of water symbols in these products. The findings also indicated that a significant proportion (81%) of wooden product stores do not display products bearing Pharaonic symbols, while a small number only (15%) confirmed the presence of such products. In contrast, leather goods and textiles showed greater utilization of Pharaonic symbols, reflecting a preference for these products among foreign tourists. Consequently, the integration of the aesthetics of water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization into the design and decoration of tourist commodities and souvenirs enhances the variety of these products and fulfills the preferences of diverse tourist groups.

Regarding the demand for these souvenirs, a significant proportion (71%) of the respondents confirmed that the demand for products featuring Pharaonic symbols primarily comes from foreign tourists who seek a clear interpretation of the symbols and inscriptions. This underscores the availability of demand for tourist commodities that feature aesthetic and unique design elements, with the level of demand varying based on the materials used. Additionally, 79% of the respondents pointed to the necessity of adding explanations in English to enhance the value of these products. Consequently, Providing interpretations of inscriptions on all products and

commodities decorated with water symbols in foreign languages enhances their appeal and increases demand

The research sample included 283 tourists, The results showed that tourists are generally dissatisfied with the quality of current tourist products. However, 45.2% of the sample indicated that they would recommend products featuring water symbols. Silver products ranked first as the most preferred products among tourists, followed by copper products, then paper products (papyrus), and finally wooden products. The study by Kosba (2022) emphasized the importance of integrating metals and leather to produce multi-material tourist souvenirs. Tourists emphasized the importance of adding brief historical information on packaging or with the products, especially those related to ancient Egyptian beliefs. They also supported the idea of using modern technologies such as 3D printing to design unique products.

Approximately 45% of tourists are satisfied customers, reflecting their approval of the integration of water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization into tourist antiquities and souvenirs. In contrast, 26.6% expressed dissatisfaction with antiquities that incorporate water symbols in their design and decoration.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Nile was not only an indispensable resource for agriculture and daily life but also a divine entity that profoundly shaped Egypt's historical and cultural trajectory. This study explores the significance of incorporating water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization to enhance Egypt's tourism identity.

A carefully selected group of water-related objects from ancient Egypt was chosen based on criteria emphasizing authenticity and suitability for a modern tourist campaign. These objects were selected with the intention of reflecting the deep-rooted presence of water and water-related motifs in all aspects of ancient Egyptian life. The researchers propose that these symbols can effectively revitalize Egypt's cultural identity.

Findings indicate that the design quality of products available in shops and bazaars needs improvement, as survey results suggest that tourists are generally dissatisfied with their craftsmanship. Additionally, providing clear and accessible information about these objects is crucial to maximizing their cultural and economic value. In this regard, QR codes could be highly beneficial, allowing tourists to scan and learn about the historical and cultural significance of these items. This study filled design gaps in the Egyptian souvenir industry, integrated ancient Egyptian water symbols, and promotes tourism through heritage-driven, evidence-based product innovation to create a new framework for creating culturally genuine tourist souvenirs.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Tourist commodities and souvenirs featuring water symbols from ancient Egyptian civilization should be diversified based on gender—men, women, and children. Additionally, it is recommended to design variations tailored to tourists' languages, distinguishing between Arabic-speaking and non-Arabic-speaking visitors.
- Incorporating water symbols into the decoration of souvenirs across various materials—such as clothing, textiles, silverware, ceramics, glass, metals, and papyrus—enhances their cultural and artistic appeal.
- Providing modern tourist goods suitable for various aspirations

- Supporting and encouraging designers and heritage enthusiasts to create souvenirs that authentically represent the region and its cultural occasions.
  - Encouraging businessmen to support projects that use handicrafts to recreate heritage artifacts with modern ideas and techniques, preserving their originality while infusing them with a contemporary spirit.
  - It is essential to include translations in foreign languages, especially English, for the decorative water symbols and inscriptions on tourist commodities and souvenirs.
- Establishing a company under the Chamber of Commodities and Antiquities to specialize in purchasing handmade goods and antiques from workshops across the country and distributing them through dedicated outlets in tourist cities. This initiative would encourage workshop owners to increase production and sustain craftsmanship.

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*Palaces–Artistic and Craftwork Heritage is a communication language between nations–International Design magazine.*










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## APPENDIX (1)

		
<p>Figure (8): A scarf adorned with repeated lotus flower motifs</p>	<p>Figure (9): A fabric bag adorned with a lotus flower in a circular design.</p>	<p>Figure (10): A gold ring designed in the shape of a lotus flower and inlaid with colors.</p>
		
<p>Figure (11): A wall painting decorated with a bouquet of lotus flowers.</p>	<p>Figure (12): A gold necklace designed in the shape of an inverted lotus flower, inlaid with gemstones.</p>	<p>Figure (13): A scarf decorated with repeated lotus flower motifs.</p>
		
<p>Figure (14): A fabric bag adorned with an image of the deity Hapi holding a lotus flower.</p>	<p>Figure (15): A scarf decorated with repeated lotus flower motifs.</p>	<p>Figure (16): A silver cup adorned with a lotus flower</p>

		
Figure (17): A gold necklace adorned with a lotus flower and a blue scarab.	Figure (18): A hot beverage cup decorated with lotus flowers.	Figure (19): A wall painting decorated with lotus flowers.
		
Figure (20): A wall painting depicting the deity Hapi holding two lotus flowers.	Figure (21): A metal pendant in the shape of a fish.	Figure (22): wall painting inspired from the cartoon mummy of Tamut now how is in the British Museum.
		
Figure (23): An accessory in the shape of a lotus flower.	Figure (24): A glass plate designed in the shape of a lotus flower.	Figure (25) Ceramic vases decorated with lotus flower designs

		
<p>Figure (26): A wooden crocodile figurine.</p>	<p>Figure (27): A wooden fish figurine.</p>	<p>Figure (28): A gold bracelet designed with a fish shape on one end and a lotus flower on the other.</p>
		
<p>Figure (29): A silver ring designed in the shape of a fish.</p>	<p>Figure (30): A metal keychain pendant in the shape of a fish.</p>	<p>Figure (31): A gold earring in the shape of a crocodile.</p>
		
<p>Figure (32): A wall painting inspired by depictions of the god Sobek.</p>	<p>Figure (33): A gold earring designed in the shape of a lotus flower.</p>	<p>Figure (34): A stone figurine of the deity Sobek in the form of a crocodile</p>

		
<p>Figure (35): A turquoise pendant in the shape of a tilapia fish (below) inspired from a Middle Kingdom pendant (above).</p>	<p>Figure (36): A crocodile figurine painted blue inspired from a figure of god Sobek, now preserved at Metropolitan Museum of Art.</p>	
		
<p>Figure (37): A gold ring designed with two opposing lotus flowers.</p>	<p>Figure (38) A decorated pen featuring papyrus plant motifs</p>	<p>Figure (39) A ceramic cup featuring a lotus design</p>
		
<p>Figure (40) A ring made of copper featuring a <i>tilapia</i> fish design</p>	<p>Figure (41) A glass plate decorated with papyrus flowers</p>	<p>Figure (42) A model of a plate featuring engravings of the papyrus plant, also colored in blue</p>

		
<p>Figure (43): A T-shirt decorated with a lotus flower, incorporating colors that symbolize water as a sign of vitality and renewal, along with gold representing continuity.</p>	<p>Figure (44): A porcelain vase designed in the shape of lotus leaves.</p>	<p>Figure (45): A metal brooch in the shape of a crocodile, adorned with pieces of colored glass.</p>
		
<p>Figure (46): A fabric crocodile doll stuffed with cotton.</p>	<p>Figure (47) A porcelain vase decorated with a lotus flower</p>	<p>Figure (48): A leather pencil case in the shape of a fish.</p>
		
<p>Figure (49): A silver earring designed in the shape of a lotus flower with an eye for protection inside.</p>	<p>Figure (50): A crystal figurine designed in the shape of a lotus flower.</p>	<p>Figure (51): A ceramic key holder shaped like a crocodile and colored blue.</p>