Gender Roles and Non-Binary Representation in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt

by

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This thesis analyzes how artistic depictions of different genders are represented in Ancient Egyptian art as more binary under the influences of Ancient Greek and Roman rule. I demonstrate this development through the archaeological record of remaining sculptures and other human figurines, as well as literary sources and historical interpretation, which indicate a shift in artistic style and other societal norms. Furthermore, many of these samples are artifacts of the elite and wealthy upper classes who had the time and resources to commission such art. My focus is on the time period when Ptolemy I Soter started his Egyptian monarchal dynasty in 305 B.C.E., and after Rome seized Egypt as a colony in the Battle of Actium of 31 B.C.E. While sex is traditionally contrasted between the masculine and feminine, non-binary is a term that refers to a gender which does not identify with either male or female. Ancient Egypt itself had its own gendered art characteristics and history of androgynous sculptures and figures, usually in the representations of the gods and monarchs. However, with the cultural influences of the non-Egyptian monarchs, ruling figures and other depictions of gender identities display more hyper-feminine and hyper-masculine characteristics. Yet, androgynous artistic sculptures decrease during the Roman reign with the Greek sexualization of androgyny and different ideals towards depictions of women than the Romans. As the gender roles of the *matronae* and *viri* are more enforced within artistic depictions in Roman Egypt, the number of non-binary traits decreases in Roman Egyptian art because the ideal values change, allowing traditional Roman ideals of femininity and masculinity to take precedence over the actual appearance of the individual.

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1.0 Introduction

Under the definition provided by non-binary people themselves, I am choosing to interchange both androgyny and non-binary. I am arguing that the traits represented in human sculpture differ from the traditional masculine and feminine characteristics but cannot prove the existence of non-binary gender identities themselves.[1] Traditional femininity and masculinity in the context of this thesis refer to the western ideals of the delicate, gracile female figure and the sharp, robust male figure.[2] This distinction, however, then brings the opportunity to question how we view the ancient world and what biases we have subconsciously put in place. Since gender identity is more complex than just how people appear, I acknowledge many non-binary people may choose to represent themselves in traditionally feminine, masculine, or androgynous ways. Therefore, the concepts I use within this dissertation pertain to how the influence of the Greeks and Romans enforced the idealization of gender-conforming traits. This is traced through the artistic analysis of various pieces of Ptolemaic and Roman Egyptian art in comparison to the traditional standards of art within ancient Egypt. Through looking at historical context and literature, we also can see the extent of influence. This interpretation is further supported and represented in conjunction with artistic anthropomorphic depictions.

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[1] "Understanding Non-Binary People: How to Be Respectful and Supportive", 2020

[2] The traditional binary gender depictions are based on gendered stereotypes. See: Kachel, Steffens, and Niedlich 2016 for more information on the traditional gender binary view and the effect of cultural influence on masculinity and femininity. They use the word "traditionally" to understand their participant's conception of social norms associated with gender role identity aspects, and so I use it the same way in this thesis.

In this study, I begin with a historical analysis of Egyptian standards of gender within art, paying particular attention to Hatshepsut and Akhenaten. These two figures are the most evidenced in androgynous sculptures within the Egyptian royal family. Through the royal family and deity practices, we can understand the tolerance and acceptance of androgyny in these conditions. Then, I focus on Greek historical marriage practices and women's societal role to give context to gender treatment. I pay attention to the practice of pederasty to show the sexualization of androgynous young boys, which affects the overall Greek art style. In this case, non-binary identities are not likely represented, but the depiction of non-binary traits are more tolerated in this realm. The extent of influence therefore shows how much Greek art style influenced the Egyptian anthropomorphic depictions and therefore how blended the art style would be. Such authors as Herodotus and Manetho show the literary traditions based in the blending of Greek and Egyptian practices as these authors talk about aspects of culture. Then, as with the Greek background, we look at Roman practices in the same way. Marriage practices and the Roman law institutions implemented after the civil war. Authors such as Juvenal provide firsthand accounts of Roman opinion towards Egypt and their extreme othering against Egypt in comparison to the Ptolemaic Greek rule. Gender roles are strictly implemented as with the Greeks, but further influence Egyptian affairs, leading to a change in social structure.

Gender identities are more than the roles that are attributed to them, but the way society interacts with various genders will therefore change how masculine, feminine, and non-binary traits. It is on this basis that I create the next three sections. By analyzing the facial and bodily traits of monarchal and deity depictions of ancient Egyptians and the Ptolemies and the mummy mask, panel paintings, and emperor images in Roman Egypt, we will compare and contrast the changes over time that these elite figures take. During Roman Egypt, the mummy mask and panel painting are important due to the elite ruling class changing and the conforming features

represented by these figures. Instead of the original royal family, there are now various images of different people, who show distinct similarities. Because the feminine and masculine traits of the Romans are very distinct, we can see how the non-binary traits have been filtered out over time and modified to fit the Roman standard in comparison to the previous Egyptian and Ptolemaic art. This paper therefore seeks to use traits to show how individuals lose their sense of identity to represent an extreme feminine and masculine that would overpower evidence of non-binary people from these time periods. Appearance does not immediately equate to gender identity, but it is an important factor, especially in obtaining archaeological evidence.

1.1 A Gender-Centered History of Egypt

The idea of divine kingship, or the concept in which the king is the living incarnation of, or related to a god, took great precedence in ancient Egyptian culture.[3] Therefore, when the kings wanted to depict themselves, they strove to honor and represent these gods by idealizing both feminine and masculine features. They then created a more ambiguous image. Wilfong describes how ancient Egypt contains "a complex system of gendered divisions" in which everything is given specific feminine and masculine markers.[4] Other gender markers are also considered by Wilfong as he

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[3] See: Shaw, 2003

[4] Wilfong 2007, p.206-207

remarks on the 'third' gender categories within ancient Egyptian language and society.[5] These markers represent themselves chiefly in the monarchal representations based on those religious values. Hatshepsut, a monarch who ruled from 1479-1458 B.C.E., encompassed this ideal by deciding to reject the typical feminine representations and to wear male adornments, having removed typical feminine characteristics from her sculptures to establish herself as the official king.[6] In Figure 1, this statue early in her reign depicts herself wearing the *nemes*, a male Pharaonic headdress. In other statues, she would also don a *uraeus* adornment, a snake-shaped decoration, which represents the male genitalia, traditional Pharaonic beard, and male wrap.[7] In one sculpture, she wears red skin, the traditional masculine color, and in another she has pink skin, combining yellow and red skin, which are assumed feminine and masculine, respectively.[8] In these sculptures, as seen in Figure 2, Hatshepsut deliberately changes her appearance, removing her breasts and other female genitalia, and dressing in traditionally masculine dress. What function does this androgynous view, then, have?

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[5] Wilfong 2007, p.206-207 – In the New Kingdom Tale of Two Brothers, Wilfong tells us that Bata cut off his penis and tells his wife he is now a female implying an "extraordinary statement on Egyptian understandings of gender, but I question whether this would truly imply a transgender individual or emasculation.

[6] Hilliard and Wurtzel, 2009, p.25

[7] Hilliard and Wurtzel, 2009, p.27

[8] Matić, 2016, p.819
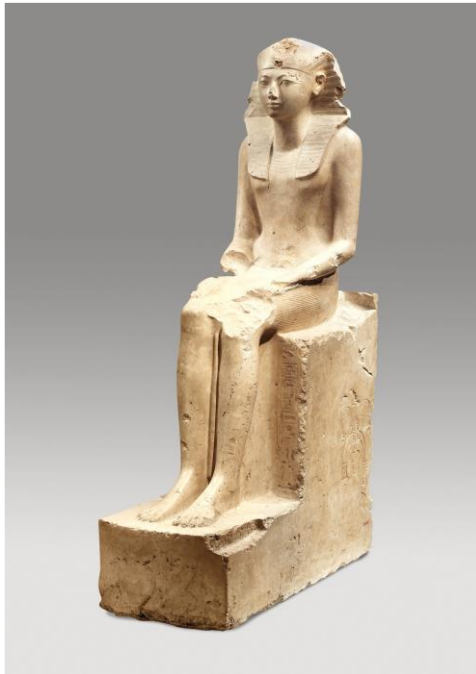
Figure 1: Seated Statue of Hatshepsut
c. 1479-1458 B.C.E. (New Kingdom)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 29.3.2,
Rogers Fund, 1930

Figure 2: Large Kneeling Statue of Hatshepsut
c. 1479-1458B.C.E. (New Kingdom)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
30.3.1, Rogers Fund, 1930

The question is more complex and can be broken down into three parts: whether Hatshepsut had actually made a statement about her gender identity; had wanted to increase her power using a more masculine persona; or had religious ideals that went beyond a binary view of sex and gender. Hatshepsut is not the only one nor the first monarch to represent herself in a non-binary view. Hillard and Wurtzel agree that many of the traditional kings would use the symbolism of gods to maintain the role of both the mother and the father of the kingdom.[9] This symbolism was used to encompass the idea of representing all forms of divinity, as the human-encased god

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[9] Hilliard and Wurtzel, 2009, p.27

themselves.[10] Before the reign of Hatshepsut, there is evidence of other queen regents and even the mothers of kings having the power of the primary monarch.[11] One queen in particular, who Hatshepsut may have been inspired by, was Neferusobek of the 12th dynasty, who went by titles such as *female Horus* and *daughter of Re*.[12] She chose to represent herself androgynously. Hatshepsut was still more extreme in personifying these androgynous characteristics, but that may be due to the loss of archaeological evidence from other regents over time. It remains that Hatpshepsut did not completely remove all feminine traits, and it is highly likely that she wanted more than an increase of power using masculine ideals, but in terms of religion or gender identity, it is up to interpretation. The expression of non-binary traits stands and prompts us to question her identity outside the heteronormative standard.

Within the same dynasty, king Akhenaten, who reigned from around 1353 to 1336 B.C.E., also had artistic non-binary representations. Lorenz states that "in sculptures and paintings of Akhenaten, he is shown as having a long, slender neck, a long face with a sharp chin, narrow, almond-shaped eyes, full lips, long arms and fingers, rounded thighs and buttocks, a soft belly, and enlarged breasts."[13]

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[10] According to Matić, in the ancient Egyptian religious literature, Neith, the warrior goddess, "is said to be two-thirds male and one-third female in texts from the Temple of Esna," and on various statues and texts, there are various depictions of goddesses with beards or erected penises, like the mother goddess, Mut. See: Matić, 2016, p.814

[11] Matić, 2016, p.814

[12] Matić, 2016, p.819

[13] Lorenz 1996

Figure 3: Akhenaten Face Inlay
The Carnegie Museum of Natural History 7043-22

As pictured in the face inlay of Figure 3, Akhenten's face has relatively soft features without the masculine lines or pharaonic beard. These traits listed are also indicative of a more rounded, curvy representation of a man, especially with the emphasized 'enlarged breasts' in contrast to the sharp, rigid edges associated with the traditional masculine form. While some argue that this is due to some hormonal disease from years of inbreeding, others remark on his religious belief in Aten, a monotheistic god, who is known as the mother and father.[14] The reasoning could also result from a combination of actual appearance and religious principles. Furthermore, the traditional belief of Amun-Re and the rest of the ancient Egyptian gods have led to various pharaohs being somewhat androgynous. Akhenaten takes it a step further as he portrays himself in some statues without any genitals.[15] It is important to note here, however, that while this indicates a very androgynous depiction, one of the traditional masculine artistic traits is hidden genitals. So instead of the absence of the masculine and the feminine, it represents the combination of the

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[14] Lorenz 1996

[15] Lorenz 1996

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masculine and feminine with his breasts being hidden by his arms. This pose is significant in Egyptian religious traditions, especially with the staffs that he holds, but the secondary purpose of gender indication remains. With these non-binary traits highlighted in the Egyptian royal families and therefore somewhat normalized, Egyptian culture within the monarchy encourages a spectrum of gender identities.

Figure 4: Statue (Akhenaten)
New Kingdom: XVIII Dynasty
Egyptian Museum of Cairo 2Ak.602

Outside of the Egyptian monarchy, we also find differentiation in the role of the typical Egyptian woman from other ancient societies in the Mediterranean world. Recorded history from archaeologists marks some notable traits of Egyptian women and men, breaking the traditional view of masculine and feminine stereotypes. Herodotus, an ancient Greek historian who lived from

484 to 424 B.C.E., remarks on how women were the ones who would frequent the market and trade, while the men remained at home and wove, (ἐν τοῖσι αἱ μὲν γυναῖκες ἀγοράζουσι καὶ καπηλεύουσι, οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες κατ' οἴκους ἐόντες ὑφαίνουσι, Hdt. 2.35.2). While Herodotus exaggerates these roles, Matić agrees "adult women were sometimes able to manage the economics of the household…engage in business and trade," indicating there is some truth to what Herodotus explains.[16] Herodotus also continues to state how the woman stands up to urinate and the men crouch down (οὐρέουσι αἱ μὲν γυναῖκες ὀρθαί, οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες κατήμενοι, Hdt. 2.35.3), to embellish how the standardized gender roles are reversed even physiologically, distinguishing an ambiguous sense of gender roles. Herodotus then succeeds in othering the Egyptians and displaying their differing gender roles. The more equalizing efforts in terms of appearance and roles among political figures and other Egyptians contribute to the non-binary acceptance allowed within the Egyptian artistic standard.

1.1.1 A Gender-Centered History of the Greeks

After Alexander the Great's conquest of most of the Mediterranean, his general and right-hand man, Ptolemy became the first Greek monarch over Egypt, in which his Ptolemaic dynasty would last from 305 to 30 B.C.E.[17] With their reign came a greater Hellenistic influence, which, then, impacted the style of Egyptian art, especially in the human-based figures of the elites and political figures. They idealized certain Greek characteristics such as their art style and literary work with Greek influence. To understand the extent of the Egyptian and Greek artistic relations,

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[16] Matic 2016, p.174

[17] Aston 2014, p.56

it is pertinent to look at the changes in societal norms that the Ptolemaic dynasty brought into the Egyptian cultural sphere.

The Greeks themselves held a standard of androgyny but rather than focusing on religious purposes as the ancient Egyptians had, the Greeks were fascinated by androgyny. This image becomes visible in their own artistic representations. In consideration of the effect of gender roles, the Greeks had many conservative values toward women in Hellenistic Greece. According to Silver, Aristotle mentions 'ancient laws' which show that the Hellenes would purchase wives from one another and Aristotle says in *Politics* that the females are ruled by the men by nature (ἄρχον δὲ καὶ ἀρχόμενον φύσει, διὰ τὴν σωτηρίαν Arist. Pol. 1.1252a).[18] Women were traded as commodities according to the will of the *kurios* or guardian and had limited human rights throughout Greek *oikomene*—which in turn signifies the way women were seen as inferior, having little choice in the matter of their lives.

This is further seen by the shock and exaggeration of the Greek Herodotus who saw how women partook in business and other activities. The way he describes the gender roles of the Egyptians also speaks to the way Greeks see traditional gender roles. In multiple quotes, Herodotus is stating how the Egyptians practice traditional gender role reversals, even in the way they urinate. This is possible to show a lack of morality for the traditionalists of the Greek world or to exaggerate in order to draw attention to the "exotic" nature of the Egyptians. Therefore, gender roles and the lack of conformity to what the Greeks have normalized is more interesting and welcomed to be

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[18] Silver 2018, p.35

explored in artistic expression, representing non-traditional Greek women.[19] This exclusion and complete separation caused a distinct barrier between the genders in a way distinct from the ancient Egyptian gendered practices. While gender inequality promotes separation in lifestyle, this does not necessarily mean it bleeds over into the depiction of appearance in art since androgyny is highly sexualized.

Pederasty was a part of ancient Greek culture in which sexual relationships between a young man (*eromenos* or *paidika*) and an older man (*erastes*) were accepted. While this practice was prevalent among the Athenian elites, the history of pederasty is deeply embedded in multiples rituals. Donnay concludes that a Cretan ritual where a young boy is kidnapped to live in "public intimacy" by an older male aristocrat is a rite of passage that leads to a shift in art in the middle Archaic period focusing on pederastic depictions.[20] As these artistic depictions are valued in Greek art, Hellenistic Egyptian art is then affected. Ferrari notes that the value of the *eromenos* was dependent on how feminine he was perceived with his *hora*, his perfume and clothing.[21] With this ideal in consideration, the young boy without any secondary sex characteristics, then was deemed more attractive as he was increasingly feminized. The *erastes* still focused on the boy as their object of affection, and it becomes highly likely that it was the androgyny and lack of obvious gendered traits which attracted men towards these young boys. While youth also play a factor in this view of the *eromenos*, there however is not the same interest in a masculine or androgynous

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[19] See: Cohen 1989 who remarks on Athenian thought as how "the low status of women was particularly marked by their confinement to their homes, their exclusion from social, public, and economic life." However Hellenistic thought does slightly differ.

[20] Donnay 2018, p.10-11

[21] Ferrari 2003, p.96

female, but this may be due to societal preferences, cycles of trauma, patriarchal mentorship, or any combination of related reasons. Ferrari further describes this inclination towards only the young boys as an indication of the third gender, which was highly sought after and accepted in the name of sexualization.[22] With the sexualization of specific forms of androgyny, monarchal ideals of the non-binary depiction further permit the Ptolemaic artistic impact.

Therefore, the Greeks were open to presenting non-binary traits and accepting various identities within artistic representations of the genders. One major aspect of this is the presence of small penises on most male statues that were used to describe the epitome of masculine beauty. With this emphasis on pederasty and androgyny, the effect of the small phallus is idealized far into adulthood, in contrast to the modern view that sexualizes a larger penis. McNiven says how small penises were idealized throughout the adulthood of the average Greek male and it was important to both the *eromenos* and the most masculine of Greek heroes. [23] This leads us to question what it means for a Greek to have a small phallus. The Greek use of nudity is also an important artistic trait as opposed to the Egyptian view of hidden genitalia indicating a more masculine appearance. It is apparent "that in the Greek world nudity is a prerogative of men suggests that it may have been understood as a manly feature…such as beards and male genitals."[24] Aphrodite, the goddess of love and desire, is almost always depicted naked and in terms of artistry, but Ferrari argues that nakedness in inherently masculine in nature.[25] If indeed the goddess of sexuality is then

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[22] Ferrari 2003, p.96

[23] McNiven 1995

[24] Ferrari 2003, p.111

[25] Ferrari 2003, p.110

represented androgynously in her sculptures, representing the masculine nakedness and the feminine fertility, then I argue that she is a great example of the sexualization of non-binary traits.

1.1.1.1 A Gender-Centered History of the Romans

As the Ptolemies, originally from Macedonia, came to rule over Greece, they brought Hellenistic ideals into much of the Egyptian art of kings and religious figures of the time period. The final and most famous ruler of the Ptolemaic dynasty, Cleopatra VII came, ruled for twenty-two years. Her reign ended with the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E. where she later committed suicide, and Egypt was seized under Rome's official rule.[26] Augustus, the first and newly installed emperor of Rome, who overthrew the Ptolemaic dynasty, placed Gaius Cornelius Gallus as his first viceroy or prefect.[27] Just as Hellenistic influences impacted Egypt under rule by the Ptolemies, Roman artistic styles and preferences took root in Egypt as policies and societal norms changed and caused a shift in artistic expression.

After the civil war led to Egypt being taken completely under Roman control, it was around this same time that Emperor Augustus instated the *lex Iulia de adulteriis* in 18 B.C.E. In order to combat the perceived moral decrease in society after the war, he made social legislation that was used to "promote marriage and the production of legitimate children, to punish lapses in morality among the elite, to regulate the transmission of wealth and thus social status, through inheritance, to place stricter controls on grants of Roman citizenship, particularly the practice of manumitting slaves, and to demarcate more clearly the social orders." [28] These various values were used to

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[26] Aston 2014, p.22

[27] Herklotz, 2012, pp. 17

[28] Deminion, 2010, p. 1

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increase childbearing, as they gave greater tax relief and other benefits. With these actions now under the eyes of the law, the domestic role of women became further implemented within Roman civilization. Some of Augustus' moralist values stem from his issues with his daughter Julia, who also lived a lifestyle of luxury and adultery from the perspective of Augustus.[29] The laws were therefore implemented to satiate his own personal issues as well as the immorality he perceived after the political strife which divided the nation before his reign.[30]

However, Augustus' law was not the first to be implemented in which women's rights were taken away, since the laws were reflecting societal norms that placed women as a possession rather than a person. Cantarella points to how women fell directly under the power of the *pater familias,* and female newborns could be killed if unaccepted or later in life "a woman whose sexual behavior had been deemed reproachable could be put to death" during the monarchy and the republic [31]. A woman in this state is put into this maternal gender role. In Hemelrjik's book on Roman women in civic life, she concludes that "despite the common association of women with the private sphere and men with public life, 'public' and 'private' are not clear-cut in Roman society."[32] Under this value of the *matronae* role in the elites of Romans, the artistic portrayals of Roman women then follow suit in order to carry out the idealizations of the feminine with conforming standards of femininity.

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[29] Deminion, 2010, p.64

[30] It was also practical to do so in order to have more children born from his allies.

[31] Cantarella 2016, p.421-422

[32] Hemelrjik 2015, p.11 However, in the elite households, Roman women were far from secluded in the social sphere.

In Roman Egypt, the gender roles were separated and distinctly made more superior and inferior than the previous dynasties. While Egypt remained a colony, politics still changed and societal norms with them, which reflects a new culture surrounding gendered artistic expression.[33]

1.1.1.2 The Extent of Greco-Roman Influence

One can demonstrate the extent to which the cultures of the Greeks and Romans influenced Egyptian art by understanding the cultural context to which these cultures made their mark on

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[33] While Rome's conservative values believed women to have to take a comparatively domestic role and believed in extreme heteronormativity, there is some instances to note marking a different viewpoint. Ovid, a Roman author, created a story of the various Greek myths, including the story of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis. However, Ovid may have been popular, but he was also disliked by the Roman government, more specifically Emperor Augustus, leading to his eventual exile. This story however envisions a complete reverse of the typical masculine and feminine gender roles instated within Roman culture and social norms. It starts with the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, Hermaphroditus, who already presented androgynously as he was made in the image of both his mother and his father, (cuius erat facies, in qua materque paterque// cognosci possent, Ovid, Met. 4.290-291). He is written going to the Spring of Salmacis, which holds feminizing youth, where the nymph Salmacis sees him and immediately falls in love with him. This is where the story opposes traditional myths, having Salmacis assault Hermaphroditus in the water, eventually leading to the two turning into one being that was both and neither a woman or a man, (nec duo sunt et forma duplex, nec femina dici// nec puer ut possit, neutrumque et utrumque videntur, Ovid, Met. 4.378-379). Ovid has now described the modern definition of non-binary within this story and while completely fictional, there is still the possibility that this outlying story came from real inspiration within either Roman or, most likely, Greek culture. However, according to Zajko in Zajko, 2009, rather than remarking on women and the androgyny, the real subject is the passivity exhibited by Hermaphroditus and it's connection to the "passive" male in homosexual relationships. This interpretation then leads to greater evidence of a very Greek-based notion within the story as this relation to the androgynous "passive" male relates to the sexualization of young, feminine men, otherwise known as the third gender.

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Egyptian religion, politics, and other societal norms. There were various instances of Greeks being assimilated into the Egyptian population just as some Egyptians adopted various Greek practices and customs. This led to people being both bilingual and bicultural in the Greek and Egyptian contexts.[34] This intertwining history, which excelled under the Ptolemaic rule, is seen as the Egyptian priests kept religious rituals and other indigenous traditions alive alongside the new Hellenistic influences.[35]

One Egyptian priest, Manetho, wrote in Greek, with many fragments surviving to indicate a mixture of religions within the Egyptian and Greek world during this time.[36] Manetho describes the Egyptian mythos as though mixed with the Greek. In his fragments, Manetho states a connection between Zeus and Ammon, "and still with many believing that the proper name of Zeus among the Egyptians is Ammon (ἔτι δὲ τῶν πολλῶν νομιζόντων ἴδιον παρ᾽ Αἰγυπτίοις ὄνομα τοῦ Διὸς εἶναι τὸν Ἀμοῦν, Manetho frag 77 = Plutarch *Is. And Osir.* Ch. 9), showing a similar level of religious intermingling to those of the Greeks and the Romans. Another fragment mentions how Manetho states two separate gods are one and the same: "and some say that Bebon was one of the allies of Typhon but Manetho calls Typhon and Bebon the same" (Βέβωνα δὲ τινὲς μὲν ἕνα τῶν τοῦ Τυφῶνος ἑταίρων γεγονέναι λέγουσιν Μανεθὼς δ᾽ αὐτὸν τὸν Τυφῶνα καὶ Βέβωνα καλεῖσθαι, Manetho frag. 78 = Plutarch *Is. And Osir.* Ch. 49), and "for they often call Isis by the name Athena" (τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἶσιν πολλάκις τῷ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ὀνόματι καλοῦσι, Manetho frag 79 = Plutarch *Is. And Osir.* Ch. 62). Manetho is purposely recording a history in which Greek and Egypt become entangled, showing possibly that they are one and the same in their originations. It is also even

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[34] Rowlandson 2013, p.217

[35] Rowlandson 2013, p.701

[36] All citations from Manetho use numbering from Waddell, 1980

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more interesting that Manetho paired Athena and Isis together, as later the Romans chose to pair Isis and other various Roman gods, which is explored more in Chapter Four. This shows a clear history of trying to culturally mix themselves as Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans prepared this cohabitation of the conquered and the conquerors.

The role of women does change under the influence of the Ptolemies, but the artistic representation of the various genders does not show the conservation of the traditionally feminine and masculine identities during this period. Silver remarks on how textual evidence for marriage by loan or *egguesis* and marriage by sale/alienation or *apedon/apodidomi* are attested for in Ptolemaic Egypt.[37] Both forms of marriage were arranged at the legal and economic benefit of the male *kurios*, usually the father or brother of the bride, and husband. Therefore, the legal tradition of the Greeks to trade women takes place in the Egyptian sphere as well, in contrast to the traditional Egyptian legalities in which Wilfong states that women did have several rights to inheritance and property in marriage.[38] Marriage was still considered a necessity in ancient Egypt, but divorce seemed to be easily done and common, according to the textual legal documentation.[39] There was an escape for women, despite the essential societal pressure of the marriage, whereas with the Hellenistic influence, marriage became much more legally bounding and controlling.

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[37] Silver 2018, p.299 – Silver differentiates them as "the first contractual form (*egguesis*) produced the legitimate wife whose father remained her *kurios* and whose offspring possessed inheritance rights to their father's name, cult, and estate. The second produced the *pallake* or slave-wife - that is, a wife whose husband became her *kurios* and whose children lacked inheritance rights in their father's name, cult, and estate."

[38] Wilfong 2007, p.208

[39] Wilfong 2007, p.208

There was also an artistic revival in which Stephens' sees how Alexandrians were very intrigued by Egyptian culture and lineage which the Alexandrians then exploited.[40] Egypt as a culturally diverse society was fascinating to the Greeks who would go as far as to make their characters have some sort of Egyptian connection in the development of their lineage.[41] This fascination with the culture then seemed to encourage Greeks to trace back to Egypt as a way of 'exotifying' their characters or storylines and gaining a broader reputation for Egypt among the Greek-inspired peoples.[42]

Pomeroy specifically analyzes Alexandrian women and the trend of feminine perspectives in Alexandrian literature, which came as a result of the alienation, lack of political power, rootlessness, and interest in the personal and private life that men felt under the monarchal rule in Ptolemaic Egypt.[43] This analysis explains the influence of the Egyptian sphere and Hellenistic sphere on each other, showing that more thoughts and perspectives of women were being analyzed and written about, even if it was under the male gaze. Theocritus, an Alexandrian writer uses Ptolemaic women and their virtues as a theme in his Idyll 17.[44] This *Idyll* represents the Ptolemaic royalty, but he does make some interesting remarks towards the ways in which gender is represented. For in his Idylls, "Theocritus presents the fathers of his subject within the terms of

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[40] Stephens 2003, p.73

[41] Stephens 2003, p. 24

[42] One author that followed this trend of including Egyptian cultures and rituals just as in the case of Callimachus, for his work includes many references to the Ptolemies in his *Hymns*, and also acknowledges the various forms of divinity as he references the Egyptian culture and status of the time period.

[43] Pomeroy 1984, p. 82

[44] Stephens 2003, p.129

heroic Greek myth that seems to be inert, while the women (and as the poems progress, their sons) are located specifically in a dynamic and evolving contemporary world."[45] Women have become not only the main theme, but also play a significant role in indicating progress within his poems, which shows the way in which Greek and Egyptian values may line up in equalizing the masculine and feminine traits of people. More than just overall government intervention, the Greeks played a large part in the artistic and religious aspects of Egyptian life as they struggled to rebrand into an intermixed society despite the racism directed at the native Egyptians. In terms of gender, the mark of equalization is both reinforced and neglected as the religious leadership is denied more to women and literature reinforces their stance. The Romans, however, took quite a different approach as their governmental regulations and societal norms completely changed the role of women and therefore impacted the artistic representation of gender.

While many civilizations took pride in their culture, Romans had a substantially increased sense of superiority in terms of being Roman. This led to varying levels of othering, especially as the Romans, like the Ptolemies, saw the Egyptians as being uncivilized compared to their own cultural ideals.[46] Romans again took a more extreme approach and had a more derogatory attitude towards the Egyptians, not being as attracted to Egyptian culture as the Greeks before them.

One author who spoke vehemently against Egypt in his satires is Juvenal, who lived from around 55 -127 C.E. In Book XV, Juvenal's first sentence says, "who doesn't know, Bithynian Volusius, what kind of omens raving Egypt worships?" (*quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens Aegyptos portenta colat?* Juv 15.1-2). By starting off with a question, in which he directly

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[45] Stephens 2003, p.157

[46] Rowlandson 2013, p.228

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states his bias against Egypt, he is preparing the reader to learn about what, in his eyes, makes Egypt so 'raving'. The most horrific theme he refers to is their supposed inclination towards cannibalism, in which he states, "there is a sin to kill the young of a she-goat: [yet] it is allowed to feed on human flesh" (*nefas illic fetum. iugulare capellae: carnibus humanis uesci licet*, Juv. 15.12-13). Not only are the Egyptians committing cannibalistic acts, but also put the lives of goats over those of humans, implying a culture of cruelty and savagery that Romans attribute to many foreigners. Yet for Juvenal, "truly Egypt is wild, but with luxury, how much I myself observed, it does not yield in foreign uproar to the famous Canopus" (*horrida sane Aegyptos, sed luxuria, quantum ipse notaui, barbara famoso non cedit turba Canopo*, Juv. 15. 44-46). In this statement, he admits to holding even more disdain towards another region, which seems unlikely giving the vehement view he has produced thus far. However, Watts also exposes that "although Juvenal's racial descriptions do seem commonplace and stereotyped, must we assume that they are not partly based on his daily observation in Rome?...perhaps he even deliberately records the misconceptions of typical Romans whose attitude he adopts."[47] His prejudice towards Egypt is unlike his vehemence toward any other civilization. With the increased embellishment of the so-called practices of the Egyptians, and since he is harsher to the Egyptians than any other civilization that he writes against, he likely demonstrates a personal disdain and the common conception of the Romans.[48]

The changes in traditions are made very clear in both religious practices and the societal roles of women. For the Romans there was a direct correlation that determined men in religious

[47] Watts 1976, p. 90

[48] Watts 1976, p.91

positions were also the men who held power.[49] So it became important to establish a sense of religion with the priests in Egypt to maintain a sense of power over them. This is further enforced as only the Egyptian upper class, otherwise known as priests, were the maintainers of tradition and ancient Egyptian culture, following a similar tradition to the Romans. Yet as Cannata remarks, there is a lot less textual evidence of mummies assemblages and other traditional Egyptian rituals.[50] Transcription of these traditions have therefore started to diminish, showing either the Egyptians genuinely stopped holding such funerary practices, or stopped being able to have preservations and records of such things being done.

In accordance with Roman *colonia* policy, Jordens notes that all of these *colonia* had to abide by Roman laws.[51] Because of Egyptian *chora*, Vanderope then states "there was, as it were, a legal vacuum which the new rulers were willing and able to fill by any available means" and that "some of these changes include how the laws were made to permit women even less power as Egyptian women now needed a *kyrios*, or male guardian, for their transactions."[52] Before, the Ptolemies had instituted a *kyrios* policy in the marriage institution, but Romans decided to take it a step further and include business and other transactions, which had been a large part of the women's role originally. In these quotations, Vanderope remarks on how the Egyptians would have been influenced under the Roman law and the change in gender representation that then bled into the way that women and other genders were represented in art. Control of the economics in the household were one of the many responsibilities of a woman, but as the Romans stigmatization

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[49] Ripat 2003, p.65

[50] Cannata 2012, p. 597

[51] Jordens 2012, p. 61

[52] Vandorpe 2012, p.268

of such matters continues into the politics of Egypt, the rights of women regress and diminish. With an increased oppressive view toward the role of women, who stay in the home and remain inferior to the *viri* who have complete control of the family, politics, and business, the ideals of genders become distinctly separated and create ideals of traditional feminine and masculine traits in art and sculpture.

2.0 Traditional Egyptian Gender Depiction

Traditional Egyptian art prior to the Ptolemies and the Romans is both ambiguous and differentiated in terms of humans within different social classes and the anthropomorphizing of the gods. From the sculpture and other figures of the human body available to us, there are numerous masculine and feminine traits that are further differentiated and changed as the influences of other regions take control. The previously mentioned, Queen Hatshepsut and King Akhenaten, are not included based on their outlying features within their artistic depictions but still are important to the overarching ideal of gender inclusivity, explained in Chapter One. Through these various kings and queens, the chronological progression of their sculpture captures the idealization of ambiguity and individuality within this time period in ancient Egypt. While royalty remains the primary evidence for what has been preserved in the archaeological record, it is pertinent to understand that most Egyptian royalty and deities would want to display the most ideal traits in order to preserve their reputation among the people. This then indicates the importance of the displayed human characteristics by the following royal families and iconography of the gods.

2.1 Egyptian Royalty Characteristics

Figure 5: Statue (Amenhotep III)
c. 1370
The British Museum EA15

Figure 6: Object: The Younger Memnon
19th Dynasty
The British Museum 612374001

In Figure 5, we can see the bust of Ramses II, wearing the traditional *nemes*, as well as hieroglyphs (not depicted) which give the name and titles of the king in his representation of Amun-Ra. Beginning with an objective view of his bust, there is curvature to his features, especially to his cheeks and chin. The eyes are almond-shaped but larger in comparison to the other proportions of his face. The musculature in the chest, shoulders and upper arm is prominent, but the face and headpiece take precedence of these particular features. This then implies that the kingliness and identity of Ramses II are more valued than the traditional masculine musculature

in this piece. The masculine beard, however, is very emphasized by other traditional kings in Egypt. The beard itself is what connected these kings to the sun god.[53]

Figure 7: Head and Upper Torso of Seti I
c. 1303-1290 B.C.E. (XIX Dynasty)
Dallas Museum of Art DMA_.1984.50

Figure 8: Shawabti of King Taharqa
c. 745-525 B.C.E
Ackland Art Museum 62.19.5

In Figure 6, this head is most likely made for Amenhotep III. This king has similar rounded cheeks and proportionally large almond-eyes to Ramses II in Figure 5, but there are distinct lines and a mouth shape, which differentiate these two figures. The lips are fuller and more rounded, but otherwise their faces have significant similarities between them. Their purposeful images fit the argument of Simpson, who argues that Egyptian sculpture primarily functions as propaganda.[54]

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[53] Li, Yi, Chen 2017, p.356: Their argument, following the symbolic meaning behind the function of the false beard, assumes that the false beard is a projection of the sunlight in water. They believe that this impracticality within the aesthetic of the beard is explained by this theory, which does coincide with its connection to the sun god.

[54] Simpson 1982

The two indicate a certain image attributed to the royal family, even with Figure 5 having been produced a hundred years earlier.

The head and upper torso of Seti I showcase prominent musculature as seen with Ramses II, displaying the importance of strength among the emperors. While King Seti I's bust is weathered, the remnants of the prominent pharaonic beard remain. His eyes and ears are proportionally large, and his face follows almost the same exact shape as both Ramses II and Amenhotep III in Figures 5 and 6. After following the reign of Akhenaten, who displayed a very different image with his monotheistic propaganda, Seti I portrayed the very typical traits of some of the previous kings. He assumes the traditional masculine traits challenged by Akhenaten and therefore elucidates the typical masculine portrayal.

Figure 9: Head of King Amasis
c.572-548 B.C.E.
The Walters Art Museum 1912.22.415

Another important factor is the apparent youthfulness displayed in each of these kingly portrayals. The shawabti of King Taharqa in Figure 8 stands out since it shows this king as both older and less defined in both face and torso. His image portrays one of experience rather than strength as the other kings displayed. His nose, lips, and eyes are proportionally larger, and his pharaonic beard is longer than the other kings. These traits then display exaggerated masculinity as well as an increased curvature surrounding his cheeks and body. His headdress is relatively humble, furthering his purpose as the elder, wise king within his reign. The preserved youthfulness of the previous kings seems to be less desired during this period or seems to be his own personal preference. Cooney points to how Tarharqa was known for his monument building, especially of temples and other religious architecture.[55] The head of King Amasis in Figure 9 has distinct facial features, which place him unique among the royal busts. His eyes are relatively small, he has no pharaonic beard, his ears are more inverted toward his face, and his face is fairly elongated and curved. The traditionally desired traits of 500 years before have now evolved into a more individualistic portrayal. In the case of King Taharqa, the image change may have been due to a new preference in the artistic portrayal of optimal ideals, but King Amasis seems to function as being completely unique in comparison to the reigning images of his ancestors. Over time, the images become more individualized and no longer seem to show the previous ideal masculine characteristics. The image of the king changes as is necessary and the traits of the kings, therefore, do not need to represent just the fatherly deity. The queens show a similar progression.
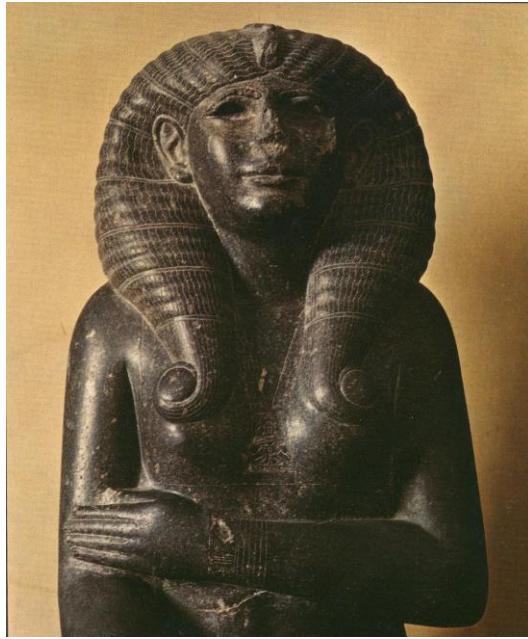
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[55] Cooney 2000, p.16

Figure 10: Queen Nofret with Hathor-wig
1879-1878 B.C.E Reign of Sesostris II Khakhepperre
Egyptian Museum of Cairo 2Ag.053.1.tif

Figure 11: Sarcophagus of Queen Ahmose-Meritamun from Thebes
c. 1500-1425 B.C.E. (18th Dynasty)
Egyptian Museum of Cairo 0114162

In Figure 10, Queen Nofret is seated with a Hathor wig.[56] The headdress is curled around her nipples, emphasizing her secondary sex characteristics. Although Queen Nofret is centering her femininity within this bust, by positioning her arm underneath her breasts, and her face itself has very similar features to some of the kings. Her face is rounded with her ears defined and outward, and her eyes are the same almond shape. Her nose and lips are slightly smaller, and her face is slightly wider. Her hips are narrow like the kings, but there is a lack of musculature that suggest how the queens may have lacked the need for representation of physical strength. The sarcophagus of Queen Ahmose-Meritamun of Thebes in Figure 11 represents different values from Queen Nofret. While her arms are crossed under her breasts, potentially emphasizing these features, her headdress resembles the Hathor wig of Queen Nofret.

Figure 12: Pair Statuette of Queen Hetepheres and Meresankh III
c. 2490-2472 B.C.E.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston BMFA.30.1456

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[56] Levin 1964, p.25: See more on the various headdresses and wigs worn by Egyptian figures.

Figure 13: Group (Thutmose IV and his Mother Queen Tio
New Kingdom: XVIII Dynasty (before Amarna)
Egyptian Museum of Cairo 2Ak.072.tif

Her face, however, is very similar to the kings with a rounded shape and almond eyes. The painted make-up on the sarcophagus seems to be the only indicative feature of femininity, but this was common for all genders, especially within the royal family. This eyeliner, or *kohl* according to the Arabs, is both a health treatment for keeping them cool, protecting their eyes from the sand and sun, and treating such illnesses as trachoma, chalazion, and conjunctivitis.[57] This eyeliner would then indicate their social status since it would only be allowed to those who could obtain it. Helmy, however, does point to the fact that there is some evidence of lower-class citizens wearing the kohl because of Egyptian papyri that contain recipes for eye ailments.[58]

Through the pair statuette of Queens Hetepheres II and Meresankh III in Figure 12, we can see the embodiment of change from over 1000 years prior. Their hips are narrow, their chests are

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[57] Helmy 2020

[58] Helmy 2020

not pronounced, and only one of the queens wears a feminine headdress, like the headdresses of Nofret and Ahmose-Meritmum in Figures 10 and 11. Their faces share very common features as their eyes and nose are shaped and sized almost exactly the same way. These pair statues may show a gender hierarchy within their positioning, but this idea seems to be more common in two-dimensional art.[59] Since the three-dimensional statues have more flexibility, Robins argues that male superiority is less emphasized due to the ability to physically change the way the statues are oriented, unlike in paintings.[60] This theory, however, does not explain why there is variety in the pair statues nor why they are made to be the same size. The pair statue of Thutmose IV and his mother Queen Tio in Figure 13 portrays the feminine and masculine traits important to the time period. Here their features are distinctly different from the previous royal busts but are very similar to each other. Both have a similar bosom, a distinct waist-to-hip ratio, and their faces match up almost exactly. The features that differ, which therefore would gender them, are the headdresses and clothing, and the slight differences in the build since Thutmose IV strives to promote a large figure, while Tio emphasizes her wider hips. Notably, the two also seem to display the same youthful image, even though this is a mother and son. Therefore, the most gendered features of this statue and many of the other statues are the clothing attributed to them. In Figure 15, the group statue of King Amenhotep III, Queen Tiye, and their three daughters, in contrast, show vast differences between the king and queen, although being made around the same time. Amenhotep III has no hips and a much wider face, whereas Tiye has wide hips and a smaller face with facial

[59] Robins 1994

[60] Robins 1994, p.40: The positioning that indicates gender hierarchy, according to Robins, is the woman being placed behind the man and to the left.

features that are all smaller relative to her face. Their headdresses and clothing are significantly traditional as well, but they do maintain a similar height and size unlike Thutmose IV and Tio.

The ideals of the time period have then changed how the royal family wishes to be perceived. This may therefore account for the flexibility in the statue positioning, mentioned by Robins.

Figure 14: Statue (Amenirdas I)
Third Intermediate Period: XXI-XXV Dynasty
Egyptian Museum of Cairo 2Ap.037a

Figure 15: Group Statue of King Amenhotep III, Queen Tiye, and their Three Daughters
c. 1391-1353 B.C.E.
Egyptian Museum of Cairo M610

The depiction of the divine consort of Amen, Amenirdas I, changes this perspective as we see her full standing form in Figure 14. She still wears the traditional feminine headdress and has her arm emphasizing the position of her breasts, but she stands tall, holding the lily scepter.

Amenirdas I's facial features have the same curved edges and same shaped eyes and mouth, but her eyeliner stands out to further depict her statute of authority. Her femininity does not negate her authority within this statue.

Figure 16: Khedebneithirbinet I
c. 6th Century B.C.E.
Kunst Historisches Museum m.05202

The sarcophagus of Khedebneithirbinet I in Figure 16 shows some of the most important traits as the features important to the royal feminine figures change over time. The headdress of Khedebneithirbinet I is much less intricate than previous women but emphasizes her ears which are relatively large in comparison to her head. Her facial features were all made larger just as Amenhotep III did in comparison to Tiye. Her face does therefore not portray outward hyper-femininity as with many of the early Egyptian royal busts. The royals believed themselves to be the embodiment of the divine and ergo sought to portray themselves as the gods in every way,

including depicting the most ideal traits. Looking at the Egyptian deity statues can further evidence of how various dynasties would go on to resemble the gods.

2.1.1 Traits of the Egyptian Deities

This unidentified male god in Figure 17 is likely one of the divine statues of Amenhotep III. This male god is identified as such by the pharaonic beard and by the scepter he's holding centered on his body. His headdress, however, resembles the traditional feminine headdresses depicted on the queens of Egypt than the men. The curved arch and straight lines etched into the headdress look similar to long hair that rests on his shoulders. His figure is relatively narrow, especially in contrast to the statues of the kings, lacking emphasis on musculature, which represents strength. Even his chest protrudes in a way that could easily be interpreted as feminine based on his nipples which are remarkably more defined than most male emperors. The face of this god does show some difference as the eyes are relatively bigger and emphasized by the same lines presented on Queen Ahmose-Meritamun in Figure 11. This figure, while described as male, therefore represents more non-binary. As the typical Egyptian beard plays a large part in the identification of this individual, it is important to note Hatshepsut's use of the pharaonic beard in her own imagery, which leads to some flexibility in the determinability of this statue. Although they are an unidentified god, their importance to King Amenhotep III and the iconography of authority indicates the idealization of this figure.
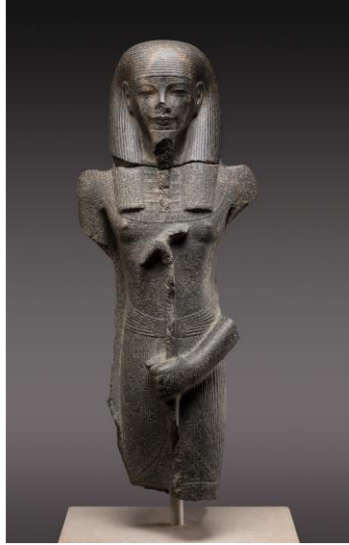
Figure 17: Male God
c. 1390-1352 B.C.E. (New Kingdom)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art Rogers
Fund, 1919 (19.2.15); Fletcher Fund, 1996
(1996.362)

Figure 18: Head of the God, Amun
c. 1336-1327 (New Kingdom, post-Amarna)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 07.228.34
Rogers Fund, 1907

These heads of the god Amun and the head of an unidentified goddess also illustrate the non-binary nature of the gods as the Egyptians made them. The almond eyes and curved faces resemble the faces of the previous kings who aim to represent these gods and goddesses. His face itself however does not seem to represent any hyper-masculinity that would indicate a male gender. The head of the unidentified goddess proves this further as the gender is assumed based on the lack of a beard. Based on kings such as King Amasis in Figure 9 and King Thutmose IV in Figure 13, however, the lack of a beard is not directly indicative of the female gender. The headdress is humble in comparison to other royal headdresses but does not represent any characteristics indicative of being entirely masculine or feminine. Their eyes are the typical almond shape proportional to their face and they have relatively smaller lips that may illustrate the individuality of this deity.

Figure 19: Head of a Goddess
c.1295-1270 B.C.E. (New Kingdom)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2000.62 Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 2000

Figure 20: Head of a Goddess, probably Mut
c. 700 B.C.E. (Third Intermediate Period)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2008.353 Purchase, Liana Weindling Gift, in memory of her mother, 2008

Another trait is the curvature of the nose, although many of the anthropomorphic statues have their noses broken, which may change this observation.[61] The eyeliner itself also indicates the intricacy dedicated to their face like many of the royals and the unidentified god from Figure 17. By looking at the head of a goddess that is probably Mut, there is more individuality depictive of the progressing art style and the current dynastic family. Her headdress is very simple, her eyes are much larger, and her nose is very straight in contrast to the curved nose of the unidentified goddess of Figure 19. Her mouth, however, is similarly proportioned as it is relatively small, and both their faces are carved in similar ways. This goddess's head has a more pronounced eyeliner that seems to be a part of the eyes themselves instead of multiple lines above the original eye shape. The characteristics that create feminine and masculine traits are therefore changing and flexible within the realm of Egypt's vast history. The binary model does not, then, always fit Egyptian society in every way.

This statue of Isis and Osiris in Figure 21 shows masculine and feminine deities paired together like in the pair statues familiar to the royal statues. Isis' place in Egyptian society is especially interesting since, as the goddess of healing, many medical papyri had the words "I am Isis," and nearly all recorded healers were males.[62] Quirke argues the existence of gendered reading and how men and women were treated within these medical terminologies, but I would argue it is also possible that many of these healers may have identified with a more non-binary representation. Isis' headdress is very decorated but does not contain intricate details typical of the queen

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[61] Loktinov 2017 argues that the nose, according to their textual analysis, is connected to emotions and feelings for the Egyptians. So, by being purposefully mutilated in these artistic expressions, people may be physically trying to cut people off from their emotions.

[62] Quirke 2004, p.191

representations. Her face is fairly wide with emphasis on her eyes and ears within the figure whereas the face of Osiris is thinner and has the pharaonic beard indicative of his authority. This is especially interesting considering the statue of King Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye in Figure 15, whose faces represented the exact opposite characteristics in terms of head sizes. Because Iris is the wife of Osiris, the most notable feature is the size differences between these two figures. She is standing behind him and seems to be protecting him in contrast to the stereotypical gender roles attributed to the determined males and females. Both the eyes of Osiris and Iris have the similar eyeliner, but their faces have distinct individual characteristics that determine the individualism between these deities.
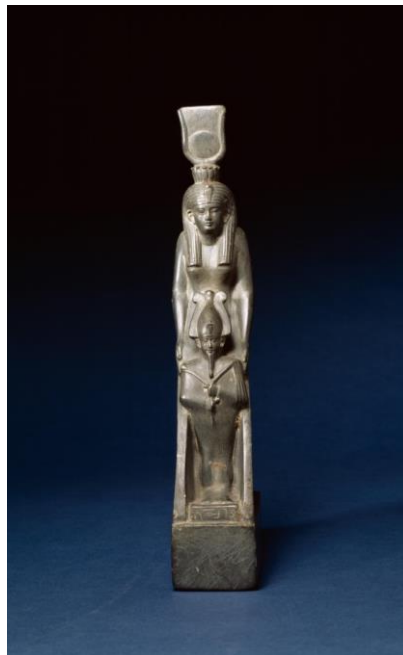

Figure 21: Statue of Isis Protecting Osiris
c. 589-526 B.C.E.
The Walters Art Museum 22.199, Henry Walters 1931

While the characteristics pointed out in this section are only representative of the Egyptian royalty and gods, the traits are still idealized in these authority figures, whose reputation depended

on their individual representations and actions among the people. The divine relationship between the royals and the deities further emphasizes the idealization of the deity statues, which would likely represent the reigning family of the time period. Through these statues, there is an obvious progression that impacts the way each of the human depictions is made, and the presence of such emperors as Hatshepsut and Akhenaten show the fluidity within the genders of all these individuals. The gender binary that western bias places on so many civilizations are not always representative of the culture, which is why it is so important to bring into question the way these people may have identified based on their characteristics. There are many questions about how the modern archaeologist has gendered certain statues and individuals within Egypt. Because of the Ptolemaic and Roman influence, we can later see these gender standards change in their reigns.

3.0 Ptolemaic Gender Depictions

By clarifying exactly how the Egyptians determine masculine and feminine characteristics and their flexibility in determining these desired traits, we then can look at Ptolemaic art figures in order to see the extent of the artistic transition. The Greeks determined strict patriarchal stereotypes in many of their polities, but their artistic portrayals were more flexible with their representations of gender-specific traits. As the Ptolemies came into power, they also embraced much of Egyptian culture to maintain their power. The way the Ptolemies represent themselves reflects the traditional traits of the previous kings and queens and the Greek artistic style.

Figure 22: Coin (Alexander the Great)
c.316 B.C.E.
Basel Museum of Art 2Av.002.tif

Figure 23: Gold Octodrachm of Ptolemy II
c.260s B.C.E.
Wriston Art Galleries 91098

3.1 Ptolemaic Royalty Characteristics

Mostly busts and other head images are more common during this dynasty since the body would be made from less sustainable material.[63] This coin of Alexander the Great from the reign of Ptolemy Soter I in Figure 22 show facial features as distinctly Greek in nature and he displays various iconography of Greek masculinity in the elephant tusk and the serpent both at the top and two serpents double knotted around his neck.[64] Serpents are also used in Egyptian masculine iconography, which may then connect Alexander the Great within the context of Egyptian culture. His elephant headdress, however, is remnant of the lion headdress worn by Heracles since elephant hunting held a certain prestige.[65] His nose is shaped in a distinctly straight with large nostrils and his jaw is also straight-edged in contrast to many of the Egyptian royalty and deity depictions. His eyes are also more sunken elucidating his brow bone, which contradicts the traditional Egyptian artistry.

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[63] Ashton 1999, p.38

[64] See: Rice 2020

[65] Lorber 2012: 28

Figure 24: Coin Showing Queen Arsinoe II,
Deified Reverse: Double Cornucopia
c. 270-30 B.C.E.
The Art Institute of Chicago AIC_.1922.4934

Figure 25: Head of Ptolemy II or III
c.246-222 B.C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
66.99.134 Purchase, Fletcher Fund and
The Guide Foundation Inc. Gift, 1966

Then, this gold octodrachm of Ptolemy II in Figure 24 shows a very different image, showing the significance of individual traits, but still has some idealized similarities. His chin juts out and curves instead of the straight jawline typical of Alexander the Great. His eyes are also more almond-shaped and larger in comparison with the typical Egyptian traits of the previous generations. His nose is the distinctive triangular shape similar to Alexander the Great, which will continue to be a common factor in many of the portrayals of the Ptolemies. While the coins are still minted in the traditional ancient Greek style, the facial features are beginning to show signs of blending with some of the significant Egyptian traits.

Queen Arsinoe II in the golden octadrachm displays traits that resemble those of both Alexander the Great and Ptolemy II in Figure 23. For Queen Arsinoe II, her features are marked by her triangular-shaped nose, her curved jawline, her almond-shaped eyes, and her elongated neck. The major difference of the features between Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II depends on her

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gendered headdress in contrast to his headband. The headdress and ornaments of these two figures therefore may relate to Alexander the Great and his Hellenistically influenced appearance.

Figure 26: King's Head with Egyptian Headdress but Greek Hair and Features
c. 125-75 B.C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2008.454
Purchase, Gift of Henry Walters, by exchange 2008

Figure 27: Marble Head of a Ptolemaic Queen
c. 270-250 B.C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
2002.66 Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, The Bothmer Purchase Fund, Malcolm Hewitt Wiener, The Concordia Foundation and Christos G. Bastis Gifts and Marguerite and Frank A. Cosgrove Jr. Fund, 2002

A head of either Ptolemy II or III depicts another side of the artistry from the Ptolemaic coins since this figure is made in a more Egyptian style. The brows don't arch in the same way the ancient royals and deities do, but he is wearing traditional nemes and has unique almond-shaped eyes. The Ptolemies do not seem to carry on the tradition of the pharaonic beard, but this then leaves fewer traits to gender the individuals without certain clothing and primary and secondary sex characteristics.

The marble head of an unidentified Ptolemaic queen again relies on the Greek style of the statute in Figure 26. Her eyes are made fairly small in proportion to her face and she has a traditional Greek hairstyle without a headdress. The triangular nose indicative of this family line, however, remains. While there is some curvature to her jawline, this does not seem to embody any of the traditional characteristics of the Egyptian culture and feminizes her figure. But, with the variety of artwork in both styles, the mixing of both the traditional Egyptian and traditional Greek seems to progress as we look at art closer to the end of the Ptolemaic period.

This king's head in Figure 27 proves this idea as it shows him dressed in the traditional Egyptian headdress with Greek features. His face is elongated and curved, but his eyes are not the almond shape typical of the Egyptian kings. Instead, his eyes and mouth have a distinct difference that shows how the two cultures have blended to reinforce the authority of the monarchy. Again, this statue relies on the masculine headdress to gender the individual instead of any other characteristics relating to the gender binary.

In Figure 28, this statue of a Ptolemaic queen, possibly Cleopatra VII displays more traditional Egyptian iconography than the other examples. She wears the iconic feminine headdress, holds a scepter, and wears hieroglyphics on her arm. Her nose is typical of the Ptolemy line, but the rest of her face matches the traditional style with the almond-shaped eyes and rounded face. According to the Greek tradition, however, her face and neck are elongated and her breasts are larger in contrast to the multiple Egyptian queens of past dynasties. Her femininity is therefore emphasized in her secondary sex characteristics, but her face and authoritative features on her image dictate how her power has not changed. In this coin of Cleopatra VII, we can see similar features, but more Greek in nature based on the sunken eyes and the way her hair is placed. Her nose is further emphasized as the typical Ptolemaic nose, and her face and neck are elongated. Yet, in this image, her features do not emphasis femininity in the same way the statue in Figure 28 did.

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Figure 28: Statue of Ptolemaic Queen, perhaps Cleopatra VII
c. 200-30 B.C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 89.2.660, Gift of Joseph W. Drexel, 1889

Figure 29: Cleopatra VII
c. 51-30 B.C.E.
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum 2005.126 Gift of David Gordon Mitten in honor of Dr. Carmen Arnold-Biucchi

3.1.1.1 Ptolemaic Deity Depictions

Figure 30: Statue of a Goddess, probably Nehemetaui or Nebethetepet
c. 550-300 B.C.E. (Late Period-Ptolemaic Period)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 26.7.845 Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926

Figure 31: The Goddess Isis and her Son Horus
c. 332-30 B.C.E
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
55.121.5 Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest Fund, 1955

The deities from this time period are particularly interesting as the religious iconography also faces some changes under the influence of the Greeks. We can see in this the statue of the Isis and her son, Horus. Her vulture headdress is typical of the headdresses reserved for goddesses and queens, but her facial features do display a significant difference. While the proportional emphasis on her large ears and her rounded jawline, her eyes are narrower and her nose is representative of the Ptolemaic nose shown in the royal depictions of the previous section. Another important feature is how her breasts are presented larger, like those in Figure 28, which was not typical of the Egyptian women in previous dynasties, for which we have evidence. As she is shown suckling the child-god, Horus, the greater size in her bosom is representative of the fertility aspect to her image as a deity. While she is a fertility goddess to the ancient Egyptians, these features do become

enhanced during the reign of the Ptolemies.[66] In Horus' childlike form, he is made deliberately

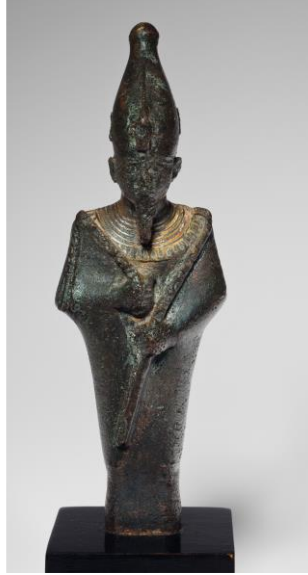non-binary by the lack of genitalia and the plumpness of his figure.

Figure 32: Osiris
Mid-7th-late 1st Century B.C.E.
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler
Museum 1920.44.278 Gift of the Misses
Norton

Figure 33: Relief: Queen or Goddess
with Vulture Headdress
c. 250-150 B.C.E.
The Walter Museum of Art 1911.22.282

This goddess statue is probably either Nehemetaui or Nebethetepe in Figure 32 from the

Late Period to the early Ptolemaic Period. Her features represent this transitional era. Her

headdress is remarkably large as the central piece to her clothing. Her face as the almond-shaped

eyes and curved face, but her chin is narrower than the typical rounded faces of the previous royal

Egyptians. Her breasts are also not the larger size that was mentioned in Figures 28 and 31. This

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[66] Clark 1946: The Isis-Horus grouping is one of the most common objects from throughout the range of Egyptian

history. Since the king saw himself as the divine son, he would identify with Horus. Isis statues were important as

votive offerings or charms for the sake of fertility.

position of sitting may have also been feminized based on the conjunction of the other females, but it does mean there is a strict correlation. The presence of secondary sex characteristics has also increased within many of these figures.

In Figure 30, this goddess relief shows the very traditional Egyptian traits in the middle of the Ptolemaic period. Having based the gender on the vulture headdress, the other facial features are androgynously depicted with eyeliner and curved jawline. Because of the lack of noses on many of the other royal and deity statues, we cannot be sure this is entirely Ptolemaic, but the nose has the previously mentioned triangular shape with large nostrils and a straight bridge.

Figure 34: Striding Thoth
c. 332-30 B.C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 26.7.860 Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926

The Ptolemies are not trying to match the deities in every image they reproduce, but there do seem to be some similar features that encompass the ideal of the divine royal family. This statute of Osiris in Figure 33 also represents similar features of the transitional period. While more weathered, he shows the pharaonic beard and traditional *nemes* represent his attributes as the king. His face is rounded, and he has indents of the traditional eyeliner for all deities. His masculine

identity relies on the gendered clothing and beard using traditional Egyptian artistry. The striding Thoth statue on the other hand deliberately shows the muscular chest of the god. While his ibis head points to his connection with this animal, because his head turns into a headdress resembling the queen and goddess headdresses, there seem to be further connections into making these gods not completely fit into the gender binary. Clothing and secondary sex characteristics may be more masculine or feminine by nature, but based on the evidence of previous monarchs, these are not restricted to the sex of the individual. In the case of the deity depictions, they represent both how the Greek and Egyptian depictions formulated the mixing of these two very different artistic methods and the continued allowance of androgyny in certain forms.

4.0 Roman Egyptian Gender Depictions

As the Romans took power after the Battle of Actium, there is another shift in the art style and artistic media. An important difference in this period is the mass production of mummy masks and panel paintings. Royals and deities are no longer the only evidence of archaeological finds from this time period. More facial reconstruction from different groups of people, therefore, increases our view of how masculine and feminine traits are expressed. As the monarchy was denounced, the Roman Egyptian depictions of Roman emperors are the most comparative, but there are obvious differences in the institutions. The deities undergo very distinct changes as well that may be interpretive of a difference in their gender. We can see that the binary depictions, compared to the previous examples, seem to be more enforced.

4.1 Roman Egyptian Mummy Masks and Panel Paintings

Despite the differing styles, this panel painting of a woman in Figure 35 represents the distinct almond-shaped eyes typical of the Egyptians and the elongated head and neck typical of the Hellenistic influence. The Roman influence seems to be attributed to the inclusion of dark curly hair and thick eyebrows. These two female mummy masks in Figures 36 and 37 have very striking similarities; but also share the same traits with the women in the panel painting from Figure 35. All figures emphasize the dark curly hair, the large almond-shaped eyes, the oval face, and thick eyebrows in contrast to the typical Egyptians traits of a rounded face, light or no eyebrows, and covered hair. The eyes are the only features, which show similarities to the Egyptians. These two

figures share other traits in the same hairstyle, the placement of stripes on clothes, and similar pieces of jewelry. They are not the same, but their resemblance is indicative of the expected appearances of many of these women in Roman Egypt. It, therefore, calls into question whether the Romans would purposefully deny their individualistic traits to appear in a certain way. Hammer agrees that the idealized feminine traits for the Romans are a tiny nose, long fingers, golden hair, to have proportion and height, eyes like flaming torches, a smooth neck with long hair, and fair skin.[67] Many of these traits are seen in these figures, but golden hair and a tiny nose are absent. Some individualistic traits therefore remain, but the common denominators between all these women cannot be ignored. Their facial features are showing a distinct pattern, and while the Egyptians had the same, the most important part is how the traits compare to a supposed masculine representation.
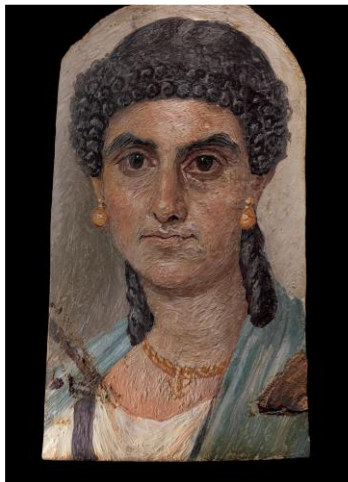

Figure 35: Panel Painting of a Woman in a Blue Mantle
c. 54-68 C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2013.438 Director's Fund, 2013

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[67] Hammer 1940, p.18-19; Also See: Borg 2010, Brøns 2018, Riggs 2006; Thompson 1982

Figure 36: Female Mummy Mask
Mid-to-late 1st Century C.E.
Berlin State Museums ART186656

Figure 37: Mummy Mask
c. 60-70 C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
19.2.6 Rogers Fund, 1919

Figure 38: Portrait of a Bearded Man
c.100-199 C.E.
Yale University Art Gallery 36683

Figure 39: Mummy Portrait of a Bearded Man
c. 170-180 C.E.
The Walters Art Museum 1912.32.6

These portraits of bearded men in Figures 38 and 39 showcases a similar phenomenon found in Figures 35, 36, and 37. The traits that make them traditionally masculine are displayed by their short hair, beard, rounded eyes, and long nose. Their complexions also differ between the feminine and masculine portrayals, since the women have fairer skin and the men are shown darker. This ideal may be attributed to the preference for women to remain in the home, untouched by the sun, and men to be out in the forum and other work, developing the circumstantial tan. Their expressions are also notable as the masculine figures are very deadpan, looking up in the panel, while the feminine figures are all depicted with smiles or looking straight in the panel. As we look at the mummy masks in Figures 40 and 41, they wear similar deadpan expressions to these figures. These mummy masks show the same elongated noses and almond-shaped eyes. Their eyes, however, are smaller in contrast to the female mummy masks in Figures 36 and 37. They both have very short hair but present the same curly texture. Their eyebrows seem to lack the same thickness presented in the other masks and panel paintings, but the paint on these masks seems to have worn off, obstructing the full appearance of the pieces. The lack of a beard in Figure 40, does vary from the other masculine representations, but the presence of the short hair, the long nose, and the oval-shaped face point to those same features being shown by the other figures. The facial structures have become more separated and ergo binary within these figures.

Figure 40: Mummy Mask of a Man
c. 200-233 C.E.
Harvard Art Museums 1965.551

Figure 41: Mummy Portrait
c. 167-199 C.E.
Dallas Museum of Art DMA_.1995.82

Figure 42: Funerary Mask of a Young Woman
c. 100-199 C.E.
Minneapolis Institute of Art MIA_.16.572

This ideal is further emphasized by the funerary mask in Figure 42. This mask has no gendered hairstyle or clothing other than the remnants of earrings. The earrings are feminine according to the Roman tradition but the facial features on the mask also share the same feminine

features as the other female masks.[68] Figure 42 has large eyes and a rounded face with an emphatic pale complexion. Davies also alludes to how Roman society had propagated that conformity is rewarded with high-class items and commemoration in a marble portrait.[69] Then, women would want to maintain a certain demeanor that deems women to remain in a state of inferiority. The Egyptian gender seems to be more ambiguous than the Roman artistic figures. While there needs to be more research into the various genders of individuals within this culture, the binary is more promoted within the art collectives of these portraits.

4.1.1 Roman Emperors' Attributes

Figure 43: Claudius
c.41-51 C.E.
Carnegie Museum of Natural History 1948-59a

Figure 44: Denarius (Coin) Portraying Octavian
28 B.C.E.
Art Institute of California 1920.3046 Gift of William F. Dunham

As the monarchy dissolved under the Roman reign, the depictions of the rulers have transitioned to include only the Roman emperors. Still, it is important to note the distinct

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[68] Hope 2019, p.27: All classes coveted jewels for, specifically, women's fingers, ears, necks, and shoes. according to an account of Pliny.

[69] Davies 2008, p.218

differences between how the emperors and the kings are depicted. This denarius of Egypt states "aegypto capta," memorializing the Octavian's capture of Egypt. Made around 27 BCE, Octavian is postured straight with a triangular nose, short hair, and a semi-straight jawline. His eyes are fairly small and sunken to show off the straightened edges of Octavian's face. Emperor Claudius shows a similar appearance in Figure 43. The features on his face are almost the same if not more angular than Octavian's features in Figure 44. The nose, eyes, and jawline all have the same shape, embodying the essence of these ultimate patriarchs.

Figure 45: Coin Showing Emperor Hadrian Reverse
c.138-117 C.E.
The Art Institute of Chicago AIC_.1980.824

Figure 46: Nero
c.54-68
Carnegie Museum of Natural History 1948-59-b9

The depiction of Emperor Hadrian in Figure 46 does display some different traits, but he still includes the previous masculine traits from the mummy masks and panel paintings: the short curly hair, angular features, and beard. The Egyptian kings before the Ptolemies emphasized the traits which would resemble the divine and these traits were not innately masculine based on the transcendence of appearance between the kings, queens, and the deities they worship. The Ptolemies strove to prove their strength but embraced enough of Egyptian culture to depict

themselves in various ways. In the weathered coin of Nero, he seems to lack the same angular appearance, but some traits remain. Nero in Figure 45 has the same straight nose and short, curly hair of the previous emperors, but his face is more rounded. The distribution of these coins in Egypt entirely reflects the Roman empirical image but does not reflect a combination of cultures in the way the Ptolemaic coins did. The portrait of Septimius Severus and his family is a unique embodiment of the empirical family with elements of Egyptian artistry. As with the previous mummy masks, the wife of Septimius is shown with larger eyes, a longer hairstyle, a pale complexion, and a rounded face. Septimius, as a native from Libya, is dark-skinned, with dark curly hair and a long beard.[70] His stature also shows a wider frame than his wife. As with the mummy masks and panel paintings, the features maintain the almond-shaped eyes and Egyptian style.

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[70] Early scholars accused Septimius of favoritism towards African countries, but Jerary demonstrates how Septimius was a victim of bias and actually was a cruel, ambitious man towards Africa. He used Africans to further his personal goals of establishing himself on the throne. See: Jerary 2008

Figure 47: Portrait of Septimius Severus & Family
c.200-210 C.E.
Altes Museum, Berlin 31329

4.1.1.1 Deity Depictions in Roman Egypt

While the ruling class decided to maintain a solely Roman representation, religion has a more commingled practice. Figure 48 shows a Zeus-Ammon syncopation. He has traditional Roman hair and beard, albeit longer than the previous portraits and emperor portrayals. His nose is larger, but straight with a more serene expression. This silver bust of Serapis has very similar features to the Zeus-Ammon head. His hair is longer, but his sunken eyes, straightened nose, and beard all fit into the same features. Serapis began as a deity combining Egyptian and Hellenistic aesthetic values but seems to embody more Greek traits since he is presented similar to the other elder male gods.[71]
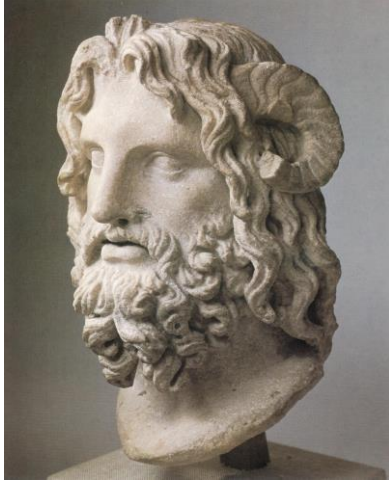
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[71] Murphy 2021, p.32

Figure 48: Head of Zeus-Ammon
c. 75-150 C.E.
Brooklyn Museum 2Aw.013

Figure 49: Silver Bust of Serapis
c. 100-199 C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1991.127 Gift of Jan Mitchell and
sons, 1991

This shroud of Osiris and Anubis was made during the 3rd century CE, showing the prominence of Egyptian religion. While some of the god images syncretized, the traditional depictions would remain in some capacity. The images, however, are styled more similarly towards the mummy masks and panel paintings. All the eyes of Osiris, the youth in the center, and Anubis are almond-shaped and are big in proportion. As seen in the Roman age, larger eyes do seem to indicate a more feminine presence with their rounded faces. Their noses are narrow and long, however, as was seen in the masculine images of the previous images. The gendered headdresses are also shown, signaling exactly who is depicted within the shroud. This shroud relating directly to Egypt, even during Roman times, shows a more lenient image of these masculine gods than the syncretized gods.

The Isis-Aphrodite statue in Figure 50, is another syncretized god, but in this form, she emphasizes hyper-femininity in almost every way. Heyob comments on the phenomenon of Isis's

syncretization that, even though being a patroness of women, she would bring both men and women together, embodying the attributes of Hathor and Aphrodite-Venus.[72]

Figure 50: Shroud
c. 200-299 C.E.
Claremont Colleges CE:261b-278b

Figure 51: Figure of Isis-Aphrodite
c. 100-199 C.E.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1991.76 Purchase, Lila Acheson
Wallace Gift, 1991

She is completely bare with two straps emphasizing her breasts and hips. She also has thick pubic hair as the only hair covering her body, except the hair on her head. She is positioned completely straight and therefore emphasizes her headdress that relates to the iconography of both Isis and Aphrodite.[73] Isis proves interesting since she is also combined with another symbol of fertility, Demeter. In this relief, she is sculpted with long hair flowing out of the frame. The child Horus is on her back much like Figure 31, in which she is depicted protecting her child. Her eyes

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[72] Heyob 1975, p.48-49

[73] See: Hollis 2019

60

are made wide, and her nose is elongated with wide nostrils. She looks forwards to the painting, giving the illusion of moving determinably. All these Isis statues show the ovular head with the elongated neck. Because of her popularization, she is the one combined with many forms of the goddess, but she is depicted by herself as seen in Figure 53. Her face is styled in the traditional Hellen-Roman style, but she wears more traditional clothing than the previous images. Her face is rounded, and her eyes are large with a small nose and lip. Her breasts are emphasized by the straps of her garment, but they are clothed and more hidden. This Isis statue succeeds in performing more hyper-femininity than the previous Isis statues of the early Egyptian kings, but it still has distinct traits that are more restricted and constrained within this style.

Figure 52: Isis-Demeter with the Horus Child
c.1st to 2nd Century C.E.
Archive for Research on Archetypal Symbolism 2Aw.015.tif

Figure 53: The Goddess Isis
c.1-99 C.E.
Minneapolis Institute of Art
MIA_.68.9.5

5.0 Conclusion

The plethora of images within this paper is not representative of every single person within the ancient world. The function of analyzing this small sample of individual portraits is to understand not only the change in gender representation among the Egyptians but also to understand why the establishment of the gender binary should not be assumed. The sex and gender system within any culture will differ from one another and progress over time within the culture itself. As influences and the people shift and change, so do the societal systems that structure these groups of people. The concept of a gender spectrum has recently entered into modern Western culture as a very controversial topic. This bias, therefore, has affected the way archaeologists and historians have interpreted many ancient societies since they did not understand or acknowledge the difference between sex and gender.

Within this thesis, femininity and masculinity have proven to change over time and under the various influences of different people. Even sex characteristics, primary and secondary, cause some doubts as to the absolute gender of the individual, which indicates the harm in assuming gender. Anatomy does not equate to gender. By assuming as such, the societal norms and culture become skewed within our perception of these ancient civilizations. It also causes harm to the people who are non-binary and feel invalidated by the lack of history of various genders other than man and woman. Gender plays into many factors of life: laws and politics, religious worship, sexualities, economics, and social relationships. Especially seen by the androgyny of the deities, there is likely divine worship attributed to many non-binary individuals that are lost to us today. Being hyper-feminine or hyper-masculine does not affect the way people identify either. Feminine and masculine traits are entirely based on societal make-up, not innate nature.

There are many shared characteristics and biased gendering within the realm of Egyptian sculpture. The Egyptian androgyny is further emphasized when one compares it to the way the Greeks and Romans changed their artistic style and therefore the way gender is depicted within art. While royalty and deities were the primary focus, the traits I am focusing on are those that are idealized, not necessarily those in practice. For the Romans, golden hair was seen as the most beautiful and ideal, according to Hammer, but all the sample mummy masks had dark hair due to the commonality of this feature. What is most ideal is not what is most represented, but this does not draw away from the existence of a spectrum of genders. Because the Greeks mixed their artistic styles with the previous Egyptian dynasties, there is more flexibility, but still some obvious gendering within facial features and other attributes. The Romans emphasized the binary more with their depictions of hyper-masculinity and hyper-femininity among the emperors and deities.

While art shows a more binary gender structure, this does not mean there were no non-binary people or people who had non-binary traits among the Romans and the Greeks. It does point to the societal necessity to propagate a strict distinction, but their actual practice in this system by the majority of people has yet to be affirmed. The way that feminine and masculine traits are attributed is called into question, as well as why we have automatically determined a binary system of gender. The evidence leading to these assumptions is biased and ergo needs to be further researched and analyzed in more contexts and media within these societies. It is important to exhaust all routes of possibilities before deciding the societal systems of these ancient civilizations.

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