

G1 (week 1, Tuesday)

Theories of Gender, Gendering Theory?!

HPAH5013/6013 – Gendered Lives in Ancient
Egypt

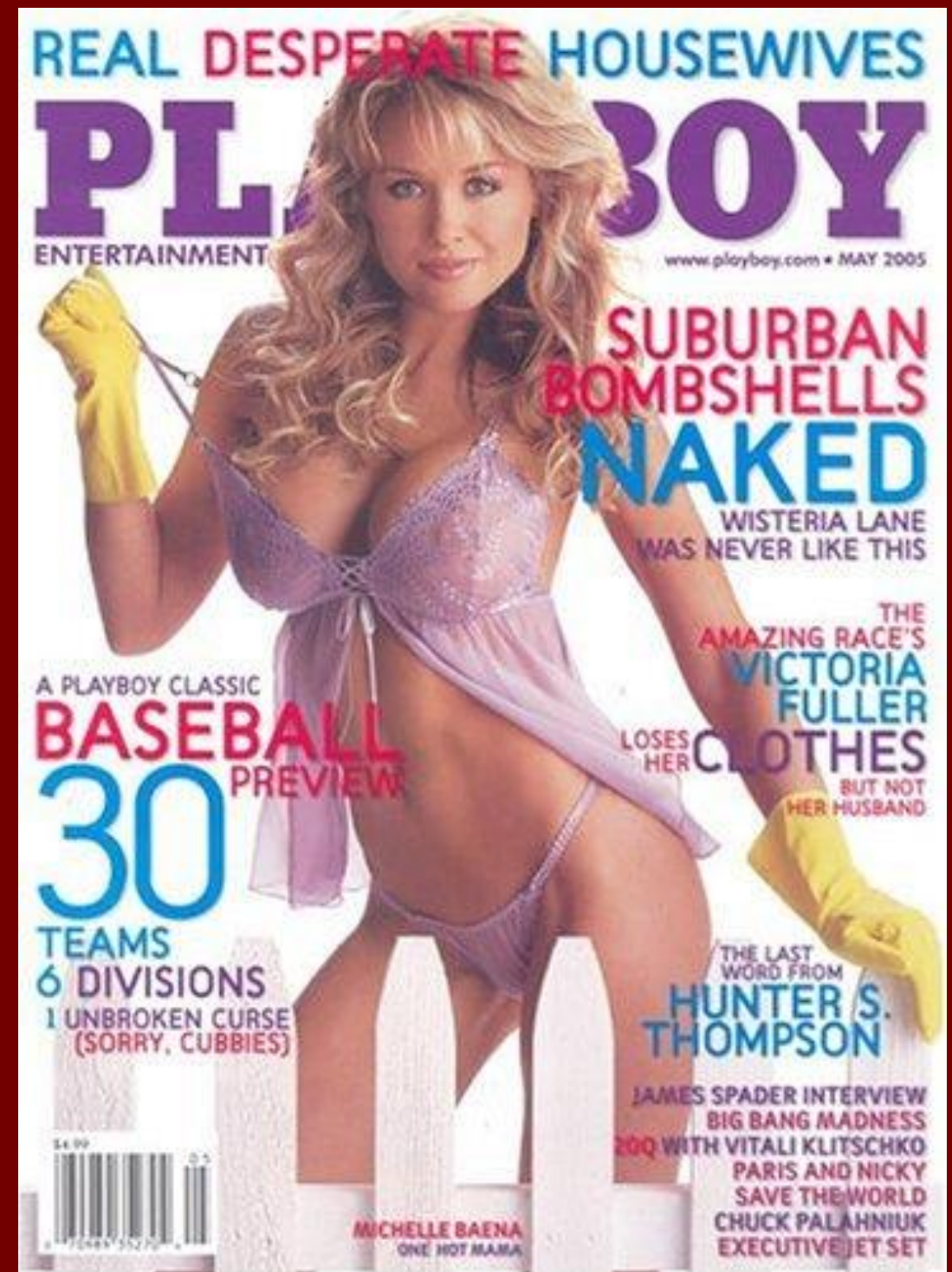
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Gender Symbolic



Gender (Re-)Presentations





**The manly
man?**

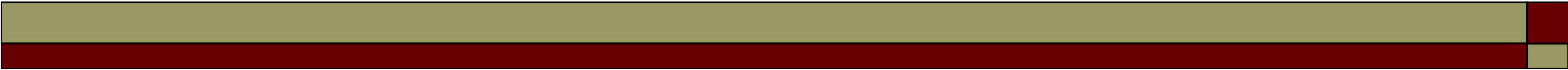
Change of
representations
according
political,
religious and
cultural
necessity





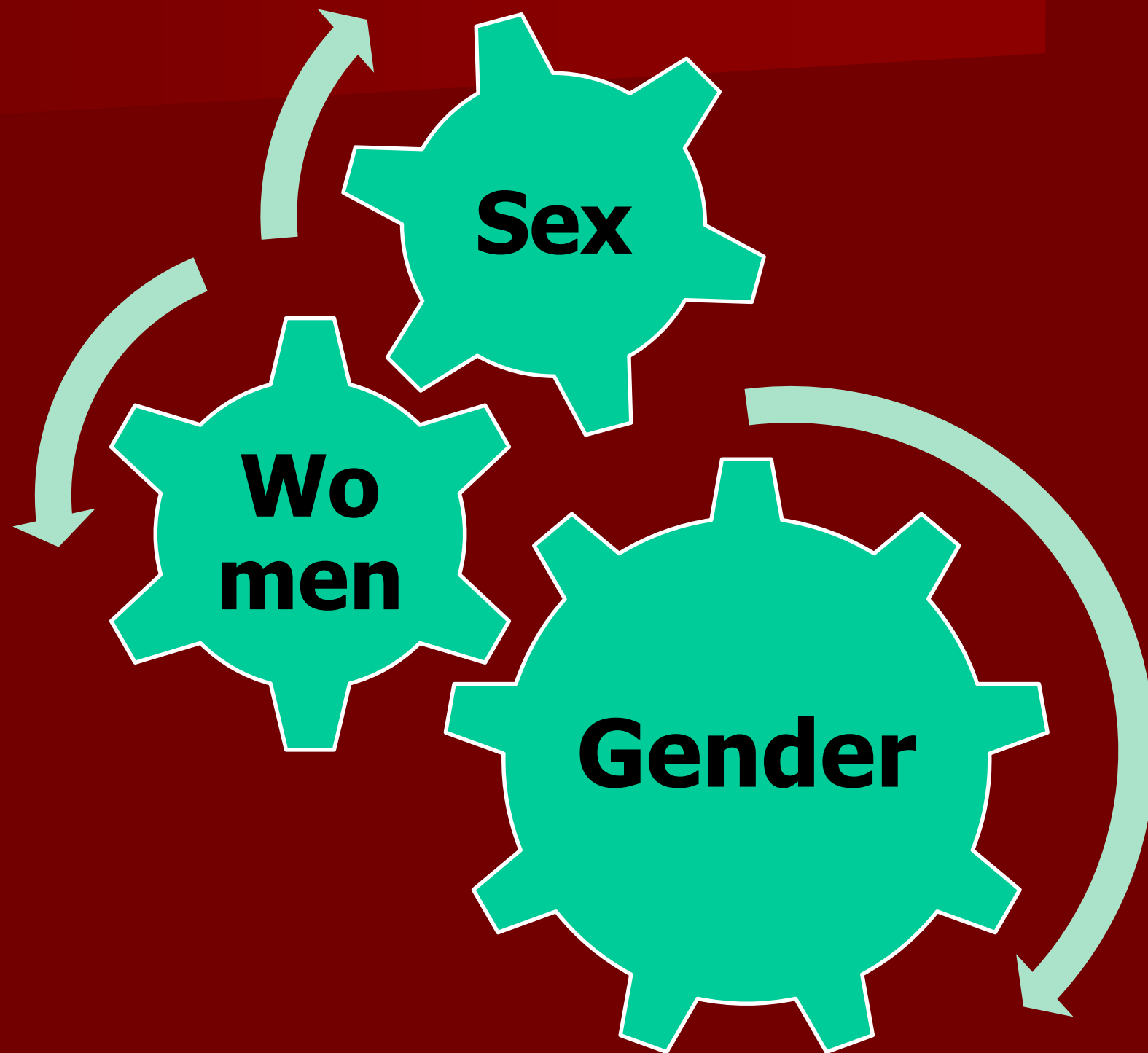
Definitions

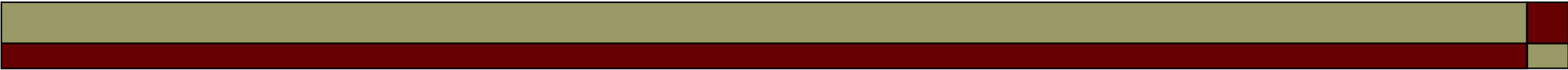
- Sex: two main categories – male, female
- Gender
 - Gender identity: personal sense of one's own gender – can correlate with assigned sex at birth or can differ from it
 - Culturally determined sets of gender categories existent – CAN serve as basis to form a person's social identity in relation to other members of society
 - most societies: still basic division between gender attributes assigned to males and females (gender binary)
 - includes expectations of masculinity and femininity in all aspects of sex and gender: biological sex, gender identity, and gender expression
 - Not always identification with some/all aspects of gender assigned to their biological sex – transgender, non-binary or genderqueer
 - some societies have third gender categories



Definitions

- That means (understanding of) gender is dependent on
 - culture
 - role
 - stereotype
 - equality
 - ideal





Definitions

- Sex
- Gender
 - Masculinity
 - Femininity
- Culture
- role
- stereotype
- equality
- ideal

Theories of Gender, Gendering Theory

- many material and symbolic phenomena related to gender
- Potential types of theory: feminist theory; post-modern and post-structural theory; standpoint theory; intersectionality; literary theory; queer theory; theories of the body and sexuality; postcolonial theory; psychoanalysis; law and bioethical theory; critical race theory; affect theory; feminist new materialism; performativity.

Sex – 5 meanings

1. One organism's reproductive capabilities (male or female)
2. assumption to which of these divisions an individual belongs (What sex are you?)
3. processes by which we discern what sex an organism might have
4. sexual division, as in the fair sex, or women (as extension to reproductive meaning)
5. pleasurable physical activities that occur in conjunction with reproduction and sexual gratification, although such activities may not have reproduction as their goal

Sex

- *Sexual identity.*
- The objective categorisation of a person's physiological status as male or female.
- Sexual identity, especially, gives problems. Does it mean genetic status as XX or XY, or does it mean the sum of our development up until birth?
- Or is it simply the social label applied to us by our birth certificates?

Gender

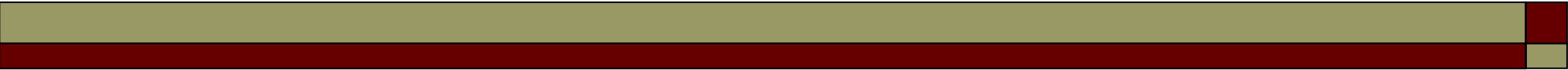
- Difficult to define!
- → Oxford Dictionaries:
- the state of being male or female (typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones)
- → leads to the term of Gender Identity

Gender Identity

- sociologists and psychologists definition:
- gender identity = differing cultural and social roles that men and women inhabit
- ways in which individuals experience those roles
 - internally
 - in terms of the ways they present themselves to the world through their
- manner of dress, behavior, physical comportment

Sex $\leftrightarrow$ Gender Identity

- Sex = biological to the person
 - male or
 - Female
- Gender identity
 - masculine or
 - feminine



Women

- Sex
- → easy: female!
- → easy???
- But gender?
- Problem: Feminism?!

Where are we concerning
Egyptology?

Sexed bodies

- ❑ bodies identified in archaeology as male or female
- ❑ Note: cultural selection restricts the range to two options in such identifications
- ❑ avoid ethnocentric assumptions!
- ❑ → useful to replace the two categories with a more self-conscious spectrum of anatomical possibilities
- ❑ Excavation reports: application of male/female opposition without discussion

Sexed bodies

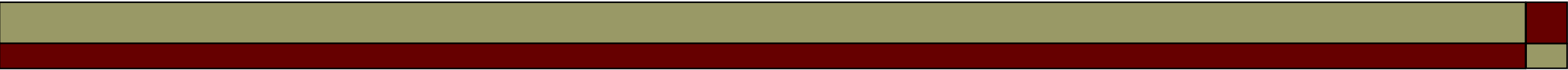
- The two categories of male and female sexed bodies are reinforced by the observation that a large number of different human societies categorise individuals according to reproductive role (individual role in the reproduction and therefore survival of the society).

Gender

- ❑ sum of associations, attitudes and practices prescribed by human societies for their members according to their sexed bodies
- ❑ 'cultural' prescription: derive from society, not from physical capabilities.
- ❑ Most men and women are broadly capable of the same activities, with the major exception of childbirth itself.

Gender

- ethnographic spectrum of gender constructions → unsafe to assume anything in advance, whether in the number of genders or in the specific associations
- . To take a couple of simplified examples, in the northern European gendered division of labour, washing clothes and milking cows are two activities often assumed to be 'women's work', whereas, in Ancient Egyptian formal visual and written records, both were carried out by men.



Seminar Questions

What is the purpose of nakedness in Egyptian art? Why is it important to erase our own preconceptions of human representation when we look at Egyptian art?

Are femininity and masculinity expressed in Egyptian art and Egyptian texts? Discuss and provide examples.

It is said that sexuality is stressed in Egyptian sources but what does it mean? How might we distinguish true eroticism from representations of fertility? What might some of the icons of female & male sexuality be?

Egyptian constructions of eroticism, obscenity, and sexuality are quite different than ours. How do they differ? How can we recognise sexual allusions in art?

Concisely summarize the main argument in any of the articles (or select one of the arguments if the article presents more), including any opposing views. Take a stand on the issue yourself, and support your own argument with primary evidence.



And in Ancient Egypt?

- Sex and gender can be expressed in art and texts (our evidence)
 - Are femininity and masculinity expressed?
 - Why is it important to erase our own preconceptions of human representation?
 - It is said that sexuality is stressed in Egyptian art but what does it mean?
 - What is the purpose of nakedness in Egyptian art?

Gender in Ancient Egypt

- Ancient Egyptian society was highly gendered
- → participation in most aspects of ancient Egyptian life depended on whether one was male or female
- positions, jobs, almost all types of labour were divided by sex (could change over the course of history – weavers)
- from the king down to the lowest rank of official, power structure + government administration = entirely male

Egyptian Art

- Egyptian **formal art is symbolic, not meant to represent reality** → an ideal world.
- **Things are perhaps not so different today.**

Characteristics of images of women in general

- ❑ not shown with rolls of fat (which indicate bureaucracy, high male status)
- ❑ generally lighter in colour (yellowish, if upper class) and shape → men ochre brownish
- ❑ physical strength not emphasised
- ❑ costume clingy emphasising so-called “erogenous” zones (though also non-erogenous)

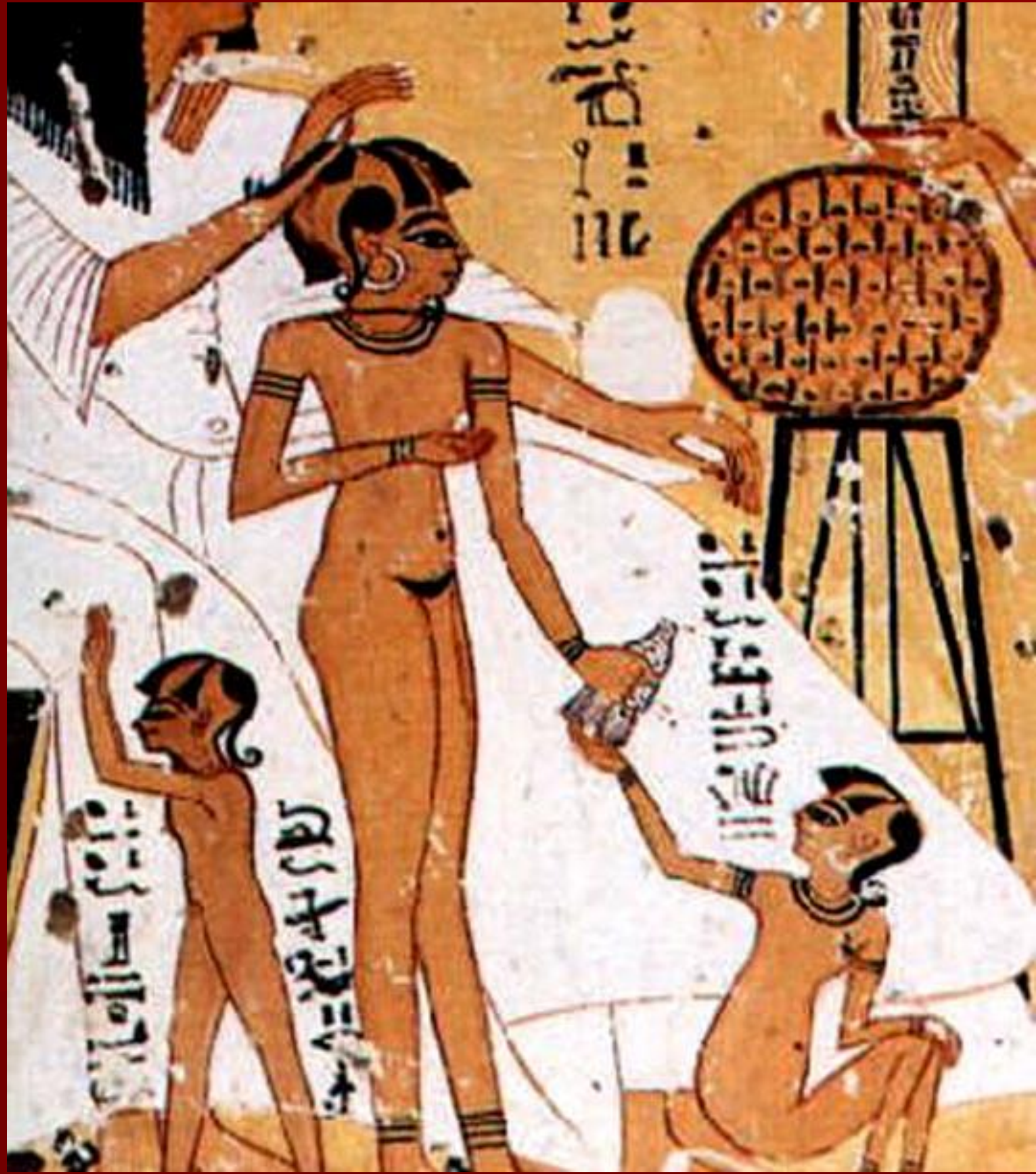






NUDITY / Nakedness

- ❑ Often discussed when focusing on gender problematic – very modern / western approach
- ❑ Modern bias – careful to not to apply to past
- ❑ *Naked* = unclothed bodies
- ❑ *Nude* = symbolic ‘transcendent’ forms
- ❑ many cultures show a close interrelationship between shame and nakedness (though the reason for this is unclear)



NUDITY / Nakedness

- ❑ **NAKED in AE: practical & functional**
- ❑ women grinding flour, men on skiffs (if low class)
- ❑ female & male musicians
- ❑ dancers, wrestlers, entertainers
- ❑ the damned
- ❑ enemies
- ❑ mourning women
- ❑ young children

Aspects of representations - sexuality

- Gestures may or may not be sexual:
 - kiss
 - holding hands
 - touching a familiar person
- VERY subtle representation of attraction / sexuality in official art



Aspects of representations - sexuality

- Gestures may or may not be sexual:
 - kiss
 - holding hands
 - touching a familiar person
- VERY subtle representation of attraction / sexuality in official art
- Different in votive offerings for temples which promote fertility



A) Type 1 faience fertility figurines from Kahun, London UC 16723-4

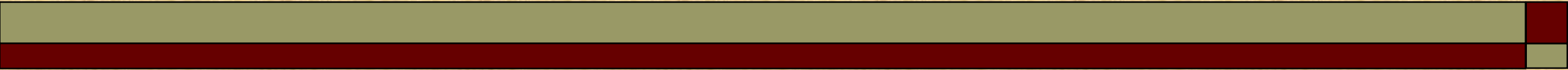
B) Type 6c pottery fertility figurine, London BM 20982



) Wooden phallus from Deir el-Bahri, Oxford Ash. 1926.401

Marriage

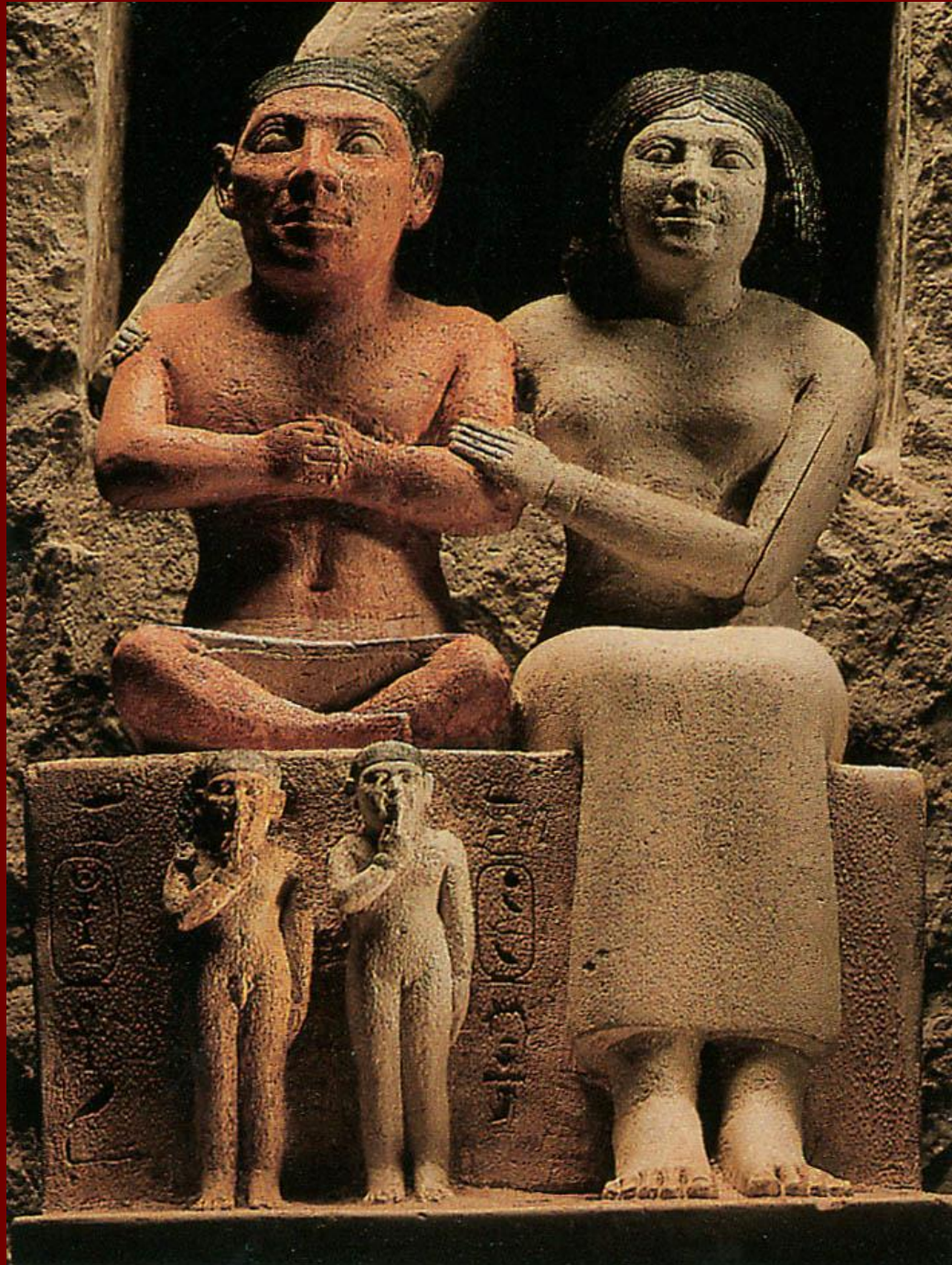
- ❑ Social organisation of Egyptian society through family groups
- ❑ Groups centred around: man, woman, children
 - Proven by register from Deir el-Medinah (NK – lists all occupants by house)
 - Lists owner in filiation to his parents (husbands sometimes called hi)
 - His wife (hemet from OK, NK nebet per) + her filiation (parents)
 - ❑ What is a hebsut? (Hekanakhte papers) – concubine?
 - Names of children (+ filiation)



Instruction of Any

*Take a wife while you're young,
That she make a son for you;
She should bear for you while you're youthful,
It is proper to make people.' ...*

Children



What is marriage in AE?

- Problematic!
- No legal ceremony, no formalisation!
 - But sometimes marriage contracts (especially Late Period and following)
- Maybe active after cohabitation? (entry of woman in house of man) – *grg per* “to establish a household” (“to live together”)
 - → Therefore divorce = “expulsion” / “departure”
- Other term “take somebody as wife”, never take as husband found
- Sometimes third party = asked to sanction

Adultery

- ❑ Men could have affairs
- ❑ Women not
- ❑ → evidence from DeM: “...(a) wife is a wife. She should not make love. She should not have sexual intercourse.”
- ❑ Marriage as social recognition of couples to produce children → filiations important

Instruction of Any

*'Beware of a woman who is a stranger,
One not known in her town;
Don't stare at her when she goes by,
Do not know her carnally.
A deep water whose course is unknown,
Such is a woman away from her husband.
"I am pretty," she tells you daily,
When she has no witnesses;
She is ready to ensnare you,
A great deadly crime when it is heard.*

Multiple marriages

- ❑ More than one partner at a time or at a lifetime
- ❑ seemed to happen often (high risk in childbirth to die → new wife) → term “former wife” as dead, shown on monuments (divorced women not shown)
- ❑ Polygamy maybe in elite, but difficult to differentiate between consecutive and concurrent marriage
- ❑ Interesting: no evidence for the idea of illegitimate children