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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

العنف النوعي (الجنساني)

Uroš Matić

Geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt
Violence genrée

Gender and violence intersected in ancient Egypt in many ways. In general, the ancient Egyptian gender system privileged men and the masculine. Exceptions to this were status dependent. Gendered patterns of violence are evident in cases of mistreatment of women through beating and rape. War-related royal texts used gendered language to frame enemies as feminine and place them lower on the hierarchy vis-à-vis the pharaoh. Enemies were also feminized in visual representations such as temple reliefs. The symbolic violence of gendered language also served to establish indigenous gender hierarchies. Although there is evidence that some Egyptian queens and female rulers organized military operations, there is no evidence for the participation of women in war. In contrast, some goddesses had a strong affiliation with war and violence and were frequently associated with the pharaoh in this regard.

تقاطع الجنس (النوع الاجتماعي) والعنف في مصر القديمة في العديد من النواحي. وبوجه عام، كان النظام النوعي (القائم على الجنس) في مصر القديمة يميز الرجال والرجولة. حيث أن الاستثناءات من ذلك تعتمد على الوضع والحالة. وتتجلى أنماط العنف النوعي في حالات إساءة معاملة النساء من خلال كلا من الضرب والاغتصاب. النصوص الملكية المتعلقة بالحرب تستخدم لغة جنسانية (نوعية) لوصف الأعداء بأنهم أنثويون وتضعهم في مرتبة أدنى في التسلسل الهرمي مقابل الفرعون. أيضًا تم تأنيث هيئة الأعداء في المناظر المصورة مثل مناظر المعبد. ان العنف الرمزي للغة الجنسانية (نوعية) أدى إلى تكوين التسلسلات الهرمية بين الجنسين (الذكر والأنثى). وعلى الرغم من وجود أدلة على قيام بعض الملكات المصريات والحكام الإناث بتنظيم عمليات عسكرية، إلا أنه لا يوجد دليل على مشاركة النساء في الحرب. وعلى النقيض من ذلك، كان لبعض الآلهات ارتباط قوي بالحرب والعنف وكثيراً ما ارتبطوا بالفرعون في هذا الصدد.

Violence is usually understood as behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something (e.g., people, animals, objects, landscape). Gender is most broadly understood as the socio-cultural interpretation of sexual difference (Díaz-Andreu 2005: 15). Therefore, gendered violence is violence with a gendered background. It is either targeting a specific gender (e.g., wife beating), committed by a specific gender (e.g., rape of women by men), or committed in order to punish gender transgressions (e.g., gay bashing) and thus affirm certain gender norms and structures (Butler 1990; Misra 2015). According to Judith Butler, sexual differences become naturalized through continuous performative practices and gender acts, which the society prescribes as normative for different sexes. In this way, practices that can easily be imagined being acted out by both sexes become gendered and

natural for one sex-gender and unnatural and inappropriate for the other sex-gender (Butler 1990: 43-44). In our heteropatriarchal society, those who transgress the norms by acting out that which the society does not ascribe to their sex-gender are often violently reminded of the norms, either by verbal abuse or physical violence. However, this definition of gendered violence does not cover the socio-cultural acts and practices that are inherently violent, although they are not primarily physical.

Practices that subtly structure gender power relations and hierarchies, privileging one specific gender, are known as symbolic or structural violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2004; Žižek 2008: 1-2). French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defined symbolic violence as "gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling" (Bourdieu 2001: 1-2). Where gender is concerned, he argued that its understanding as symbolic violence can be exemplified by the fact that the dominated assume the categories of the dominant as natural. This leads to self-deprecation and self-denigration, illustrated, for example, in Bourdieu's study of women in Kabyle society of north Algeria who view their genitals as deficient and ugly, or in our society, by women or men who suffer from the pursuit of ideals of beauty (Bourdieu 2001; Bourdieu and Wacquant 2004: 273). Conversely, the dominant can assume their status as natural. One well-attested example in modern heteropatriarchal society is the so-called "mansplaining"—a condescending and often oversimplified explanation provided by a man to a woman.

Although historians and archaeologists have investigated violence against women, gender patterns of violence, and various gender forms of symbolic and structural violence for some time now (for further references and examples see Jensen and Matić 2017; Kuhrt 2001), these themes have attracted the serious attention of Egyptologists only recently. Gender-based violence is here understood both as physical violence targeting a specific gender and as symbolic and structural violence observable in unequal power relations between different genders. However, given that gender is not the only category that structures power imbalance—other categories, such as class and ethnicity, also need to be considered—an intersectional understanding of violence is more appropriate than a focus solely on gender (Crenshaw 1989).

Sources

Ancient Egypt's long history provides us not only with rich textual, iconographic, and archaeological sources, but also human remains, which are paramount for the study of gender patterns of violence and gender as a form of symbolic violence. Of course, the character and number of sources vary from period to period, and Egyptologists dealing with gender and violence have until now focused mostly on texts and images.

There are few known juridical documents with attestations of gender-based violence, such as rape or wife beating, before the New Kingdom. This is certainly a consequence of the discovery of the workmen's village at Deir el-Medina, from which most of these texts come. However, the number of such attestations is relatively low and the response of legal authorities is often missing (Hue-Arcé 2018a, 2020). This could indicate that such cases of violence were usually not reported to the authorities but rather settled between the families of the involved. There appear to be a larger number of textual sources from the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods (Bryen 2013; Hue-Arcé 2017). However, even here it is hard to argue for a gender pattern behind violent acts.

Feminizations of enemies and enemy lands through comparison with women are an example of violence entangled with gender *par excellence*. However, these are found only in royal texts on stelae or on temple walls from the Middle Kingdom onwards (Matić 2019a: 139-148; 2021a). The number of attestations using this gender rhetoric is rather small compared to the number of other ways of framing enemies, e.g., as animals (Hsu 2017; Matić 2019a: 133-138). Such gender rhetoric

structuring power relations is more or less absent from the private documents, or we are simply not recognizing it yet.

When visual representations of violence with a possible gender background are concerned, it must be stressed that we lack depictions of Egyptian men acting violently against women or children. Depictions of violence against foreign women and children in war are generally missing (Bestock 2018; Matić 2019b, 2021a). Exceptions are found in depictions of Egyptian soldiers acting violently against foreign women in the Old Kingdom and late First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom (figs. 1 and 2). In the siege scene from the tomb of Inti at Deshasha (see fig. 1), foreign women are fighting the attacking soldiers in their fortified town, which could be an indication that in circumstances of war, women could participate in defending the community. However, bearing in mind that foreign men outside the fort are depicted as passive victims of violence, one should not exclude the symbolic message behind the binary opposition of passive and defeated foreign men and actively fighting foreign women. The underlying message behind this image could have been that these men are so weak that their women have to defend them.

In the New Kingdom, although foreign women and children are depicted as prisoners of war in the so-called tribute scenes (fig. 3) or in battle scenes, there is a curious absence of violence against them. We know from royal texts that in fact they were victims of violence and that they were regularly taken as prisoners of war (Matić 2015, 2017b, 2019a, 2019c). The reasons for the lack of depictions of violence against foreign women and children has been interpreted as a consequence of decorum (Baines 1990) related to a question of taste (Matić 2019a, 2019b).

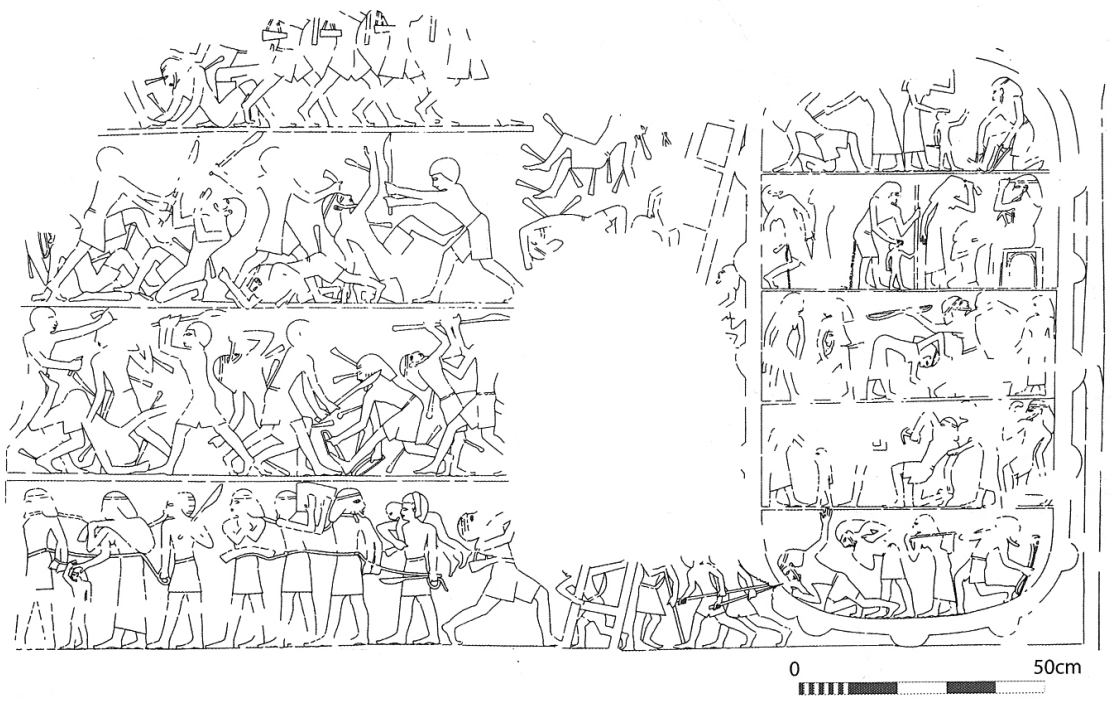

Figure 1. Siege of an "Asiatic" fortified town from the tomb of Inti at Deshasha, 5th Dynasty.

Figure 2. Siege of an "Asiatic" fortified town from the tomb of Intef at Asasif, 11th Dynasty.

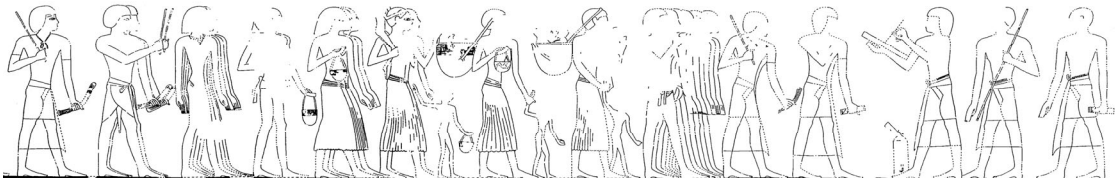

Figure 3. Fifth register of the tribute scene from the tomb of Rekhmira (TT 100), 18th Dynasty, showing foreign women and children as prisoners of war.

In the New Kingdom, foreign women are depicted as victims of violence only at the hand of great royal wives such as Tiy, wife of Amenhotep III, or Nefertiti (figs. 4 and 5), wife of Akhenaten (Matić 2017a). The context of these depictions is ideological and devoid of any historical reference. A question worth considering is whether such depictions of violence serve to establish native gender-hierarchies or reflect them. The fact that Egyptian queens are depicted smiting or trampling only foreign women and not men strengthens the symbolic violence behind the understanding of women as normatively subordinated to men. Only kings, or women ruling as kings and depicted as kings, such as Hatshepsut, are represented smiting foreign men. Therefore, such images both reflect and establish native gender-hierarchies.

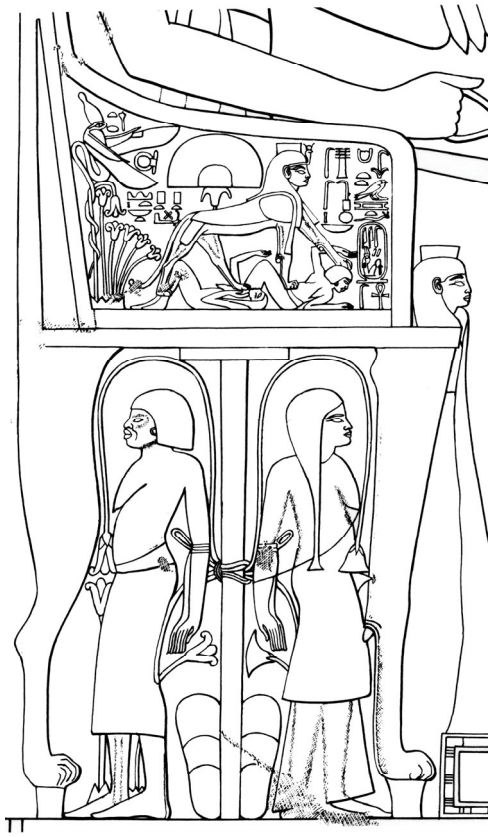

Figure 4. Depiction of the throne of Queen Tiy, showing female captives bound to a *sm3 t3wy* ("Union of the Two Lands") hieroglyph, and the queen, in the form of a female sphinx, trampling female captives. Tomb of Kheruef (TT 192), 18th Dynasty.

Masculine Domination

Egyptian wisdom texts and literary stories present us with an image of women as either passive, subordinated, and in need of protection, or as dangerous, adulterous, and requiring control by men (Dieleman 1998; Matić 2021a; Orriols-Llonch 2007). Already in Maxim 21 of the *Maxims of Ptahhotep* of the 5th Dynasty, a man is instructed not to contend with a woman in court and to keep her from power, restrain her, and make her stay in the house (Lichtheim 1973: 69). Much later, Demotic Papyrus Louvre 2414 (II, 8-9) from the second century BCE advises the reader not to tolerate the insults of his wife and to beat her (Hue-Arcé 2017: 137). Domestic violence in the form of husbands beating their wives, probably with a stick, is well known from texts on ostraca from the New Kingdom workmen's village at Deir el-Medina (Hue-Arcé 2018a, 2020; Müller-Wollermann 2004: 77; McDowell 1990: 152; Toivari-Viitala 2001: 216; Matić 2021a). One ostracon (CGC 25521, recto 12) informs us that a workman was absent from work because he was beating his wife (Černy 1927: 184-190). From the fact that the incident was recorded on the ostracon, we can only assume that the workman was reported for his absence and had to answer for it. According to Christine Hue-Arcé (2020: 148-151) the "wife beating" description could rather designate a physical dispute between the two spouses. That violence against women was nevertheless a matter of concern is attested in Papyrus Harris I (78, 8-9), in which Ramesses III boasts that under his rule a woman could travel safely throughout Egypt (Eyre 1984: 101). The number of texts reporting violence at Deir el-Medina is rather small (not more than 20, according to Hue-Arcé 2018a). It is possible that in many instances such cases simply did not reach the authorities; it seems that the family played a significant role in the regulation of conflicts (Hue-Arcé 2018a: 265-279).

There are more attestations for violence against women, and committed between women, from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. However, one should be careful not to jump to the conclusion that these periods were more violent, since we may ultimately be dealing with

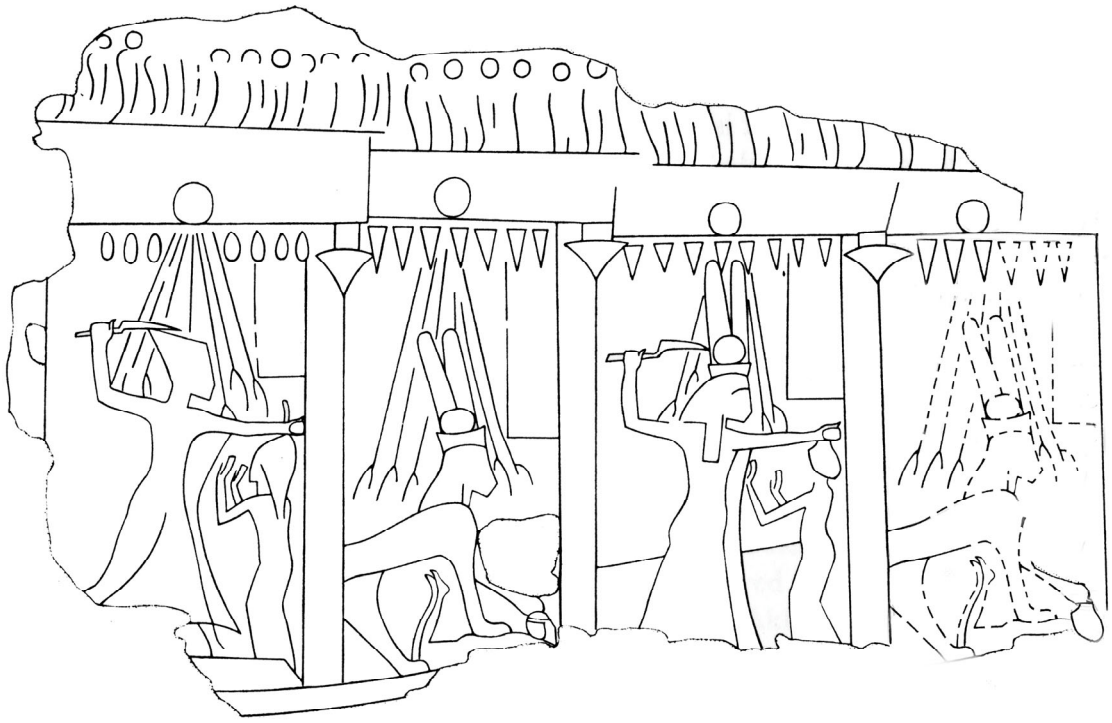

Figure 5. Representation on a talatat block of Queen Nefertiti, smiting and trampling female captives on a barque. Luxor Temple, 18th Dynasty.

problems of reporting and record keeping. Women in these sources complain about their mistreatment by their husbands (Papyrus BGU VIII 1820), uncles (Papyrus Dryton 33. 1, 19), state authorities (Papyrus Mich. VI 425), their brother and his wives (Papyrus Chrest. Mitt. 126 = Papyrus Amherst 141), or by unknown attackers (Papyrus Tebtunis 2, 283). In almost all of these cases the perpetrators of the violence are men, though in some cases even pregnant women were attacked by other women, as attested in Papyrus Ryl 2, 68 (Bagnall 1989: 211-213; Bryen 2008; Scheerlinck 2011 – 2012: 172-174). In their discussions of evidence from Ptolemaic Egypt, Bernard Legras (1999) and Christine Hue-Arcé (2018b) stress that focusing solely on gender behind violent acts can be misleading as very often the status and ethnic identity of actors and victims play a significant role. Intersectionality is a useful concept to use when reading evidence on violence. Women were not only women, and men were not only men, but also Greek or Egyptian, from a town or a village, and of a certain social status. Violence against a free woman, or against the daughter or wife of a citizen, was not viewed in the same way as violence against an enslaved woman, who was essentially considered to be a possession. Also, the violence committed by a person of lower status to a person of higher status was not viewed in the same manner as when violence occurred between peers (Hue-Arcé 2018b; Matić 2021a). For example, in Papyrus Enteux 79 from 218 BCE, a Greek man named Herakleides accuses an Egyptian woman, Psenobastis, of Psya in the Arsinoite nome, of pouring urine on him while he was passing by. When he confronted her, and after they exchanged insults, she tore off a piece of his himation (outer garment), making his chest bare in public, and spat in his face. He describes her acts as *hybris* (Greek ὕβρις; in legal usage referring to assault, sexual crimes, or theft of public property) and stresses that she took the initiative in the aggression. Although we do not learn anything about the fate of the woman, here we observe not only

violence enacted by a woman to a man, but also violence enacted by an Egyptian woman of possibly lower status to a Greek man of higher status (Hue-Arcé 2018b: 166-167). Evidence from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt also indicates that women seem to have been subjected to as much violence from women as from men. For example, in Papyrus Enteux 83, dated to 221 BCE, a woman named Thamounis complains that she was assaulted by a woman named Thothortaïs in a bathhouse. Thothortaïs had wanted Thamounis to leave the bath and when she refused, Thothortaïs hit her all over her body and tore off her necklace. Thamounis also complains that she was detained. It is important to stress that Thamounis was not a local (Legras 1999: 232).

In Papyrus Oxyrhynchus VIII 1120, from the third century CE, a woman complains of an attack on several people at her home. She terms the attack on her son-in-law as *hybris* and an attack against her servant girl as *bia*, violence against personal property (Bryen 2008: 192). The text of a fragmentary parchment book (BGU IV 1024), found in Hermopolis and copied in the fourth century CE, mentions various cases of violence, such as the murder of three women by men with whom they had sexual relationships, the murder of an adulterous woman, and the murder of an unmarried woman who had a lover. Also worth mentioning is the case of a sex-worker who was murdered by Diodemus of the senatorial order. Her mother, Theodora, complains that she had handed her daughter to the brothel keeper because they were poor; she asks for a sum to be paid to her since, with the loss of her daughter, she lost a source of income. Diodemus was executed by decapitation for the offence (Montserrat 2011 [1996]: 132-134). These examples point to gender-based violence related to sex in Roman Egypt: women committing adultery or engaging in sexual relationships before marriage could trigger the wrath either of individuals or the community. As indicated by the daughter of Theodora, women of lower socioeconomic status who turned to sex work were also exposed to potential violence from their customers. The same case indicates that even a higher-status customer, Diodemus, did not escape justice for killing the daughter of Theodora. The evidence from Roman Egypt informs us that interpersonal violence during this period of Egyptian history was status dependent.

Rape

Sexual violence is extremely hard to pinpoint in ancient Egyptian texts. This is because very often information on consent is missing. In complaints of men about the adultery of their wives, for example, it seems that there was more concern with the possibility that adultery had occurred than whether the woman participated willingly or was forced. Numerous literary texts such as the *Maxims of Ptahhotep* (5th Dynasty), the *Story of Cheops and the Magicians-Papyrus Westcar-Papyrus Berlin 3033* (13th Dynasty), the *Instructions of Ani* (copies from 19th Dynasty until the Late Period), and the *Instructions of Ankhsheshonq* (first century BCE) advise men to avoid married women (Matić 2021a; Orriols-Llonch 2007). Adultery and rape could disrupt the kinship fabric of society. Alexandra von Lieven argued that, where the world of divinities is concerned, as we perceive it in religious texts and representations, we are safe to interpret certain acts as rapes, because either unambiguous terms are used to indicate physical violence or the reaction of the victim is defensive or frantic (von Lieven 2015: 184). Where the human world is concerned the main difference is that we do not have the perspective of the victim, nor are the reactions of the victim ever described. Even the terms used are ambiguous. According to Renate Müller-Wollermann (2004: 108) in all cases of adultery and rape the verb used is ***nk***. Jac. J. Janssen (1988: 55) and Jaana Toivari-Viitala (2001: 153-154) warn against this interpretation of the verb and have pointed to its ambiguous meaning depending on the context in which it is used. There is indeed another Egyptian verb, ***ḥꜥ***, which was used to indicate physical acts of a sexual nature that most probably involved at least some type of force—if not actual physical violence culminating in rape—as attested in an inscription (lines 9-10) purporting to be a copy of a foundation document of the funerary

temple of Amenhotep, son of Hapu, from the reign of Amenhotep III, in the Turin Indictment Papyrus (Papyrus Turin 1887, verso 3. 4-5, section C, column III) of c. 1150 BCE (Gardiner 1948: 81; Möller 1910: 934, Taf. VI). Amenhotep, son of Hapu, reports here on the rape of a wife in front of her husband, who had committed adultery. Rape is attested in two papyri of the second century CE: in Demotic Papyrus Petese II C1 II-III, the rape of a combatant's mother by an enemy is mentioned, and in Demotic Papyrus Petese II D1, the rape of a woman named Hatmehit is mentioned. Both of these documents are literary texts, which begs the question of why some forms of violence, such as rape, are rarely reported in juridical documentary evidence (Hue-Arcé 2017: 137-138; 2020: 57-58).

Cases of rape in the divine world are less ambiguous. Horus's rape of Isis is attested in the Magical Papyrus Harris (7, 10-11) of New Kingdom date (Lange 1927: 62; Leitz 1999: 42). Repeated episodes of rape are attested in the text of Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84, also known as the *Mythological Manual of the Delta,* from the seventh century BCE. The reason behind the interpretation of these attestations of sexual encounter as rape is, according to Alexandra von Lieven, the fact that they resulted in abortion, since "normally the birth of a child was considered desirable" (von Lieven 2015: 187). The possibility of Geb's rape of Tefnut is much discussed in Egyptology. Ursula Verhoeven (1991: 330) and Orell Witthuhn (2017: 148) argue that there is no evidence for it, at least not in the 30th Dynasty text on a naos from el-Arish cited as a possible attestation; there the phrase usually interpreted as evidence for the rape of Tefnut by Geb is, as Verhoeven showed, difficult to translate (Verhoeven 1991: 323). Most of the scholars who had priorly dealt with the text, and more recently von Lieven and Jens Blach Jørgensen, argue that the evidence is there. Von Lieven and Jørgensen stress, however, that though the act is not explicitly mentioned in the naos text, rape is to be inferred from the context (Jørgensen 2014: 73; von Lieven 2015: 191). They corroborate this interpretation with evidence from other texts. That Geb raped Tefnut is supported by the Roman Period *Mythological Manual of Florence*, PSI inv. I 72 x+4, 12-18, which mentions the dwelling of the one who punished the son, i.e., Geb, who perpetrated a crime against his father in the slaughtering place in Hermopolis. The son settled down with his mother, Tefnut, and thus they sinned against his father, Shu (Osing and Rosati 1998: 160). Similarly, the reference in the *Mythological Manual of the Delta* to the first abortion of Horit with Osiris, and the description that she (Horit) did as Tefnut did, are interpreted by von Lieven as indications that Tefnut was raped by Geb (von Lieven 2015: 187). Furthermore, according to the same manuscript, Geb was punished for his deed with a spear. In the *Tale of Two Brothers*, Anubis set out to kill his brother, Bata, with a spear for supposedly committing adultery with his wife, who had falsely complained that Bata had forced himself on her (Jørgensen 2014: 81-109). In the *Ritual of Repulsing the Angry One*, in which Seth is substituted for Geb, Seth is punished for rape. His punishment was to witness his wife being raped in front of him, paralleling the inscription purporting to be a copy of the above-mentioned text of Amenhotep, son of Hapu. Shu impales him with his spear, the weapon of choice for punishing rapists in the *Tale of Two Brothers* (Papyrus d'Orbiney from the reign of Seti II) and the *Mythological Manual of the Delta*, and Isis and Nephthys spit on him (Jørgensen 2014: 108). A case of son-mother rape is possibly attested in the text from the temple of Edfu (VI 147,5) of Ptolemaic date describing Khnum forcing himself on his mother (Meeks 2006: 269).

If the attestations from the divine world can be used to cautiously draw conclusions about Egyptian attitudes towards rape, then one aspect that is missing from the evidence of rape in the human world may possibly be reconstructed. From von Lieven's hypothesis that abortion in the divine world is undertaken when pregnancy results from rape, we can surmise that in the human world, too, pregnancies caused by rape were expected to be terminated and the abortions cast to the waters of the Nile, especially since a child born from adultery or rape would have posed a

threat to inheritance strategies and arrangements between families.

Feminization of Enemies

Anthropologist Marilyn Strathern argued that "relations between political enemies stand for relations between men and women" (Strathern 2016: 21). Indeed, this is attested in many societies and was the case in ancient Egypt. On boundary stelae of Senusret III of the 12th Dynasty at Semna (Berlin ÄM 1157, lines 10-11) and Uronarti (Khartum Nr. 3 = Inv. 451, lines 7-8) in Lower Nubia, we find a curious designation of cowardly behavior: "Aggression is bravery. Retreat is vile. He who is driven from this boundary is a true ***ḥmjw*** ("back-turner")." The term is derived from the verb ***ḥmj***, "to drive back; to repel" (*Wb III*, 79.1-21) and it could be that it is related to the word ***ḥmt***, "woman" (*WB III*, 76.16-77.19). The same designation for enemies is also found later in a passage of the text of the Battle of Qadish poem from the reign of Ramesses II preserved at Karnak and Luxor (*KRI II*, 70. 1-10; *KRITA II*, 10). The phallus determinative in ***ḥmjw*** indicates that the term had a sexual aspect. It has been variously translated by Egyptologists, the translations ranging from "coward," "unmanly," and "pansy," to "fag" and "sissy" (see Matić 2021a for further references and discussion). Bearing in mind that the noun ***ḥmjw*** derives from the verb ***ḥmj***, the translation "back turner" by Richard Parkinson seems to retain both the etymological background and the gender connotation of passivity (Parkinson 2008: 117). Parkinson places the term in a constellation of concepts linking weakness, defeat, and sexual passivity (Parkinson 1995: 66-67).

Usually, the textual attestations of feminizations of foreigners and enemies are more explicit. For example, enemies are described as ***ḫnryt***, "women of the harem" (Kom el-Ahmar, west Delta or Athribis stela of Merenptah, *KRI IV*, 21.13), or simply as ***ḥmwt***, "women" (Medinet Habu temple of Ramesses III, *KRI V*, 8.7), while enemy land (referring to what is now Syria) is labeled ***ḫꜣrt***, "widow" (Israel stela of of Merenptah, *KRI IV*, 19.7-8). In the 11th regnal year of Ramesses III, during the Second Libyan War, Libyans are described as ***jrjw ḥdj***, "made limp" (*KRI V*, 63.5-6), and their leader, Meshesher, as ***pq ḥr tꜣ,*** "spread out on the ground" (*KRI V*, 61.11-12). The determinative used with both of these terms is a woman giving birth.

David O'Connor was the first to suggest that the use of this determinative was deliberate feminization. The Ramesside temple reliefs of Medinet Habu, where the king is depicted fighting effeminized enemies, contrast with those depicting the king in the company of court women. O'Connor argues that the sexual context of the latter scenes is indicative of the king's consensual sex with court women, while the former scenes indicate the rape of enemy men, which he considers a Sethian aspect (O'Connor 2005). In a later text, on the Triumphal Stela of Piye (Cairo JE 48862, 47086-47089, lines 149-150), enemies are said to have the legs of women (Grimal 1981: 177). In his most recent study of the stela, Mattias Karlsson argued that the portion of the text addressing the relationship between Piye and Nimlot, ruler of Hermopolis, was structured using gendered language and iconographic motifs (e.g, a sistrum in the hand of Nimlot and his position behind, rather than in front of, his wife) that assign Nimlot with failed masculinity (Karlsson 2020). Similar feminizations of enemies are found in texts of other Nubian rulers from the Napatan and Meroitic periods (Matić 2021b).

Possible feminizations of enemies are also found in the iconography of some New Kingdom temples. Nubian boys receiving injured, dying, or dead, but certainly defeated, Nubian men on reliefs of Derr and Beyt el-Wali temples in Lower Nubia (figs. 6 and 7) are depicted with the palm of their hands touching their foreheads, a gesture usually made by mourning women in Egyptian iconography (Millward 2012; Riggs 2013). This motif-transference of scenes of mourning to battle scenes could be more than just a depiction of Nubian women and boys mourning their men. It is possible that we are dealing with deliberate feminization (Matić 2019a: 141-142; 2019b: 251-253). Failed masculinity can be seen in the

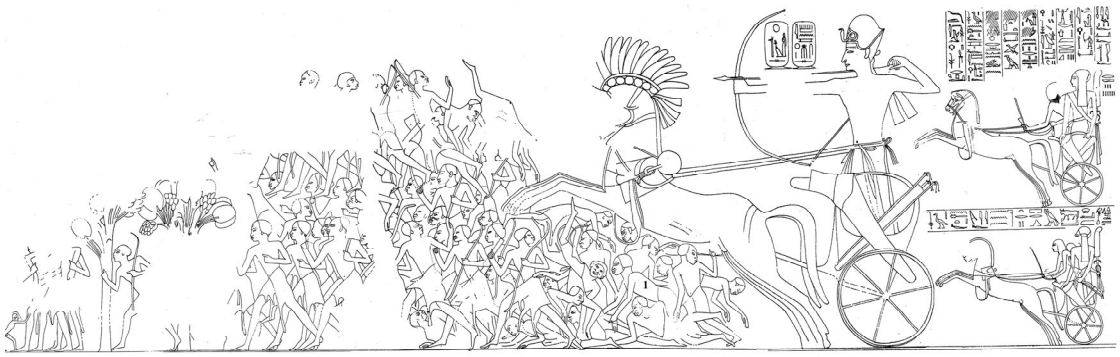

Figure 6. Return of defeated Nubians in the Nubian campaign of Ramesses II, depicted on the eastern half of the southern wall of the forecourt of the temple at Beyt el-Wali/South, 19th Dynasty.

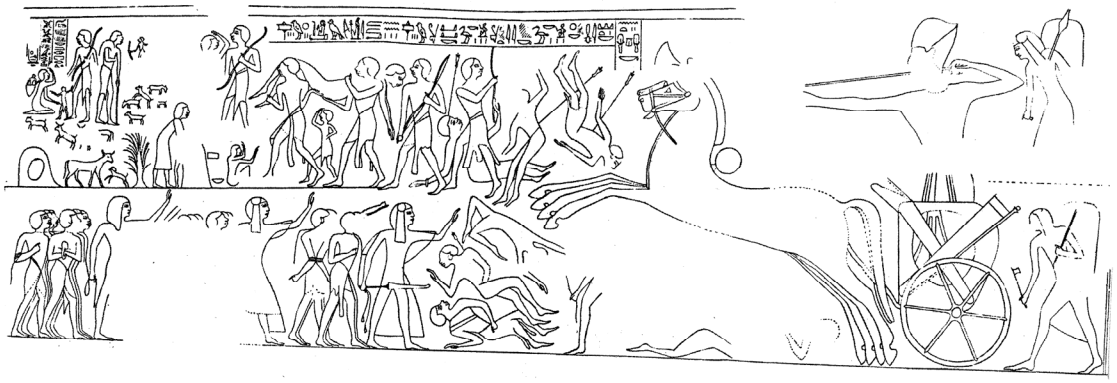

Figure 7. Return of defeated Nubians in the Nubian campaign of Ramesses II, depicted at the temple of Derr, 19th Dynasty.

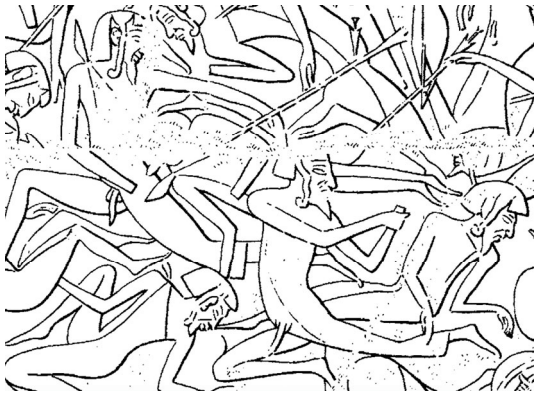

Figure 8. Libyans with flaccid phalli, depicted in the second scene from the west end of the north exterior wall of the Medinet Habu temple, 20th Dynasty.

depiction of flaccid phalli of Libyan enemies of Ramesses III on the Medinet Habu reliefs (fig. 8).

Libyans are the only enemies whose phalli shafts were cut off in the New Kingdom (Matić 2019a: 61, 149). There is an indication in the *Tale of Two Brothers* that the loss of the penis reflected a symbolic change from masculine to feminine. After being pursued by his brother, Anubis, on the false accusation that he had committed adultery with his wife, younger brother Bata cuts off his own penis. Later in the story Bata marries, and he warns his wife not to go out alone because he cannot protect her from the sea, since he is a woman like her (Gardiner 1932: 19.15).

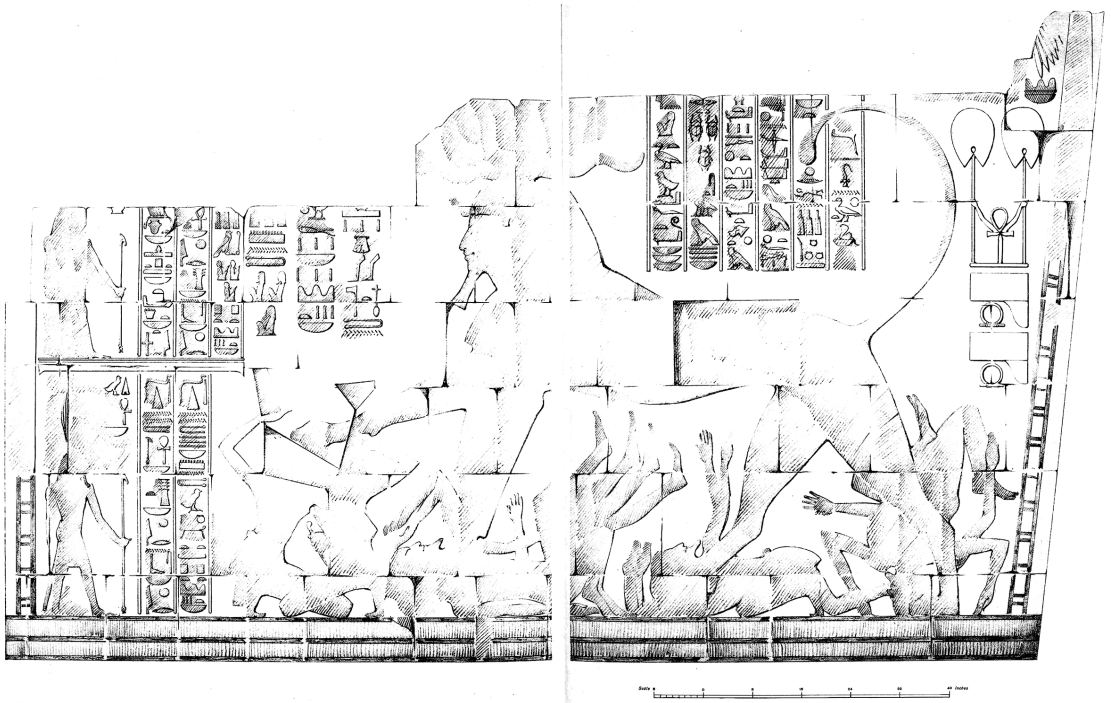

Figure 9. Hatshepsut as a male sphinx trampling enemies, depicted on the south wall of the southern lower portico of her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri, 18th Dynasty.

Figure 10. Ostracon Cairo CG 25125 (height 25cm, width 38cm), showing a queen or goddess riding in a chariot and shooting arrows at a male opponent.

Warrior Women and Warrior Goddesses

There is no evidence for so-called warrior women in ancient Egypt. Queen Ahhotep, mother of 18th Dynasty king Ahmose, and Hatshepsut, 18th Dynasty female king of Egypt, are both attested in the context of military campaigns (Beylage 2002: 324-325; Taterka 2017). However, for neither of the two women can we claim actual participation on the battlefield based on the available evidence. Ahhotep I, who is not universally recognized by Egyptologists as the mother of Ahmose (Ryholt 1997: 276; Vandersleyen 1980; also see contra arguments in Eaton-Krauss 1990 and 2003), was buried at Dra Abu el-Naga with, among other burial goods, two axes and two daggers. This does not necessarily indicate that the queen had used these items as weapons, nor that the items actually belonged to her. Indeed,

one of the axes bears the name of Ahmose (Lacovara 2008: 119). Andrea Gnirs warns against misinterpreting the weapons buried with Ahhotep I as exceptional, since there are other burials of women with weaponry, like that of Senebtisi from the 13th Dynasty, chronologically close to the burial of Ahhotep I (Gnirs 2009: 105). Furthermore, it is questionable whether all Egyptian kings actually fought in battles or rather functioned as strategists in the background of military campaigns, as is stressed in texts describing their military pursuits (Spalinger 2020). Apart from the case of Seqenenra Tao II of the 17th Dynasty, whose injuries on the forehead and neck have been interpreted by some Egyptologists as evidence of participation in battle, or possibly of execution by the victorious enemy (Saleem and Hawass 2021; Shaw 2009), it is hard to argue the case for the engagement in combat of other rulers simply based on written and visual sources.

While physical evidence of royal women performing as warriors is lacking, there are depictions of ruling women and great royal wives behaving violently. Hatshepsut is depicted as a (male) king, trampling and smiting male enemies (fig. 9) in her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri (Pawlicki 1997: 50). However, as earlier mentioned, in depictions of queens Tiy and Nefertiti engaged in violent behavior, the victims are female (see figs. 4 and 5). Furthermore, the violent depictions of Nefertiti are part of larger scenes featuring Akhenaten smiting male enemies (Cooney 1965: Fig. 51α; Tawfik 1975: 163, Fig. 1). This gender structure indicates a difference in status (Matić 2017a: 118). On Ostracon Cairo CG 25124 a queen or a goddess (for interpretations, problems, and further references see Hoffmann 2008: 52 and Matić 2021a) is depicted riding in a chariot and shooting arrows at a male opponent (fig. 10). Otherwise, the participation of women as soldiers in war is not depicted, although there are, as shown above (see figs. 1 and 2), depictions of foreign women fighting against Egyptian soldiers amidst the siege of their town.

War-like aspects and violent behavior are attributed to some goddesses, including Mut, Bastet, and Sakhmet. This is probably the reason even the king is at times directly or indirectly compared with warlike goddesses in texts. For example, the reactions of the king are described as being like those of Sakhmet when shooting an arrow; fear of the king is described as pervading all lands like the fear of Sakhmet in the time of plague; the king is described as being powerful like the might of Sakhmet, and raging like Sakhmet when he sees the battlefield. Sakhmet likewise is described as accompanying the king on his horse, causing anyone who approaches him to burn. (Hsu 2017: 386-392; Davies 2018: 47-48; Matić 2021a). The goddesses with warrior aspects, such as Mut, Bastet, and Sakhmet, are attested as emanations of the Sun Eye. The dangerous and distant goddess Sakhmet is described as such an emanation, sent by her father, Ra, to destroy humanity, as attested in the story the *Destruction of Mankind*, which constitutes the first part of the longer *Book of the Heavenly Cow*, known from five royal tombs of the New Kingdom (of Tutankhamun, Seti I, Ramesses II, Ramesses III, and Ramesses VI) and in the later Demotic versions of the *Myth of the Sun Eye*. It is therefore not surprising to find attestations of these goddesses providing the king with protection on the battlefield (Matić 2021a).

Gender Patterns behind Evidence of Trauma

In the last two decades, Egyptian archaeology has benefited from significant developments in bioarchaeology, the study of human, animal, and plant remains in archaeological contexts (Ikram, Kaiser, and Walker 2015). Information on bioarchaeological remains is now regularly included in excavation reports. When human remains are concerned, in addition to the attributions of age and sex, physical anthropologists are increasingly including observations on health and trauma (Sabbahy 2018). So far, only some studies explicitly mention sex-based patterns behind traces of trauma and differences in health status or life expectancy. Therefore, it is at this point not possible to make any generalizations or comparisons between regions and periods.

It has been reported, based on the study by Azza Sarry el-Din (2003) of 271 skeletons from Old Kingdom cemeteries at Giza, that the highest incidence of bone fractures occurred in male workers (43.75%), while bone fractures occurred in 20.73% of male high officials. Bone fractures occurred in 26.41% of female workers and 16.66% of female elite. Sex-based differences in the percentages were thus most prominent between the workers. The study showed that the most affected bone was the right ulna. Head injuries were also higher among the workers (Sarry 2003). Clearly, being a woman of the working class meant being exposed to more injuries than being a woman of the elite. The effects of structural violence based on both gender and socioeconomic status mean that most impacted people in this sample are non-elite men and the least impacted are the elite women. Evidence from the analysis of 257 skeletons from Tell el-Dabaa (ancient Avaris, capital of the Hyksos kingdom) indicates that during the Second Intermediate Period women had significantly lower life expectancy (30 years) than men, whose life expectancy was 34.4 years (Winkler and Wilfing 1991). It cannot be excluded that this is the consequence of gendered structural violence. Joyce Filer analyzed 1,726 Late Period skulls from Giza known as the E series, dating from the 26th to the 30th dynasties. Injuries were present in 21 crania (1.2%), the majority of which were of mature to elderly individuals. Twelve were male, or probably male, four were female, or probably female, and for five skulls the sex could not be determined. Severe gashes and incomplete and complete slice injuries consistent with attacks from swords, axes, and crushing weapons were detected. These are suggestive of militaristic behavior and seem to have affected men in this group more than women (Filer 1992).

Whereas there is some evidence for difference in rates of trauma in the Old Kingdom—female workers appear to have been more exposed to trauma than the female elite—and whereas there is evidence that women had a lower life expectancy in the Hyksos capital during the Second Intermediate Period, until now there is no indication of a clear gender pattern in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. The results of bioarchaeological investigations by Moushira Erfan et al. (2009) of cranial trauma at Bahriya Oasis during the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods showed that 31 (19.4%) out of 160 crania showed traces of trauma, with similar percentages between men (18.6%) and women (20.6%). The highest prevalence of injury was exhibited on the parietal bone (65.9%), followed by the frontal bone (27.3%) and occipital bone (6.8%). Depression fractures were present in 88.6% of the trauma events, and blade injuries in 11.7%. The authors of the study argued that Roman rule in Egypt contributed to violence inasmuch as the population experienced social stress, which ultimately manifested in interpersonal violence (Erfan et al. 2009).

Some interesting evidence of gendered violence comes from Nubia, Egypt's southern neighboring culture. Joyce Filer analyzed 309 skulls from the Eastern Cemetery at Kerma, of which 34 (11%) showed head injuries. The majority of these individuals were mature to old and had mainly oval and depressed head lesions, consistent with attack from stones, sticks, maces, and clubs. According to Filer these types of injuries indicate domestic disputes. Out of 34 individuals with such injuries 44.1% were women, which in Filer's opinion must necessarily be explained by non-military disputes because she assumes that women in Nubia were not militarily active (Filer 1992). Margaret Judd showed that there was no statistical significance behind the gender distribution of injuries for her sample of individuals from the Kerma Period (c. 2,500 – 1,500 BCE) in Sudan. Multiple injuries were found on the crania and long bones of female individuals from both rural and urban Kerma communities, which led her to the conclusion that women of varying social standing were equally exposed to interpersonal violence (Judd 2006). We see here a marked contrast with Egypt, where differences in, for example, life expectancy or frequency of injuries were both gender and class dependent. It has been recently suggested, based on evidence from Tombos, that New Kingdom Egyptian rule in Nubia influenced the local society in such a way that the frequency of interpersonal violence

dropped in comparison to that during the Kerma Period (Buzon and Richman 2007).

Overall, bioarchaeological evidence reported thus far suggests that traumatic injuries left in bone are unequally distributed between males and females of different status. This does not, however, always clearly distinguish between traumatic injuries due to interpersonal violence and other forms of trauma, such as occupational injuries. Additionally, the human skeleton occupies about 60% of the target area of the body, meaning that the frequency of injuries detected on skeletal remains represents only a portion of the possible area of vulnerability. For example, only 16.6% of assault injuries in the United States are classified as muscular/skeletal, and many would not be observable in the archaeological record. Most violent acts that leave temporary traces on tissue do not leave traces on bone (Walker 2001: 584). Detectable gender patterns of trauma would therefore be based on only the most extreme cases.

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Figure 1. Siege of an "Asiatic" fortified town from the tomb of Inti at Deshasha, 5th Dynasty. (Line drawing reworked by the author, no scale, after Petrie 1898: pl. IV.)

Figure 2. Siege of an "Asiatic" fortified town from the tomb of Intef at Asasif, 11th Dynasty. (Line drawing courtesy of Brigitte Jaroš-Deckert, after Jaroš-Deckert 1984: pl. 17.)

Figure 3. Fifth register of the tribute scene from the tomb of Rekhmira (TT 100), 18th Dynasty, showing foreign women and children as prisoners of war. (Detail of line drawing by the author, no scale, after Davies 1943: pls. XXI, XXII, and XXIII.)

Figure 4. Depiction of the throne of Queen Tiy, showing female captives bound to a *smꜣ tꜣwy* ("Union of the Two Lands") hieroglyph, and the queen, in the form of a female sphinx, trampling female captives. Tomb of Kheruef (TT 192), 18th Dynasty. (Detail of line drawing by the author, no scale, courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, after Nims, Habachi, Wente, and Larkin 1980: pls. 47 and 49).

Figure 5. Representation on a talatat block of Queen Nefertiti, smiting and trampling female captives on a barque. Luxor Temple, 18th Dynasty. (Line drawing by the author, showing author's reconstruction of the kiosk at far right, no scale, after Tawfik 1975: 163, fig. 1.)

Figure 6. Return of defeated Nubians in the Nubian campaign of Ramesses II, depicted on the eastern half of the southern wall of the forecourt of the temple at Beyt el-Wali/South, 19th Dynasty. (Line drawing by the author, no scale, after Wreszinski 1935: pl. 165.)

Figure 7. Return of defeated Nubians in the Nubian campaign of Ramesses II, depicted at the temple of Derr, 19th Dynasty. (Line drawing by the author, no scale, after Wreszinski 1935: pl. 168a.)

Figure 8. Libyans with flaccid phalli, depicted in the second scene from the west end of the north exterior wall of the Medinet Habu temple, 20th Dynasty. (Detail of line drawing by the author, no scale, courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, after Nelson 1930: pl. 18.)

Figure 9. Hatshepsut as a male sphinx trampling enemies, depicted on the south wall of the southern lower portico of her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri, 18th Dynasty. (Line drawing by the author, no scale, after Naville 1908: pl. CLX.)

Figure 10. Ostracon Cairo CG 25125 (height 25cm, width 38cm), showing a queen or goddess riding in a chariot and shooting arrows at a male opponent. (Line drawing by the author, no scale, based on a photograph detail, after Daressy 1901: pl. XXIV.)