Image Construction, Status Analysis, Goddess Reflection

-- Three Kinds of Directions of Ancient Egyptian Women's Research in China

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Abstract. In the history of ancient Egypt, women were an ordinary but indispensable group, occupying an important position in family construction, legal practice and national governance. At the same time, their activities are also reflected in literature, artworks genesis mythology. From the perspective of academic history, the existing achievements of ancient Egyptian women can be summarized as three research directions: image construction, status discrimination and Goddess reflection. In advocating gender study and interdisciplinary construction of academic trend, effectively take example by art, law, literature and other discipline research methods, reasonably draw religious theology, marriage and family theory paradigm, to build a discourse system of world history gender research with Chinese characteristics based on the historical facts of ancient Egypt which has a broad academic prospect.

Keywords: Ancient Egypt; Gender Study; Image Construction; Status Analysis; Goddess Reflection.

1. Introduction

In the history of ancient Egypt, women were an ordinary but indispensable group, occupying an important position in family construction, legal practice and national governance. The importance of the ancient Egyptians to the women's group reflects the dualistic philosophy, so the ancient Egyptian women are also an important window to investigate the historical trend of the ancient Egypt and the spiritual world of the ancient Egyptians. In recent years, in the context of "people can evaluate the civilization degree of a nation according to whether its life organization supports women" [1], Chinese scholars have launched a multi-level and multi-dimensional discussions about ancient Egyptian women. Overall, by contrast, after Zhou Gucheng, Wu Yujin and Lin Zhichun’s The blank of research in Classical Civilization in China must be filled [2] was published, China's present situation of ancient Egyptian women research can be said to be remarkable achievements, increasingly attracted the attention of scholars, gradually into academic frontier, but the research review about ancient Egyptian women can be rarely seen in China.

From the existing situation, the only research review on women's issues of ancient Egypt in China is the Research Review of Chinese Ancient Egyptian Goddess(hereinafter referred to as "Goddess Review"). Ji Jiawei and Tian Ming summarized more than 40 monographs and articles related to the ancient Egyptian goddess since the reform and opening up from three aspects: the popularization of the ancient Egyptian goddess knowledge, the study of the ancient Egyptian goddess and from the goddess to the ancient Egyptian women [3]. However, according to the author's statistics, in the five years after the publication of the Goddess Review (2017 -- 2022), the Chinese academic circle has developed nearly 20 systematic and professional academic achievements, which shows that the study of ancient Egyptian women has become one of the heated issues in the Egyptian academic circle. To some extent, there is no comprehensive "review" of the study of ancient Egyptian women in the academic circle so far. Therefore, this paper tries to sort out the existing achievements of the study of Chinese ancient Egyptian women, preliminarily summarize them into three research directions: image construction, status discrimination and goddess reflection, and make a brief evaluation, in order to contribute to the in-depth promotion of the research in this field in the future.
2. The Image Construction of Ancient Egyptian Women

Ancient Egyptian women, are the women living in the biological sense of ancient Egypt. Ancient Egyptian women usually refer to married women, whose title is usually "mistress of the house", representing the ancient Egyptian women doing the house in their family. In ancient Egypt, 30 years old women can be called the elderly, but still belong to the category of women, widows also belong to the category of women. We can't help but ask: What image of ancient Egyptian women appeared in many fields of politics, family, marriage, art and other fields of life? What is the difference between the historical image of ancient Egyptian women and the real image of that time? This is the first question to be answered in the study of women in ancient Egypt. To analyze the image of ancient Egyptian women, it is not only necessary to classify their different fields, but also to construct the image of women of different social classes, including female rulers, female nobles, female civilians and so on. According to the image perspective and analysis of the different identities of ancient Egyptian women in administrative administration, diplomatic marriage and literary works, we call it the image construction direction of ancient Egyptian women research. On the one hand, the academic circle analyzes the construction of historical figures on their own images, on the other hand, it uses the data to give play to the subjective initiative to summarize the characteristics and image construction of women.

(1) Construction of the image of female rulers

Female rulers took the lead to become the important role of academic research. Female pharaoh Hatshepsut and Nefertiti were important female figures in ancient Egyptian history, and the last female pharaoh Cleopatra VII was studied earlier. As early as the 1980s, Ji Xue introduced the basic information and related historical stories of Cleopatra VII, the last queen of Ptolemy Egypt, based on archaeological discoveries [4]. In the mid-1990s, the Qian Jiexian introduced us to the appearance and temperament of Cleopatra VII, and told us on her merits and demerits. Since then, her historical image has become more distinct [5]. According to Sun Anjie's research, the self-image of Cleopatra VII was constructed and shaped on the basis of the dual structure of Yin and Yang in the ideology of the royal power. The study discusses in detail the Cleopatra's self-image construction [6]. In addition to the study of the last female pharaohs, there are studies of other female rulers. Liang Qiaoyue's detailed analysis of the political life of Nefertiti, and the image of women participating in politics. The author believes that it is precisely because of the androgynous qualities in religious theology, the ambiguous gender of the king, and the real status of women that a few female pharaohs in the cloak of men appear, which provides the basis for women to participate in politics [7]. Meng Fanqing studied the phenomenon of "the queen participating in politics" in the Period of Ptolemy Egypt, and shaped the image of the queen participating in politics in the process of political wrestling and power game [8]. Order contains dualistic concepts, as one of the binary, the existence of female rulers is a way to stabilize the political situation in ancient Egypt.

In the construction of the image of the female ruler, Hatshepsut became a research topic. Wei Fenglian took the lead in publishing a document, summarizing the measures to consolidate his rule from the relationship between her and the god Ammon, the divine grant of power, trade expedition and foreign policy [9]. Twelve years later, Wei Fenglian made a contradictory analysis of the male image and female appellation of Hatshepsut, believing that the contradiction between her male image and the negative pronoun in the appellation is the portrayal of the real status of women in the society, reflecting the complex mentality of the queen to retain her female identity [10]. He Jing and Zhong Ruxian introduced the throne, the administrative action and the final end of the new Kingdom [11]. Wang Haili, in the form of academic reports, responded to the confirmation of the mummy of Hatshepsut announced by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities in 2007. The article reviews the academic history of Hatshepsut, describing the mummy of the female pharaoh (including his burial temple, sarcophagus, and the overview of her disappearance and identification) [12]. Jing Ruochen made senior scholars on the study of the queen administration for the deepening, in China's present, female pharaoh research results made summary, on the basis of finding new research perspective and ideas, the third chapter from the aspects of appearance image, text image discusses the shape of the
legitimacy of the throne [13]. It can be seen that the academic research on the image of female rulers in ancient Egypt started early, spanning forty years, and increasingly diversified and deeply.

(2) The construction of the image of women of the specific strata

In addition to focusing on the issues of women at the top level of society, the academic circle also has the divergence of specific groups of ancient Egyptian women in a specific period, mainly focusing on the discussion of their "role". Zhao Xiaofan discussed the women who were both identified as princess, queen and queen mother, and analyzed their influence on the succession of the throne in different periods [14]. Guo Qi's research shows that the upper class women mainly activities in the political field, the lower class women mainly activities in the economic field, women in life are still in a subordinate position, and play a limited role in the social stage outside the family [15]. Han Shanshan analyzed the role of women in the new Kingdom, and divided the family roles of women into juvenile women, women in sexual relations and motherly women according to the time period of women's growth, and the social roles into political, economic and cultural roles, so as to study the role of women's family and social activities [16]. Li Mengyi selected the special historical period of the third intermediate period to study the differences in the identity expression of Theban aristocratic women in the tomb and temple space and the reasons behind their identity changes [17]. In the royal family, trade, family and other fields, the image of women with multiple identities is gradually three-dimensional and distinct.

(3) Construction of the image of women in marriage

Women in marriage show an important influence on the family establishment and stability of the ancient Egyptians, so the image of women in marriage is worth exploring. Wang Haili's research showed that the image and status of women in the eyes of Egyptians were relatively high. Through the diplomatic marriage of "Only marry a man but not take a wife" in the 18th Dynasty, Egyptians achieved a good protection of women [18]. Guo and Li believe that women in royal marriages are mostly close relatives of their spouses and provide a brief analysis of their role in political life after marriage [19]. Wu Yumin explained to us the dependent status of women in the economic field, and the roles and responsibilities in the family [20]. On the basis of Wang Haili, Yang Guang made a further analysis of the reasons of "Only marry a man but not take to wife" from the four aspects of geographical environment, female status, endogamy system and religious concept [21]. Zhang Yingying's master's thesis studies the marriage objects of female members of the royal family during the new Kingdom and the reasons for the marriage of the royal family, confirming the role of ancient Egyptian royal women in reproduction, pure blood and property maintenance, indicating that royal women have a certain say in political life [22]. It is difficult for women in marriage to construct their own image, indicating that men are still the dominant person of society. Scholars continue to inherit and develop the achievements of their predecessors, and the image of women in marriage is constantly clear, and the subtle evolution of the relationship between the dynasty and dynasties have come into the vision of scholars.

(4) The construction of women's artistic image

With the rise of interdiscipline, the construction of women's artistic image from the perspective of art has become a relatively novel research topic. Zhao Keren believes that in the unique geographical and cultural environment of ancient Egypt, women's decoration reflects the national customs of ancient Egypt, as well as the aesthetic concept, artistic taste and cultural orientation of the ancient Egyptians [23]. From the macroscopic theory, Su Xiuling examines the aesthetic orientation of the art of the female image, the author thinks Egypt to clothing material pursuit of natural beauty, the pursuit of harmonious dress collocation, female form of the pursuit of perceptual beauty, space layout, artistic pursuit of beautiful aesthetic orientation, and from the social economy, religious culture, original thinking, male aesthetic Angle and positive law of four aspects of the formation of the ancient Egyptian female image aesthetic orientation [24]. Focusing on the concrete artworks of specific periods, Ma Xiaomin discusses the art of royal female sculpture during the Ptolemaic Dynasty [25]. Yang Xinxin's papers cover the appearance of a large number of ancient Egyptian women. Her
research says that hair and hairstyles are the ideas and expression tools for female images [26]. It can be said that women's "artistic" modeling is a "key" for us to construct their images.

In the above studies, scholars can sort out the measures of female rulers to construct their own image, examine the complex relationship between women and the legitimacy construction of the dynasty and the image building of the emperor, and explore and construct the virtual image construction of women in the text and the physical image in the physical historical materials. It is a normal physical and mental need and necessary measures for women to express their feelings and thoughts through the popular physical carrier and to show their satisfaction to the outside world. Historical figures are little girls who are dressed up, which is vividly demonstrated in the study of women in image construction.

The image of ancient Egyptian women, just like a "window" to observe the political and cultural context and social and economic activities of ancient Egypt, has become a key research topic that cannot be ignored, and will surely continue to attract the attention of scholars.

3. Analysis of the Status of Ancient Egyptian Women

What was the status of women in the ancient Egyptian society? How is its status given? Addressing these issues is one of the goals of conducting research on Egyptian women. Based on the original historical materials and foreign language materials in different historical periods, the academic circle defines the concept, right interpretation and role research centered on the discrimination of women's status. So far, the discussion of women in ancient Egypt. Through the contemporary Scholars working hard, women have become a key topic in the politics, economy, culture and society of ancient Egypt. Combining the empirical analysis of history with the modern theory of "feminism", it presents the specific research logic of the concept, rights and roles of ancient Egyptian women, and the research content of the overall status, specific status and causes as the main object, which we call the research direction of status discrimination.

(1) Research on the overall status of women in ancient Egypt

From the overall perspective, scholars have made a macro summary of the status of women in ancient Egypt. Wang Haili analyzed the status of ancient Egyptian women from the perspective of history, literature, art and meaning, and believed that the status of men and women in families is relatively equal in theory, law and family, while objectively, most women are in a subordinate position in society [27]. Since then, the academic community broke with the past stereotypes and realized that the status of ancient Egyptian women was not absolutely high, so they began to rethink the status of ancient Egyptian women. In addition to thinking about the overall status, the rights of women are also important objects of investigation, because the rights of women are often the external expression of their status, and the number of rights is the reflection of their status. From the perspective of law, Zhang Xiaohu and Wang Chaoqian classified many rights enjoyed by ancient Egyptian women in family and social life, such as marriage autonomy, property rights, inheritance rights in family life, education rights, right to participate in politics, economic rights and religious rights in social life. At the same time, they believe that the social characteristics of the matriarchal clan, the worship spirit of religious sacrifice, the traditional concepts of living customs, and the special provisions of marriage habits are the reasons why ancient Egyptian women enjoy more rights [28]. By summarizing the many rights enjoyed by ancient women in Egypt, these two legal scholars triggered us to think about the overall status of women, and also provided us with the perspective of rights that can reflect the status of human rights and real rights. The overall status of women in ancient Egypt should not be "summed up in a word", and the analysis of the overall status of women should also be discussed through specific perspectives. The judgment of the overall status in the academic circle depends on the wealth of historical materials and needs further in-depth discussion.

(2) Research on the family status of women

In addition to macro comprehensive analysis and multi-dimensional investigation, there are also research results analyzing the status of women from a specific perspective. The first is the study of
women's family status, including family economy, marriage engagement, emotional morality and other research perspectives. Zhang Ye and Liu Hongcai discussed the status of ancient Egyptian women in family economic life, the feelings between husband and wife, the status and role of mother, and believed that ancient Egyptian women enjoyed a relatively high family status on the whole [29]. Lu Huiying made a more detailed study on the status of women's families. His research said that although the forms of marriage between the royal family and the common people were very different, the essence is the combined effect of the historical accumulation of the country and the realistic politics, reflecting the family status of women in the new kingdom [30]. In 2013, Xu Haiqing posted several articles, discussing the positive role of engagement in maintaining the family status of women in ancient Egypt and the limitations of The Times [31]. His doctoral thesis is more detailed and systematic in the study of the marital rights and family status of ancient Egyptian women during the Ptolemaic period [32]. Some scholars were also involved in the end of the ancient Egyptian rule. Lian Qi analyzed the promotion of women in the Roman -- Byzantine period and the reasons behind it, and believed that the status of women's families had improved during this period [33]. The academic study of women's status from the perspective of family is a process of vertical refinement and horizontal comparison, which started late and there are no huge differences.

(3) Research on the social status of women

In addition to family status, there are also studies on social status, which can be divided into two perspectives: professional and literary. From a professional point of view, Li Mo examined the status of the occupation of the priestess in the ancient Egyptian temple and funeral services, and believed that the priestess could perform both the ceremonial functions and the actual priest duties, which was an important part of the priests community [34]. It can be seen that women as a priestess also enjoy a certain social status. According to Zou, Egyptian women enjoyed a higher social status based on the role women played in economic and religious activities in social life [35]. Xie Zhenling put forward a new perspective on the study of women's social status, and examined the social status of Egyptian women from the situation of land tenancy management [36]. Feng Yang studied the education of women in ancient Egypt. The author clearly realizes that women's education situation is a reflection of their status, and therefore verified the social status of women in ancient Egypt from the perspective of education [37]. Guo Xiaorui jumped out of the gender limitation of the traditional research. Guo Xiaorui studied the social status of the "female citizens" group in the New Kingdom from two aspects of economy and law [38]. It seems that for the discrimination of women's social status, on the one hand, we should pay attention to the investigation of their occupation and work participation, on the other hand, we need to fully explore the evidence of women's assets or skills, and the two should not be ignored.

From the perspective of literature, women's social status is mainly Jin Shoufu's research. Jin Shoufu believes that the ancient Egyptian "preaching" is to cater to the needs of the society, which can reveal the attitude of the society towards women and the actual social status of women [39]. Ten years later, the author took letters as the entry point, listed the disadvantages of unmarried women, widows and dead wives, and believed that the view that women in ancient Egypt had high status or even equal status with men was worth deliberation [40]. It is worth mentioning that Jin Shoufu borrowed from Asman's theory of explicit and implicit culture, which provides a new and even completely different perspective for us to study the real status of ancient Egyptian women. What we see and understand the status of women in ancient Egypt, is what the writers want us to see, or should not be seen, which situation is more in line with the reality of the time? This is what we should be careful about in the course of historical research.

(4) Analysis of the reasons for the higher status

The academic consensus on the reasons for the high status of women in ancient Egypt. The fourth part of the paper pharaoh's Status of Egyptian Women in the Family by Zhang Ye and Liu Hongcai discusses the reasons for the high status of ancient Egyptian women's families. There are four perspectives: religious belief, economic factors, marriage customs and legal reasons [41]. Zou
Wenxing believes that the reason why ancient Egyptian women enjoyed a high social status is not analyzed from the perspective of women's view, religious belief, marriage customs, economic power and other aspects [42]. Qu Chunxue explored the reasons of women's economic rights, the marriage age gap between men and women, the importance of love in marriage, women's cultural level and communication with society [43]. The analysis of "why the status of women is higher" is the inevitable requirement and the only way to distinguish the status of women. Only by truly understanding the causes and historical background of the higher status, can the discrimination and definition of the status of ancient Egyptian women be truly realized.

It should be noted that in the downward direction of status analysis, politics, economy, culture, law and education under modern terms and theory are one level, and public office, trade, literature, judgment and writing, which are closely related to ancient Egyptian women in the historical scene, are another level. How to achieve the fine exploration of historical materials and fact discrimination, and the free application of theoretical concepts, really consider the academic skills of researchers. In fact, this reminds us that status discrimination should always maintain a high degree of theoretical consciousness and reflection. There was a long way to analysis the status of ancient Egyptian women. It is expected that future new archaeological data and more advanced comparative theories will provide a better analysis of the status of ancient Egyptian women.

4. The Goddess of the Ancient Egyptian Women Reflected

Human being is a conscious and thoughtful animal. Ancient Egyptian women refer to the people in the real society of ancient Egypt, so what is the embodiment of the spiritual world of the ancient Egyptians? How to study the women of ancient Egypt through Goddess worship? Scholars have carried out multi-level research on this, including the macro goddess group, the specific individual goddess, the deep logic behind the Goddess worship, and the care and connection between the goddesses and the women of the world. Here, the ancient Egyptian women were no longer the focus of study ing, and the individual experience of right and wrong became insignificant, and scholars walked into the spiritual world of the ancient Egyptians. By taking the goddess as the starting point, we examine the root, implication and influence of the Goddess worship and genesis mythology the ancient Egyptian spirit and dual concept reflected behind it, combined with other national myths, in order to clarify the connotation of the ancient Egyptian view of women and goddess. We call the goddess of ancient Egyptian women research reflects the direction, in the direction down, the scope of ancient Egyptian women research more widely, because the study of the goddess is essentially the study of women, which includes the historical evidence of archaeology, including religion, mythology, has beyond the above image construction road role positioning and position of the right to road.

(1) Research on the image of the individual goddess

In the downward process, scholars focus on the most famous goddesses such as Isis and Hathor. Wei Xinxin outlined the image of the goddess Isis in the coffin inscription of the Middle Kingdom, as well as the image of the Egyptians in this particular period of time [44]. Huang He gave a reasonable explanation of the positive image of the goddess, and discussed the identity of the mother and daughter of the goddess in the sacred lineage to explain the reason for the positive appearance and the connection with the viewer [45]. It should be pointed out that the studies listed above in this section are based on the goddess, and do not include the studies mentioning the goddess in the studies. It can be seen that both the scientific introduction of the goddess, and the special research of the goddess image, are relatively lacking, and other goddess images are also worth discussing.

(2) The interpretation of the Goddess worship

Interpreting the profound implication of the Goddess worship supported by the theory of the world of genesis mythology an important research content under the reflection of the goddess. The five master's degree theses focused on the past ten years either focus on specific goddesses or make general discussion, reflecting the perspective innovation and methodological significance of goddess
research. Yu studied the past origin and realistic transformation of various images of Hathor goddess, as well as the historical status and practical significance of Hathor worship [46]. As the "Review of the Goddess" commented on this article, "This master's dissertation is also a relatively complete comprehensive study of the goddess Hathor in China, providing a new perspective and adding a new color to the study of the ancient Egyptian goddess in China. "On the basis of sorting out the historical changes of Isis worship, Zhan Yusong observed the complex interaction between the concept of "salvation" and royal politics and social life through the formation and evolution of the goddess of Isis [47]. From the perspective of literature, Zhu Guang discussed the connotation of the ancient Egyptian myth of blood marriage in the religious context, as well as the interaction with the monarchy, so as to study the writing of blood marriage in the myth of creation [48].

The general and theoretical discussion is Hao Yuying's reasons. The author uses the symbolic theory of the prototype mother goddess and the theory of marriage and family to analyze the worship of the ancient Egyptian goddess [49]. This study regards the ancient Egyptian goddess as a whole, and is an outstanding academic achievement of the study of the ancient Egyptian goddess. Therefore, what is lacking in the current academic circle is the macro influence of Goddess worship on the status of women, and the subtle influence of a specific goddess on the status of women.

(3) the connection between the goddess and the present world of women

The condition of the goddess is inextricably related to the situation of the woman. Zhao Shuwei believes that the goddess Isis has all the qualities of a perfect wife and a strong mother, as the wife of Oris and the mother of Horus, enjoys a high status in the hearts of the Egyptians. It was also a model of ancient Egyptian women [50]. Jin Shoufu's research pointed out that the gods in ancient Egyptian mythology improved the status of people, and that women in ancient Egypt could not only seek an important position in the secular power system, but also have a wide activity space in "theological concepts and religious objects" [51]. Four years later, Jin Shoufu described the phenomenon of having a priestess acting as a goddess in the temple, examining the specific division of labor and status changes of the priestess. The author believes that ancient Egyptian women in the temple mainly for the royal power, not a normal occupation [52]. According to Yu's study, "Hathor's femininity helped her excel as a mother, wife, daughter and protector. And hathor's goddess magic has once again been successfully interpreted through women." [53] Xie Yaping introduced to us the influence of the worship of the god on the status of women in ancient Egypt, believing that the god's influence on the women of the royal family mainly focused on politics and religion, while the influence on ordinary women is more reflected on religion and housewives [54].

Nearly a decade later, Guo inspected several important goddesses in the genesis mythology, believing that the mythical goddesses reflected the phenomenon that ancient Egyptian women were generally respected and had more rights and higher status. She used the research method of comparison to deeply explore the causes of the differences between different mythical lineages, and promoted the study of religion and gender in the ancient world [55]. Yan Haiying unscrambled through the Roman period Egyptian mummy portrait masters’ names and images, detailed summarized the development and evolution of the Goddess worship. The research show and analyze the female portraits in the period, to examining the portrait masters as belong to the identity of the social elite, from the civilization inheritance of time, peep and thought the historical image of ancient Egypt [56]. The above understanding leads us to deepen the study of the goddess and women in ancient Egypt.

5. Conclusion

It should be noted that in the specific studies of ancient Egyptian women, the above three directions of image construction, status analysis and goddess reflection are not distinct, but linked to complement each other. In general terms, Image construction direction down, Women's roles and images are multidimensional constructed by scholars, gradually become three-dimensional and comprehensive, the research focuses on the interaction between women and political rule, social operation and literature and artworks; The direction of status analysis goes down, data highlighting
the rights and status of women are fully mined by scholars, the research method is mainly by comparison and comparison, at the same time, it is combined with the modern feminist theory; The direction of goddess reflection down, the goddesses were included in the gender research category, women's research has a strong connection with goddess research, the goddess became the fulcrum to move the understanding of the view of the ancient Egyptian women, the individual functions of the goddess, the myths and legends, and the Goddess worship behind it is becoming the focus of attention, it's particularly striking. The above academic history shows that our study of ancient Egyptian women starts from the curiosity and construction of the historical image and real image of individual women and their groups, to the thinking and analysis of the status of women, and then expands to the connection and reflection of the Goddess worship of the ancient Egyptian spiritual world and the women in the earthly world. The research field of women in ancient Egypt is expanding, the observation perspective is more and more diversified, and the understanding is increasingly deepening. In effectively drawing on the research methods of art, law, literature and other disciplines, and reasonably absorbing the theoretical paradigms of religious theology, marriage and family, so as to construct the gender research and world history discourse system with Chinese characteristics, its academic prospect is quite broad.

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