

NEWS

Transgender in Antiquity

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LGBTQ history dates back to when the first instances of same-sex love and ancient civilization's sexuality were first recorded. In history, myth, literature, and art, queer people are visible in antiquity (Verstraete, 81). In 2021, it seems appropriate and significant to roll the clock back in the ancient world and look at the remarkable examples of such figures and their experiences. We will then try and compare their experiences and people's views back then to modern-day views regarding LGBTQ figures. In literature, Sappho was an archaic Greek poet coming from Lesbos Island and was known for her lyric poetry. Despite her remarkable reputation as one of the most prolific poets in the ancient world, she was often regarded as the earliest lesbian in history. As a matter of fact, the term lesbian came up as Sappho's illusion coming from the island she originated from Lesbos (Champion, 12).

The fact that she was caricatured as a heterosexual woman subjected her to a lot of criticism, with a biography written on papyrus during the second century accusing her of being irregular actions and ways as a woman lover. She was called out for having sexual relationships with other women, especially her female pupils (Monro, 652). This went to an extent where most of the translators to her work during the ancient time heterosexualized her poetry, whereby many of them portrayed her as an object that desires to be a male. This follows that many of her poems were focused on a subject that tend to be overlooked in antiquity. However, some of the people came to her defense, defending the accusations that she was homosexual. Besides, some of her work still remains relevant and continues to impact the modern world.

Another figure is Alexander the Great, who served as the King of Macedon in Greece and is regarded as the creator of some of the largest empires in Ancient History. While he is commonly regarded as one of the most influential

commanders, his sexuality was subject to much speculation and controversy as he was said to be too keen on boys (Dahmen, 14). His relationship with Hephaestion was deemed sexual but was painted as a couple just like that of Patroclus and Achilles by the Greek culture. However, their youthful relationship was criticized by many people as it went against the Greek Cities social norms like Athens. In art, the lover's Tondo painting from ancient Greece is another figure which postulates an example of LGBTQ lives in the ancient world (Mark, 2).

The treatment and judgment of transgender figures back then in the ancient world and in the present is somehow different, as there has been an increasing acceptance of LGBTQ relationships in the past two decades. While there have been laws and norms surrounding the issue of same-sex relationships and LGBT rights all over the world, public opinion in regard to acceptance has developed. This follows that there has been considerable progress in terms of sexual diversity acceptance, such as in the United States. As such, equal rights and responsibilities have been constantly advocated for by queer people. However, there is resemblance as criticism still exists among the figures who are seemingly LGBT members. For instance, Frank Ocean, an American singer, has been subjected to criticism as he is fond of using homophobic lyrics in his songs. While he has refused to label his sexuality, he has received much criticism from the public, not forgetting most public figures who have come out and declared themselves to be members.

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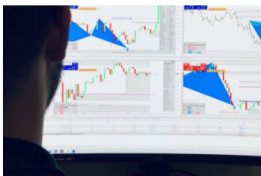
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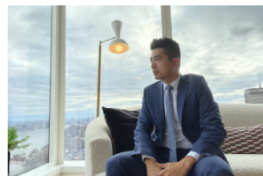
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