

A bust statue of Nilos at Greco-Roman Museum Alexandria (No. 842)

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Abstract

The point of the research is to study and publish a bust statue of God Nilos, that is recently displayed in the Greco-Roman Museum (No. 842), the aim of the study is to clarify the position of the statue while comparing it with other statues with unique different positions of the same deity and of the same period in order to indicate the variety of features & position of the sculptural art of that era, further more discussing the origin of the god, its existence in mythology and ancient sources, its family besides the cult of the Nile in the Greco-Roman period. The study also spots the light on the attributes and symbols related to the god which mostly appeared on this bust such as the cornucopia, the false beard, the fillet. Research obstacle is to distinguish the manufacturing material of this bust which was in a long debate. Research draws on a two-tiered methodological approach: a full complete description of the artifact and analyzing the data through theoretical frameworks to determine its historical and archaeological contexts.

Keywords: Nilos – Greco-Roman Egypt – cult of the Nile – Euthenia.

Introduction

This bust statue of god Nilos is one of the submerged monuments, that was excavated by the *European Institute for Underwater Archaeology* (IEASM) in 2003 at Herakleon (excavation no. 200), Lower Egypt, near to Canop in Alexandria ¹ (fig. 1). This artifact was preserved in the storerooms of the *European Institute for Underwater Archaeology* (IEASM) at Alexandria (General excavation no. 842). Then, it was transported to display in the Greco-Roman Museum at Alexandria, second floor (GRM-34324) on February 2, 2023, upon an acceptance no. 263 of the Head of the Museums Sector on February 2023. It is worth to mention that researcher get the acceptance of the Head of the Museums Sector and the Permanent Committee of Antiquities on January 23, 2024 to publish and study this artifact.

In order to publish and study this artifact, research aims are focused on conducting a descriptive, analytical, and stylistic analysis of this unique artifact. It is also very important to illustrate its historical and archaeological background, through comparing it with other similar statues of the same deity. Furthermore, discussing the origins,

¹ Goddio, F. (2007). *The Topography and Excavation of Heracleion-Thonis and East Canopus (1996-2006)*. Underwater Archaeology in the Canopic Region, Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology Monograph 1, OCMA, Oxford.

mythology, family, attributes and appearance of god Nilos are among research objectives. Research challenge is to identify its material which made of. A two-tiered methodological approach is used in research: first, a thorough description of the artifact is provided, and then, data is analyzed using theoretical frameworks to determine its historical and archaeological context.

Description

- **Category:** Sunken monuments, Gods and Goddesses statues
- **Date:** Greco-Roman Period, Roman Period, 2nd century C.E.
- **Provenance:** Lower Egypt, Alexandria, Herakleon
- **Excavation:** Canop – (No. 842) – 2003 – European Institute for Marine Archaeology
- **Material(s):** Black basalt (?) – Chest Grey wacke (?)
- **Height:** 65.5 cm
- **Length:** 75 cm
- **Photos:** By the Researcher (fig. 2, 3, 4, 5)
- **Description:**

This bust was originally used to ornament a temple in the ancient Egyptian city of Canopus. It was set into a huge ornate shield. Underwater archaeologists found it near the base of the wall that it had previously hung on. It is of the greatest quality and remarkably well preserved. The only parts lacking from the head are the tip of the nose and the bottom of two lengthy beard strands where they meet the chest.²

It depicts a vigorously idealized deity with a long beard who is holding a cornucopia at its proper left shoulder. This quality and the divine "portrait" are most appropriate for a river god; the setting and content are most appropriate for a depiction of Nilos, the god of the Nile. The flat back with a wide-gauge dowel hole, the semicircular bottom edge, and the head's forward tilt all indicate that the bust was placed inside a shield frame. The muscular brow, the long, thick beard, and the faint age lines beneath the eyes all symbolize the river god's youthful, active demeanor. The characteristics that are classically developed symbolize his ancient divinity.³

The incision made in the fillet over the brow's center was most likely intended to hold a lotus blossom, a feature that busts of Nilos on Alexandrian Roman-Period coinage wore. The most well-known Egyptian plants are those that are technically referred to as *Nymphaea Lotus* and *Nymphaea Caerulea* but are more commonly nicknamed "lotuses."

² Smith, R.R.R (2006), Exhibition Catalogue Egypt's Sunken Treasures, Berlin, exh. Egypt's Sunken Treasures, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin.

³ Goddio, F. *The Topography and Excavation of Heracleion-Thonis and East Canopus*.

The most well-known aquatic plant from Egypt that is a member of the Nymphaeae family is the lotus flower, often known as the water lily.⁴

Grey wacke

Greywacke quarries were not heavily or continuously mined. The stone may not have been as in demand as other materials like granite, limestone or sandstone because it was utilized for private or royal statues rather than as a building stone. It can be challenging to identify stone classifications in historical written documents, but most agree that greywacke was known as the bekhen (*bhn*) stone starting in the Middle Kingdom, and that by the New Kingdom, the topographic term "mountain of bekhen" had emerged. Originally, the primary source of this stone was Wadi Hammamat, the wadi that Turin represents. Papyrus and referred to in the ancient times as wadi "r - hnw"⁵,

Gray wacke is a variety of impure sandstones and is generally characterized by its hardness, dark color, and poorly sorted angular grains of quartz, feldspar, and small rock of lithic fragments set in a compact fine clay and muddy matrix Gray wacke in the rocky crust of Earth makes up 20–25% of all sandstone and is a relatively common form of sandstone. Three kinds of gray wackes are distinguished based on the relative amounts of quartz, feldspar, and rock pieces.⁶

Cornucopia

The emblem known as cornucopia, which translates to "horn of plenty," dates back to classical Greek and Roman times. It was displayed as a horn covered in an enormous amount of nuts, flowers, fruits, and vegetables. The motif originated as a curved goat's horn filled to overflowing with fruit and grain. It is emblematic of the horn possessed by Zeus's nurse, the Greek nymph Amalthea, which could be filled with whatever the owner wished⁷.

Curly Hair

With their short, disheveled hair, these extremely intricate hairstyles set the Greeks apart from the barbarians of the North. The Greeks developed an infatuation with curls and spent a lot of time cleaning, braiding, curling, coloring, and even sweetening their hair.

⁴ Ahmed, A. M. (2022) Imitation of the Lotus flower in Architecture: Its use in the Decorations of the Walls and Ceilings of Palaces, Houses and Tombs in Ancient Egypt, *Res Mobilis Revista internacional de investigación en mobiliario y objetos decorativos* 11 (14): 1-20.

⁵ Othman, A. I. (2017) Extraction and Use of Greywacke in Ancient Egypt, *Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University* 14 (1): p. 52 ff.

⁶ It is a Paleozoic-era sedimentary rock with an undeveloped textural structure. Larger grains can range in size from sand to pebbles, and 15% of the volume of rocks can be made up of matrix elements. a dark hue typical of low-oxygen deep sea environments. See: <https://geologyscience.com/rocks/sedimentary>

⁷ Kaya, M. (2023), Studies on the Importance of the Cornucopia Motif in Byzantine Art and the Aniconic Decoration of the Wall Paintings of Cappadocia Region, *Bizans Özel Sayısı: Art-Sanat* (20): 263–291.

They used curling irons, of course, and combs made of bone, metal, or ivory that were frequently adorned with elaborate designs. packed with the owner's choice of contents.

Some of the deities of Olympus, like Aphrodite, had long, gorgeous hair. The Greek hairdressers were known as psecades because Artemis, the goddess of hunting and warfare, had her hair combed by the nymph Psecas, who went on to become the patron saint of hairdressers. On the body and hair, complex fragrant essences derived from flowers, spices, and oils were applied. They also held that scents and odors were vital and that the gods of Olympus had sent them into the world. In the past, they would boil flowers and herbs, including frankincense and myrrh, along with vine leaves and rose extracts, and then combine the mixture with olive oil. They utilized lotions, balms, and beeswax to soften and comb the hair.⁸

Numerous Greek gods could be recognized by their distinctive haircuts, which acted as inspiration for hairstyles in ancient humans. Therefore, the major god Zeus usually has his hair arranged in an upward, downward, and radiating pattern that forms a corona of individual strands. Asclepius, he had hair like Zeus! In addition, he manifests as a fully grown deity of healing and is the only one to don the Hippocratic ring.⁹

The Fillet

A headband made of cloth or metal that encircles the head and is knotted at the back is called a fillet or diadema. Zeus (Jupiter) and Apollo both wore it, but the forehead is especially symbolic of Dionysus and his adherents. It is filled in all around. Furthermore, the item wore was a regal emblem. Furthermore, the item wore was a regal emblem. Furthermore, the item wore was a regal emblem. Furthermore, it was a royal emblem that was worn.¹⁰

Comparison with other Statues of God Nilos

(1) *Sitting Statue of God Nilos on a rock at (NMEC) (fig. 6)*

- **Category:** Gods and Goddesses statues
- **Date:** Greco-Roman Period, Roman Period, 2nd century C.E.
- **Provenance:** Upper Egypt, Qena
- **Material(s):** Marble
- **Display:** National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC).
- **Description:**

During the Greco-Roman era, the god Nilos represented the Nile River. This statue is one of the few that shows him as a man leaning on a hippo over a rock where water flows. A

⁸ Graf, F. (1996), "Asclepius". In: Hornblower, S. & Spawforth, A. (eds) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 187–188

⁹ Haas, N., Toppe, F. and Henz, B. M. (2005), *Hairstyles in the Arts of Greek and Roman Antiquity*, publishing of University of Berlin, Germany, p. 298 ff.

¹⁰ Hafez, M. F. (2010), *The Statues of Deities of Agriculture in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, PHD thesis, Helwan University, p. 298-299.

cluster of kids surrounds Nilos, signifying the flood's depth. Nilos represented wearing the Himatoin, while his upper part of the body is nude showing his belly as a sign of prosperity. His right hand is broken and holding something, while holding the Cornucopia in his left hand.

(2) Reclining Statue of God Nilos at (GRM) (fig. 7)

- **Category:** Gods and Goddesses statues
- **Date:** Greco-Roman Period, Roman Period, 2nd century C.E.
- **Provenance:** Lower Egypt, Alexandria, El-Mehamara (Sidi Bishr)
- **Material(s):** Rock Marble
- **Measures:** Height: 43 cm; Length: 60 cm; Width: 12 cm.
- **Display:** Greco-Roman Museum (GRM).
- **Description:**

This artifact was temporarily displayed at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum from 2008 until it was returned to the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria on 16 August 2022.

The statue is of Nilos reclining on his side, holding wheat stalks in his right hand and in his left hand a cornucopia (horn of plenty), which was depicted in the Roman period filled with fruits and was a symbol of abundance and prosperity. On top of the cornucopia, there is the lower part of a child, symbolizing the unit of measuring the level of the Nile water, which is the arm. Nilos rests his left elbow on a hippopotamus. The upper part of the deity's body is nude, showing his full and flabby stomach, which may also symbolize the life of plenty and prosperity brought by the flood, while the lower part of his body is draped in a cloak. Most times Nilos was depicted reclining on his arm, on a jar and sometimes on a sphinx (the Egyptian emblem which considered a distinctive feature rather than the other rivers), sometimes appear with him Hippopotamus or crocodile. This was the most famous feature of god Nilos more than the Egyptian one.¹¹

Comment on the Comparison

Often, Reclining or leaning are common depictions of god Nilos, as a sign of generosity and prosperity. These specifics include his corpulent physique and the two attributes he holding: The Cornucopia represents wealth in general; while the wheat stalks specifically reflect to Egypt's position as the ancient world's breadbasket.¹² Also, the representations of hippopotamus that Nilos rests on with his left elbow, illustrates his identification, as it notable from (fig. 6, 7). Here in the research case study, the artist depict god Nilos in exceptional attitude without his usual attributes (Childs: referring to flood cubits; wheat

¹¹ Toynbee, J. M. C. (1934), *The Hadrianic school: A Chapter in the History of Greek Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press, p. 31.

¹² Savvopoulos, K., Bianchi, R. S. (2012). *Alexandrian sculpture in the Graeco-Roman Museum*. Alexandria: Bibliotheca Alexandrina, p. 150.

stalks; lotus blossoms or the hippopotamus), except the Cornucopia. Furthermore, the material is uncommon, may be referring to Egypt.

Historical and Archeological Context of Nilos

The Nile wasn't only a geographical fact or a vital source of life. It is the life itself for the Egyptians.¹³ Ancient Egyptians had consecrated the Nile and raised it to the rank of deities as a gratitude for his favor on them and on their lands, they called it "Hapi". Hapi is a personification of the Nile's floods, would bring fertility and prosperity to their land.¹⁴ During the ancient Egyptian era, Hapi remained a lone deity, and the separation of Egypt into an Upper and Lower Egypt. Nile is nothing more than an expression of the pervasive political and geographic dualism in Egyptian thought.¹⁵

Nilos "The Mystery of the Name"

He is regarded as a god of the Nile¹⁶ and is thought to be the son of Oceanus.¹⁷ Oceanus' sons (like as Scamander, the god of Troy's principal river) were nearly always associated with rivers, while his daughters were typically nymphs.¹⁸ Istros is the god of the river that is now known as the Danube, and Nilos is the god of the Egyptian Nile.¹⁹ However another tale developed that connected the river to the story of (IO). It was said that Memphis, the daughter Nilos, and Epaphus, the son of (IO), were married. Libya, the mother of the race of Agenor and Belus, was born from this marriage.²⁰

Nilos was a king of Egypt, according to the Euhemerist narrative adopted by Diodrus Seleucus. He gave the name Nile to the river Nile, which was formerly known as Aegyptus. His people granted him this honor in appreciation for the significant irrigation work he completed.²¹

¹³ أبو بكر سرحان (2015)، نهر النيل في المصادر اليونانية واللاتينية، مؤتمر المياه والطاقة في دول حوض النيل. إمكانات التكامل والتنمية، أعمال المؤتمر السنوي لمركز البحوث والدراسات السودانية، معهد البحوث والدراسات الأفريقية – جامعة القاهرة بالتعاون مع مركز بحوث الطاقة، مركز تنمية الموارد الطبيعية والبشرية بمعهد البحوث والدراسات الأفريقية، ص 171.

¹⁴ El Shiwy, R. (2022). "Hapy of the south Versus Hapy of the North", *International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality* 16 (2), p. 26 ff.

¹⁵ Kákosy, L. (1982). The Nile, Euthenia, and the Nymphs. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 68(1): p. 290; See also El Shiwy, R. *Hapy*, p. 28 ff.

¹⁶ شيماء فرغلي سيد علي (2021)، مصادر الكتابة عن نهر النيل في العصرين اليوناني والروماني: قراءة في كتاب جون بول أوراقي فلسفية، كرسي اليونسكو للفلسفة فرع جامعة الزقازيق، ص 127 وما بعدها.

¹⁷ Oceanus is a river in Greek mythology that surrounding the whole world & is considered the source of all rivers & its water represented a barrier between the true & virtual world, for more details about the sources of the Nile and the rich debate between ancient Historians, see

أبو بكر سرحان (2015)، نهر النيل في المصادر اليونانية واللاتينية، ص 177.

¹⁸ كوملان (1992)، ترجمة أحمد رضا محمد، الأساطير الأخرى والرومانية، الهيئة العامة المصرية للكتاب، ص 110-111.

¹⁹ Cavendish, M. (2012), *Gods and Goddesses of Greece and Rome*, Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Reference, p. 219.

²⁰ Grimal, P. (1990), *A Concise Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, edited by Stephen Kershaw, from the translation by A.R. Maxwell Hyslod, Basil. Black well. Oxford. England.

²¹ Grimal, P. *A Concise Dictionary*; See also

أحمد أمين (1953)، قاموس العادات والتقاليد والتعبير المصرية، دار النهضة المصرية، ص 404.

In the Hellenistic era, Nilos, a fertility deity and the embodiment of the Nile, was brought to Alexandria by the Genie. His gifts brought abundant floods to the nation.²²

The name Nilos appeared for the first time in the 8th century B.C, by Hesiodos in his poem *Theogony*²³. The word Nilos may have been of a Hebrew origin that used later by the Greeks from the Phoenicians, The Bible has five different names for the Nile in Hebrew. The most common one is "Ye'or," which appears 64 times and is typically translated as "nile" or "water course" in English. Another name for the Nile is "Nachal Mizraim," which is referenced seven times and is translated as "wadi of Egypt." and Shîhôr, which is referenced five times, generally to a more precise place. The Greek name for river is *Potamos*, *ποταμός*. Two other words that signify the river of Egypt are *nahar mizraim* and *yam mizriam*. Jewish writers adopted the Greek term Nilos, which indicates the influence of Greek culture and religion on Jewish writings in the Greek and Roman periods. Philo uses the term four times, Artapanus twice, and the Sibylline Oracles at least four times throughout books five through eleven.²⁴

Later the Copts referred to it as "Iero" which means the Great which is a continuity of the ancient Egyptian name also sometimes it was called "Senehor" which means black in the Hebraic language²⁵. In the writings of Diodorus Seleucus he mentioned that the Nile was called "Aetus" which refers to the Eagle as its water flows strongly meanwhile the name "Aegyptos" was used again by Homeros²⁶ in the 9th century B.C in his famous *Odyssey* when he spoke about the Journey of "Minelaus" when he was strongly opposed by Hurricanes that changed his destination causing him to visit unpredictable places when he describe "in the Nile of Aegyptos my shops stayed"²⁷ on the other hand the Ancient Geographers stated that the word River Nile refers to the River bed started from "Meroy"²⁸ while Strabo relates this name only to the part which situated in the Egyptian lands as the river southwards had other names such as "Astapous" which means coming from the darkness.²⁹ Strabo continues his speech about the sources of the Nile describing them as unknown while in other places he states that the Nile gets its water from the sky.³⁰ In any case, the Nile was of a mysterious nature to the Egyptians.³¹

²² Hafez. M.F., *The statues of Deities of Agriculture*, p. 233.

²³ Hesiodos, *Theogony*, 338.

²⁴ Bloch, R. & Hogan. K.M (1996), *Supplements to the journal for the study of Judaism*, Brill, p. 89-95.
²⁵ أبو اليسر فرح (2004)، *النيل في المصادر الإغريقية*، عين للدراسات والبحوث الانسانية والاجتماعية، القاهرة، ص 56-57.

²⁶ Homeros, *Odessey*, XIV, 257/8 & 477.

²⁷ أبو اليسر فرح، *النيل في المصادر الإغريقية*، ص 57.

²⁸ Diodorus refers that Ptolemy II sent an expedition to Euthiopia as a Greek man called "Simonides" spent 5 years in this land & wrote down a book about his expedition as at Meroy, between the works of pliny that a soldier called "Timosthenes" works at the service of the River Navy of Ptolemy II & he sailed from Aswan to Meroy in 60 days, see

جان فركوته (1960)، *قنماء المصريين و الإغريق*، دار النهضة العربية، القاهرة، ص 42.

²⁹ Diodorus, S. (1961) *The Library of History*, trans. by Old Father, C. H (L.C.L) Vol. 1, London, p. 38.

أبو بكر سرحان، *نهر النيل في المصادر اليونانية و اللاتينية*، ص 175.

³⁰ Strabo (1966) *The Geography*, translated by Horace Leonard Jones (L.C.L) Vol. 1, London, p. 786.

³¹ Helck, W. (1972) *Der Text des 'Nilhymnus'*, Wiesbaden, p. 5.

Philo describes the river as being in its normal state as vivifying, wholesome, and clear nevertheless, during the Plagues, it changed into a destructive force that was connected to death and thickness. Plutarch describes how the Greeks valued the Nile usually referred as Nilos³², and its flood waters, mirroring the honor the Egyptians bestowed upon it. The Greeks denied that the Nile's water had special properties that caused healing, rapid growth, weight gain, increased offspring, ease of pregnancy, and nourishment to the body.³³

In the priestly decree of Memphis on 27 March 196 B.C, when the Nile flood was low during the 8th year of the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, the Nile was referred as "il" means river when the Nile was referred as "ir" in the Egyptian language while in Demotic it still referred as "il" then the letters N and O was added then it became n+il+o,³⁴ as the Nile himself is a god **θεος**.³⁵ So the researcher suggests that the name Nilos was derived from the two previous words Nilo+ θεος = Nilos.

Euthenia

During the 2nd part of the reign of Augustus, the wife of Nile's god appeared on coins, her name means "the plenty of the corn supply", the verb **εὐθηνεῖν** was used long time ago when talking about the prosperity resulted from the Nile flood, also the goddess name **εὐθηνια** which wasn't mentioned in the words of Aristotle, found in another form **εὐθηνη** during the honors given to Augustus at Actium, this secondary goddess may have been born at the time of the organized corn attribute usually sent to Rome from Egypt.³⁶ Due in large part to Rome's wheat supply, the Roman government came to be intimately associated with the cult of the Nile god. During Augustus' reign, the newly created companion of the Nile deity and its heavenly personification first appeared on Alexandrian coins. These depictions were similar to those of the Roman goddess Annona, who symbolized the grain supply. She personified the religious component of Augustus' new economic strategy, which depended on the results of a good flood, a society whose economy was mostly reliant on the river's yearly surge and whose system was heavily reliant on Egypt's fertility.³⁷

In the final decade of BC, the goddess initially appeared on Egyptian coinage. The frequent usage of this new goddess' image in Alexandrian coinage, which dates back to AD 272-3, shows the great significance that was attached to her. The coins display a wide range of varieties. She is frequently depicted as either a sitting or standing figure, occasionally perched on a throne or a rock, and she frequently sports ears of wheat on her

³² Inwood, B. & Gerson, L. P. (1997), *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory readings*, 2nd edition, Hackett publishing company, Cambridge, p. 373.

³³ Bloch, R. & Hogan, K.M, Supplements to the journal, p. 93.

³⁴ أبو العطاء، الحسين ابراهيم (2008)، *عبادة النيل في العصرين اليوناني والروماني*، مجلة كلية الآداب جامعة المنصورة 42، ص 404.

³⁵ Le nil lui- meme y est θεος

³⁶ Bonneau, D. (1964) *La Crue du Nil: Divinite Egyptienne a travers mille ans Histoire (332 A.V - 641 A.P)*, Paris, passim, librairie C. Klincksieck, p. 330-331 .

³⁷ Riggs, C. (2012), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, Oxford, p. 442.

head. She can be seen standing between two ships or with a sphinx on certain coins. At other times, she is seen giving her spouse a crown, while at other times, the Nile is seen beside just her bust.³⁸

Around AD 139, Euthenia was most likely created, signaling the start of a new Sothic Cycle. This occurrence, which was undoubtedly joyful, brought Sothis to the attention of both scientists and religious scholars.³⁹

Nymphs

In the centuries of syncretism, nymphs also arrive, marking a striking new development in Nile mythology. They are significant in two burial poems discovered in Isidora's tomb in the Tuna el-Gebel necropolis, which is close to Hermopolis Magna. They date back to the 2nd century AD & it has already been established how the poet was influenced by Egyptian milieu.

1. Οὐκέτι σοι μέλλω θύειν, θύγα[τερ, μετ]ὰ κλ[α]υθμοῦ,
ἐξ οὗ δὴ ἔγνων ὡς θεὸς ἐξεγένου.
Λοιβαῖς εὐφημεῖτε καὶ εὐχλαῖς Ἰσιδώραν,
ἣ νύμφη Νυμφῶν ἀρπαγίμη γέγονεν.
2. Χαῖρε, τέκος· Νύμφη ὄνομ' ἐστὶ σοι . . . (Bernand, 350)

The oldest of the Nile's daughters, Nilo', begins the work on the building of the tomb of Isidora which is represented as an abode constructed by the nymphs⁴⁰.

Despite having a major role in both poems, nymphaea was not widely practiced in Egypt at the time of their cult. They are linked to Pan in an inscription found on the Gebel Tukh (north of Ptolemais, end of the first century AD), where they are reported to have assisted Isidorus, the inscription's dedicatee, in locating a quarry. The syncretistic theology of Greco-Egyptian religion also made a space for the nymphs. 'Victorious, Athena, nymph' (1. 30) is the Saite Nome for the goddess Isis, as described in the well-known hymn to her in P. Oxy. 1380 (2nd century AD). When compared with a passage in the Coffin Texts that mentions Sobks and Neith(s) of the Nile—where the Neiths are presumably Nile goddesses acting as ladies grieving the deceased identified with Hapy—the association of Isis-Athena-Neith with the nymphs takes on significant significance.⁴¹

Festivals

During the Ptolemaic period, the cult of **Νειλος** began from the reign of Ptolemy V to Ptolemy X (116-81 B.C), the deity was known in Greek papyri as the glorious **ο μεγας**

³⁸ Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 291.

³⁹ Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 293.

⁴⁰ Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 294.

⁴¹ Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 296.

θεος (OIG. 168 = SB 8883⁴²), in another papyri dates back to the 3rd century B.C, the Nile is a god and lord **θεος και κυρθος** (P. Aberd .18)⁴³.

The celebration and anticipation rituals for the flood, which was worshipped as Hapi or Nilos, were able to endure, and the significance of the different festivals honoring the Nile flood was maintained because these festivals were considered sacred national occasions though the Ptolemaic king or his representative must attend it.

1. **Τα νειλαια**, in the canopus Decree it was mentioned that Ptolemy III Euregetes attended this festival, also Ptolemy VIII & Ptolemy IX during the triple rule with his mother queen Cleopatra III & his brother Ptolemy IX attended this festival.⁴⁴ There is only one engrave on stone refers to this festival was held in Elephantine during the reign of Ptolemy IX (17 Aug -15 Sep. 115 B.C) in line 6 it can be translated as the glorious Nile, its reached the highest mark Ptolemy IX made a trip from Alexandria to Elephantine in order to throw gold and silver offerings into the mouth of the cave believed to be the source of the Nile.⁴⁵

" ο **μεγας θεος Νειλος ανηκει ελθων**⁴⁶".

2. **σεμασια semasia**, which were in a sense secularized and ruled by Roman authorities rather than priestesses, were recorded on numerous papers from Akoris to Fayoum and occurred when the river reached a particular height or gave its sign The prefect now held the title "high priest of the most holy Nile" (*P. wisc.9.4 - Oxyrhynchus 183 C.E.*)⁴⁷ This festival held when the Nile water reached the mark of 16 arm (*P. Mich. inv. 5084, verso*) it was registered in upper Egypt and also throughout the Nilometer in Memphis, as well as the Nile reaches this mark, happiness overcomes.⁴⁸ All the Egyptians making songs for the Nile flood, this festival was usually held in the month of Augusts.⁴⁹ Another papyri from Tebtunis P. Milan, 28, Col. II, 46 and Col. III, 79 & Papyri from Karanis P. Mich. Inv. 5984, verso, 215 A.D = SB 9245 both of them refers to the continuous festivals & celebrations of the Holy Nile held by the

⁴² Bonneau, D., *La Crue Du Nil*, p. 328.

⁴³ Bonneau, D., *La Crue Du Nil*, p. 334.

⁴⁴ أبو العطاء، الحسين ابراهيم، *عبادة النيل*، ص 405 وحاشية رقم 20-19.

⁴⁵ Booth, C. (2024), *Tourism in Egypt through the Ages: A historical guide*, Ben & Sword Books Limited, p. 118.

⁴⁶ أبو العطاء، الحسين ابراهيم، *عبادة النيل*، ص 405 وحاشية رقم 20-19.

⁴⁷ Riggs, C., *The Oxford Handbook*, p. 442.

⁴⁸ One arm, or 0.52 meters, was used to measure the rise in the Nile's level. The nilometers that were dispersed throughout Egypt were used for this purpose. There were nilometers in a few significant temples. The nilometers at Elephantine Island, the Edfu Temple, and the Serapium Temple in Alexandria are the most well-known nilometers in Egypt. The religion of Isis likewise depended heavily on the holy water of the Nile. Occasionally, sixteen offspring would appear in the statues of the god Nilos, signifying the number of arms required for an ideal Nile inundation. see:

Fekri, H., et al (2002) *Alexandria Graeco-Roman Museum: A Thematic Guide*, (Cairo: National Center for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage; The Supreme Council of Antiquities, p. 122

⁴⁹ أبو العطاء، الحسين ابراهيم، *عبادة النيل*، ص 405 وحاشية رقم 15.

Egyptians for the so-called the signal festival.⁵⁰ Alexandria was locally personified as Semasia who was a woman on a Horse signifying the sacred high mark of the Nile on the Nilometer.⁵¹

3. **Καταχρηρία**, which means the festival of inundation, and it was held on 19th July about this festival in Sais Sa el Hagar (P. Hib, 27, col. XII, 165-196 & 174-176), this festival was also held in Fayum region P. Cair.Zen, 59176, 39,255 B.C).

Table 1. Comparison between Egyptian God Hapi and God Nilos.

	Egyptian God Hapi	God Nilos
Appearance	Usually portrayed as an androgynous person with a huge, sagging breast, belly, and loincloth, as well as a ceremonial artificial beard.	Usually lying on his side, holding wheat stalks in one hand and a cornucopia in the other, encircled by children representing the arms, the unit of measurement for the level of the Nile water. The deity's upper torso is bare, revealing his voluptuous and massive stomach.
Division of cult		
Female consort	No name of a wife registered. The wooden statuettes known as the "wives of the Nile", which were made in large quantities and considered as Hapy's concubines, plainly depicted human sacrifices in a symbolic fashion. ⁵²	Goddess <i>Euthinia</i>
Related goddesses	Isis ⁵³ - Sothis (Aspect of Isis ⁵⁴) – Hathour ⁵⁵	Sothis ⁵⁶ - Hathour – Demeter ⁵⁷

⁵⁰ أبو العطاء، الحسين ابراهيم، عبادة النيل، ص 407 وحاشية رقم 20.

⁵¹ Bloch, R. & Hogan, K.M, *Supplements to the journal*, p. 214.

⁵² Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 291.

⁵³ It was believed to have played a proactive role, similar to Euthinia in causing the flood in one myth. Isis, grieving for her husband, closes the mouth of the Nile, which naturally causes a partial drying out of the Riverbed. As she lies weary, her tears fall into the water, causing the water to rise. Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 292.

⁵⁴ Sothis: Known by the Greek term "dog star," Sothis was also known as Horus in Greek mythology. During the Roman era, the god was also identified with Anubis. Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 293.

⁵⁵ Although she cannot be numbered among the gods of the flood, one of her monikers is somewhat pertinent to this issue. Hathour Mistress of Sixteen is the title given to her at the ceremony of bringing in Sokaris; this title refers to the physical and natural surroundings, therefore it was thought that both Euthinia and Hathor would preserve Egypt from a low Nile. Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 294.

⁵⁶ In A.D. 139, Euthinia was most likely created, signaling the start of a new Sothic cycle. This happy occasion undoubtedly attracted a lot of attention, both from a scientific and a religious perspective. Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 293.

Daughters	Neith ⁵⁸ - Athena ⁵⁹	Minerva ⁶⁰ - Memphis ⁶¹ - Nymphs.
Attributes	It is common to depict him holding papyrus stalks and a tray filled with different contributions. , Most likely, his extended arms were originally meant to hold a tray filled with floodwaters, symbolizing the wealth that the earth will later carry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cornucopia - Wheat stalks - Hippopotamus - Childs - Lotus blossoms
Temples	Despite, There are no registered temples of Hapi, he was worshipped alongside the Nile banks, especially in Aswan and Gebel El-Silisila. There are many reliefs found in many temples, devoted to god Hapi.	The Nilometers were found in some important temples. The most famous Nilometers in Egypt were: the one found at Elephantine Island, that at the Edfu Temple; and the one at the Serapium Temple in Alexandria.
Jubilations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Τα νειλαια, (17 Aug -15 Sep) - Σεμασια, held on Augusts. - Καταχυτηρια, 19th July.

Conclusion

Once the statue was thoroughly inspected and its characteristics were compared to those of other statues from the same era The Nile River was known in Greek as Nilos. The Khrementes (Chremetes) river in western Libya is the only other known river in North Africa to have been personified by the Greeks. Since Nilos was connected to nymphs and Euthinia, the cult of the Nile god was considered to be Roman in nature, setting it apart from the Egyptian devotion of Hapi. The image and name of Nilos departed from the god Hapi and was identical to some extent with the other river gods, with some special allocations to him alone.

The statue of the Nile is somewhat similar in shape to the god Serapis in both shape and function, also among the functions of god Serapis he was worshipped as god of the Nile,

⁵⁷ Given the connection of Isis as Demeter in the Greco-Egyptian Pantheon, it is not surprising to see that Euthinia is connected to Demeter and occasionally with Tri Ptolemus in Alexandrian coins from the 2nd century A.D. under the reign of Trajan. Kákosy, L., *The Nile*, p. 294.

⁵⁸ The myth might have sprung from the Egyptian tale of Neith's birth in the primordial water.

⁵⁹ The belief that the "Egyptian Athena" was the daughter of the Nile was well known to Clement of Alexandria.

⁶⁰ In Cicero's *De Divinatione* - It is said that the goddess emerged from the Nile: (*Minerva*) *secunda orta Nilo, quam Aegyptii Saitae colunt* The Nile's waters gave birth to Minerva, who then took on her virginal form when the dew or moisture solidified.

⁶¹ She is the mother of Libye and the spouse of Egypt's ruler, Epaphus.

and there is a group of consecrations dating back to the third century BC from Canopus in which there is a connection between Isis, Serapis and Nilos.

The goddess Euthinia, who is known as the goddess of abundance and prosperity, and wife is the god of the Nile, her representations are very similar to that of goddess Isis in the way she styles her hair and dresses like the Isis knot.

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Fig. 1: Submerged Bust of Nilos in the sea during excavation. After Goddio, F. *The Topography and Excavation of Heracleion-Thonis and East Canopus (1996-2006)*.

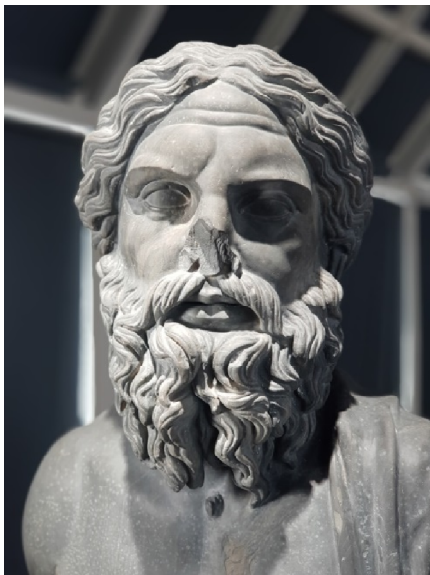


Fig. 2: Front view photo of the bust of Nilos. (Taken by the researcher).

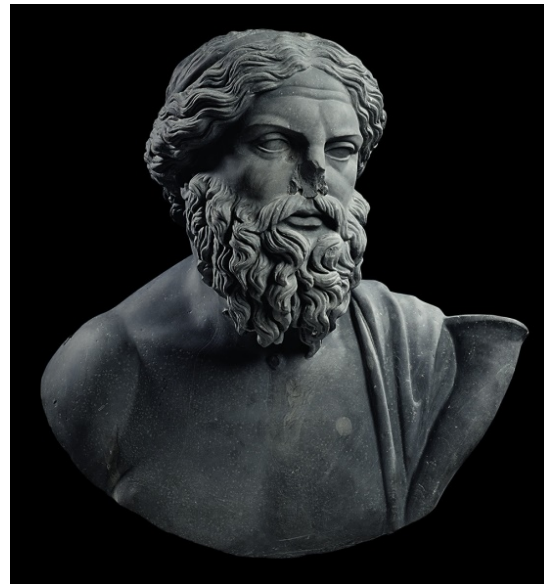


Fig. 3: Edited photo of the bust of Nilos. (Edited by the researcher).

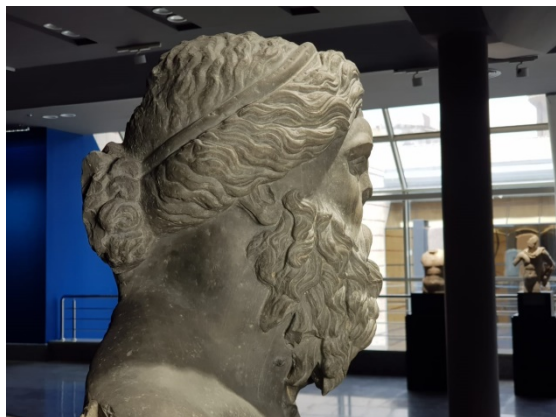


Fig. 4: Side view photo of the bust of Nilos. (Taken by the researcher).



Fig. 5: Top view photo of the bust of Nilos. (Taken by the researcher).



Fig. 6: Sitting Statue of God Nilos on a rock at National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC). <https://nmec.gov.eg/main-gallery/>



Fig. 7: Reclining Statue of God Nilos at the Greco-Roman Museum (GRM). (Savvopoulos, K., Bianchi, R. S. *Alexandrian sculpture in the Graeco-Roman Museum*, p. 151).



Fig. 8: Reclining Statue of Goddess Euthenia at the Greco-Roman Museum (GRM). (Savvopoulos, K., Bianchi, R. S. *Alexandrian sculpture in the Graeco-Roman Museum*, p. 151).

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تمثال نصفي لنيلوس في المتحف اليوناني الروماني بالإسكندرية أميرة كامل الدسوقي

قسم الإرشاد السياحي – كلية السياحة والفنادق – جامعة مدينة السادات – جمهورية مصر العربية

المخلص

يهدف البحث لدراسة ونشر تمثال نصفي للإله نيلوس، والذي تم عرضه مؤخرًا في المتحف اليوناني الروماني بالإسكندرية (رقم 842). كما يسعى البحث لتوضيح وضع التمثال ومقارنته بتمائيل أخرى ذات أوضاع مختلفة وفريدة لنفس الإله ومن نفس الفترة؛ من أجل الإشارة إلى تنوع سمات ومكانة الفن النحتي في ذلك العصر. علاوة على مناقشة أصل الإله ووجوده في الأساطير والمصادر القديمة وعائلته بالإضافة إلى عبادة النيل في العصر اليوناني الروماني. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على السمات والرموز المتعلقة بالإله والتي ظهرت غالبًا بالتمثال محل الدراسة مثل: (قرن الخيرات – اللحية المستعارة – عصابة للرأس). تتمثل معوقات البحث في الفصل في مادة صنع هذا التمثال النصفي والتي كانت محل جدل طويل. يعتمد البحث على منهج علمي من مستويين: وصف كامل للقطعة الأثرية وتحليل البيانات من خلال الأطر النظرية لتحديد سياقاتها التاريخية والأثرية.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: نيلوس – مصر اليونانية والرومانية – عبادة النيل – أوثينيا.