

Cult Installation in Greco- Roman Egypt

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Abstract

Religious life in Egypt had a special character; religion involved in people's life, they keen to keep a connection with gods and create mediation inside their house. On other hand the Roman materialism were imposed some changes on the priests clergy. They were not carrying about the people's needs any more, people consequently turned their personal religious life towards the home, especially when they noticed that the sacred rituals were not being performed by pious priests, but by some agents of a foreign oppressor. The house was a mirror which reflects the religious concepts of its inhabitants, most houses contained one or more shrines, signifying the possibility of various worship practices. Houses' chaples which was the biggest room, they always contained niches where the figurines were put. The chaples might contain some wall paintings that depicted the images of gods as Heron, Disocuri, Isis and Harpocrates. Karanis's houses were characterized with different religious objects as figurines and textile dolls that gained its divine power from the gods of temple, as they were manufactured on temples. This thesis tries to recognize how people created sacred ambience in their houses; it explores cult items which helped them to perform domestic religious rites.

Key words: Shrines, Niches, Wall paintings, Figurines, Textile dolls.

Introduction

The Impact of Religion on People's Life:

Egyptian religion involved in every aspect of people's life, in the rhythms of cultivation and the guarantee of happiness and wealthy of the family. The ritual interactions with different gods and spirits: inside houses, in local shrines and at festivals. Actually the Egyptian religion was not restricted in temples and priests; it was lifestyle (Frankfurter, 2012). The circumstances of life in Roman Egypt were very hard as people faced many difficulties. The rate of mortality and morbidity was very high, even though those who were lucky to survive they had to struggle to overcome the tensions of life (Dieleman, 2012).

But how Can the One Adapt With Such Conditions; Actually people refuge to gods as they believed that their fortune was depended on the divine will. They tried to influence imperceptible forces and supernatural power (Dieleman, 2012). People didn't only worship and perform religious rites in temples and shrines, but also they had performed domestic religious practices. The houses contained many figurines, wall painting of religious images of gods, some of them were portable and others applied directly to house wall and altars. The presence of specific god reflected the family goals and aims (Frankfurter, 2012). (figures 1, 2).

According to P. Oxy 3992 (Bagnall and Rowlandson, 1998). It was obviously that some ceremonial devotions were performed at such altars. A letter from Aelius Theon assures to his brother that *'every day I make devotion on [your daughter's] behalf before the god.the lord Serapis'*

Αἴλιος Θεών Ἐρμίνωι τῶιδελεφῶι χαίρειν.καὶ πρὸ ἡμερῶν ἔγραψά \σοι/
ἀσπαζόμενός σε καὶ τὴν κυρίαν μουυγατέρα σου [Δι]ονυσίαν καὶ τὴνμητέρα
αὐτῆ[ς]. καὶ νῦν τὸ αὐτὸποιῶ καὶ παρ[α]καλῶ συγγνωναί\μοι/ εἰ μήπω τῆι
\αὐτῆι/ κυρίαι ἡμῶν πέ-πομφα τραγημάτια. οὔπω γάρτὰ νέα κατέπλευσεν. ὅταν
δέκατακομισθῆι, πέμψω αὐτῆ[ι]ἄξια αὐτῆς κα[ι] εἴτ[ι] ἄλλο ἐὰν δύ-νωμαι.
ἐκάστη[ς μέν]τοι ἡμέραστο προσκύνημα αὐτῆς[π]οιῶ παρὰ τῶι θεῶι τῷ.
θε[.]τω[ι] κυρίωιΣαράπιδι καὶ σοῦ καὶ τῆς μητρὸς
αὐτῆς. ἀσπάζ[ου] οὔν αὐτὴν καὶ

It can be concluded that people tried to create a connection and mediation with gods into their homes. Even in the fifth century Shenoute of Aripe criticizes that some people still light lamps in their houses to celebrate the festival of the regional god Shai, and others preserved figures and images of Shai inside niches devoted to him (Frankfurter, 2012).

Items Devoted for Performing Religious Rituals inside Houses:

I-Shrines Inside Houses

From the late period, Ptolemaic and early Roman era, the presence of religious motifs and figures were very common, doorposts were fastened with an image of the apotropaic and fertility god Bes, the presence of altar inside houses with different forms as it could be in or by the wall (Frankfurter, 2017). Many terracotta figurines have been placed inside these niche-altars. The most common figurines were for Bes with a sword, the child-god Harpocrates on a horse or with a goose, goddess Isis nude or with robes, and the serpentine Agathos Diamon as a twisted snake or the head of Asclepius. The main reasons for the presence of such popular religious figures were protection, and fertility. But by the fourth century the presence of specific god or figure at home was related to family tradition and personal needs. We may also find using some god to provide authority to local goddess, as with the Fayyum's agricultural snake- goddess Renenoutet (Thermouthis). Many terracotta images of Isis with a snake's tail were found beside the shrines to Thermouthis, as it was believed having such image on the home altar, a person would have been allow to connect his home with the sacred guardian of regional agriculture, whose adoration would have been shared by many homes (Frankfurter, 2017).

Yandek (2013) spots light on a decorative niche from one of Karanis's house B14 (figure. 3), it followed the Greco-Roman style, and it is characterized with two magnificent columns of plaster which support the shell cavity of the niche. According to, one of the most important sites which is characterized with rich architectural features is Karanis, its niche-shrines are very unique. Some of these shrines are made of mud brick or stones, and they were decorated. Some limited evidences indicated that there were religious activities centering on doorways. These doorways seem to have been elaborately ornamented (Alston, 2002).

The researcher concludes that house in Greco Roman era was a mirror of its inhabitants and their religious believes. Many religious practices were performed inside the house which depended upon the ancestral cult of the family. On the other hand the spreading of shrines among larger Roman houses reflected divisions within the household.

Alston (2002) agreed with Talalay (1993), as he mentioned that religion at Karanis seems to have been melted into the fabric of daily life. It can be assume that life of people and their religion became two sides of the same coin. Every house of Karanis had some images of deities, amulets, votives (figure 4) and much other stuff which used in religious rites. According to sources of papyri and inscriptions we can extract names of 30 gods and goddesses that have been sacred and worshiped in that region. Harpocrates was one of the most important gods whose terracotta image was wide spread in many houses and granaries (figure 5).

Goddess Isis also had a great importance in Karanis. She was revered among the Roman world for many virtues and for its power. She was linked to marital devotion. Isis was depicted holding Harpocrates to her breast in magnificent wall painting from Karanis house. Isis was also venerated at Karanis in agricultural form recognized with the Cobra goddess Thermouthis, whose main responsibility was shielding the harvested grain. There were perfect sculptures of Isis –Thermouthis with serpent tail in private dwellings; they were possibly once exhibited in household shrines (Talalay, 1993). (figures 6 and 7).

Many papyri reflect the prevalence of domestic religious practices, as we see in a P. Athens 60 (Frankfurter, 2017), it was a letter from two women to their sisters "*would please light a lamp for the shrines and spread the cushions*"

Ἀπολλωνία καὶ Εὐπούς Ῥασίοι(*) καὶ Δημαρίῳ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσθε εἰ[ῦ· ἐρ-]ρώμεθα δὲ καὶ αὐταῖ. κα[λῶς]5δὲ ποιήσεις τοῖς ἱεροῖς λύχνον ἄπτουσα καὶ ἐκτι-νάσσουσα τὰ προσκεφάλαια. φιλομάθι(*) δὲ καὶ μὴ λυποῦπερὶ τῆς μητρός· ἤδη γὰρ 10κομψῶς ἔχι(*). προσδέχεσθεδὲ ἡμᾶς. ἔρρωσθε.καὶ μὴ παῖζε ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ, ἀλλὰἔσω εὐτάκτει· ἐπιμέλου δὲΤιτόας καὶ Σφαίρου.

The religious ambience was very clear in Karanis houses, starting even from the front doors which were having blots shaped like lions. Actually these signs propose many features of religious protection of thresholds and a potential socio-cultural link between the practical physical control of house access and protection of the household (Simpson, 2014). Some of constitutive signs of Roman domestic cult were still existed even after the spread of Christianity. There were some prohibition concerning these pagan practices in Theodosian laws "*to venerate, by more secret wickedness, [one's] lar with fire, his genius with wine, his penates with fragrant odors.. to burn lights to them, place incense before them, or suspend wreath from them*" (cod Th.16.10.12).

For the importance of shrines which had been increased in Greco- Roman period; It should be mention that the people of the city reacted to the changing function of the Temple by turning their personal religious life towards the home, especially when they noticed that the sacred rituals were not being performed by pious priests, but by some officers and agents of a foreign oppressor. In fact the people hadn't relied or trusted in priests as they used to. The Roman materialism were imposed some changes on the priests clergy, they were not carrying about the people and their needs any more (Fennnelly, 1967).

Zogrfou (2010), agreed with Fennnelly (1967), as he mentioned that the Roman occupation had many influences on the Egyptian clergy and temples, which consequently made the people to give more attention to the domestic cult. Most houses contained all the stuffs which used in temples; beginning from terra cotta versions of temple statues of gods and goddesses, lamps and incense-burners. There were small altars and chapels and small cippi of Horus. The lightening of lamps was a traditional sacred rite in temples and during Roman period it was more flourished inside houses as religious practice (figure 8).

The researcher wonders here if the presence of Greco-Roman as colonists increased the Role of religion in people's life? Household shrines became popular at the end of the Ptolemaic period, and their popularity increased during the Roman occupation. At Karanis, niches were turned from storage space to shrines beginning in the period of Layer C and the household shrine niches became very common in Layer B. At Soknopaiou Nesos, cultic niches and wall paintings were found in houses II 202 and II 204. Both of these houses were from the first late level (Fennnelly , 1967).

Hodge (2010), confirmed that most houses had specific places dedicated to the gods; these might be paintings, reliefs (figure 9), niches in the wall, or small shrines where statuettes and cultic objects were usually preserved. We should mention here that every household had various gods to worship, according to its precise needs. On other word we can find several shrines in the same house, especially in the large house, which means that the householders sacred various gods in order to get the benefit from them, they also were carrying about presenting offering to satisfy them.

It can be conclude that people found their religious refuge inside their houses. But all the inhabitants of the house as wife, child, or slave should worship the gods of the husband who considered as the head of the house, Sources often depict the subordinate members, slaves and wives, as responsible for preparing and carrying out household rituals, even as the husband or master is supposed to be the one to manage these activities. On the same time slaves and wives may indeed have introduced their own religious performances, perhaps to their own gods, without the accord of the head of household. We can say that every one of them believed in their own gods from his original household (Hodge, 2010).

Draycott (2014), and Bill (1948), spot light on Papyrus Giessen 20, it was a letter from a woman called Alien to her husband Apollonios, who was the strategos of the region Apollonopolites Heptanomia in Middle Egypt during the reign of Emperor Hadrian. This letter shows a kind of rescue archeology and spot light on some series of performances that used to be occurred in Greco-Roman era in Egypt, through Aline's argument of her communication with the savior gods, the Diosokuroi. Alien dedicate that shrine in the honour of Diosokuroi, actually it was a kind of healing practice that was spread between the Greeks in Egypt, they used to dedicated offerings and make votive limbs.

"I have received an oracle from the Dioscuri on your estate, and their shrine has been built, and Arius, the limb-maker [that is, a maker of terra-cotta limbs for votive offerings], is serving them, and he said, "If Apollonius writes to me about them, I will serve gratis" (Draycott , 2014)

One of the most striking letters of the Zenon archive is from an Aspendos named Zoilus to Apollonius, in which the writer tells how, when he was begging Sarapis for the Finance Minister's well-being, the god 'several times' enjoined him 'in my dreams' to sail to Alexandria and ask the Minister to build him a shrine near the harbour, and how, when he hesitated to obey the divine command, he was visited with sickness.' Then he was promising to fulfill the divine order in case of he was healed. Zoilos travelled to Alexandria to give the charge to Apollonios, but he was still unsure, so he suffered from god's anger, becoming ill again. So he decided to take all the financial cost of building that shrine to avoid the anger and punishment of god (Alvar , 2018).

At Karanis, in house B 64, there was an elegant niche, possibly affected by the Dionysos cult, ornamented with grape vines, grapes and shell-patterned vaulted roof. There was also great shell-patterned vaulted niche in house B 14. There were also other fewer decorative niches were found in other houses, mostly from the B level (Fennelly, 1968).

Omran (2015), indicated to the presence of the gods Dioskuri in a stela from a niche in a house at Theadelphia. Dioskuri depicted served a goddess, Harpocrates also depicted on the left side of the stela and Hermouthis on the right side. He adds that the Disokuri had a great value among the Hellenized community in Egypt, as the Disokuri became the Greek version of "Senouy" Egyptian crocodile gods, and Helena with Isis-Sothis.

The houses of Karanis contain many religious depictions inside the niches and also decorating its wall. Omran (2015), refers to house CIII, where a depiction of god Heron. House number B50 was characterized with its magnificent three paintings; one portrays god Herpocrates on his chair. He is depicted in the form of god Tithos as a protector but with the famous appearance of Harpocrates his finger in his mouth (figure 10). The second one represents a standing Kore, naked on a cushion carrying torches. Demeter is also depicted in standing position, Isis accommodated on a great throne, Serapis seated on a minor throne spreading his hand to a three headed Ceberus. The third one contains remains of unknown figure, enthroned male symbol, a small Harpocrates, a

figure with wings carrying a torch. There is also a huge standing female figure depicting Isis- Fortuna or Hekate, this figure is surrounded by two miniatures bulls, one of them with an altar. Omran (2015), also spots the light on another domestic relief from a house's niche which depicts god Soknopaios receiving offerings on an altar from a man and his wife.

Interaction between Domestic Shrines And Official Cult:

According to Memphis decree where an important aspect about religion in Roman era has been shown, there was interrelationship between domestic and official cult. The domestic shrine was mentioned in a context allied with royal cult:

Now, at the same time, it will be available to those who will desire,

To set up the likeness of this shrine of the God who Goes forth [Epiphanes],

The lord of Goodness [Euchaistos],

In order to cause that it be in their houses,

So that they make these monthly and annual festivals and processions. (Barrett ,2011)

Barrett (2011), mentioned that Philae decree also shed light on the presence of domestic practice of royal cult, as the decree inspires people to create a resemblance of the royal shrine inside their homes.

II -Chapels and Wall painting:

Mathews (2016), described the chapels as it was the biggest room in the house which always contained niches where the figures were put, actually that place had a sacred atmosphere. Rubensohn who excavated houses in Theadelphia north of Tebtunis, concluded that niches were fixed or symmetrically put in the walls, these niches surmounted by wood lintels, sometimes there were decorative elements. Of course there were no doors for these niches and their contents were always ready for any cult rituals.

Beside the normal role of niches as a cupboard, some niches used for religious purpose. The most common example coming from house C51 in Karanis, where two niches had been erected in the same room, one for domestic religious function as it was cleared from the religious motifs which decorated its wall, while the other niche contained shelves used for preserving different objects. In fact, the niches can be classified into three major types: Egyptian, Greco-Roman and traditional with paintings. The Egyptians niches were similar to the traditional niches which appeared in New Kingdom, and the Greco-Roman had many features from the domestic niches of Rome (Gottry, 1995).

Bell (1948), indicated to the wall paintings which distinguish the houses at Karanis, these religious motifs were connected with domestic cults. Most houses contained niches for the reception of cult object. So it can be concluded that niche and shrine were essential element in most houses, according to P.

Brem 15, Herodes who was an architect in charge of building a house asked Apollonius for some woods for the shrines: *"If Apollonius writes to me about them, I will serve gratis"*

The Significance of Chapel's Wall Painting:

Mathews (2016), spots light on wall paintings in the chapel of niches in Theadelphia. The first chapel here was in a house dating back after Hadrian. The chapel represents "pantheon" of the Fayyum; they were a Greek gods; Dioscuri, Demeter, Asclpius and Hygeia. I would like here to mention that Dioscuri had a very importance position in Fayyum.

The researcher wonders about the reason for the fame and status of Disocuri in Fayyum? Mathews (2016), justified that fame as Disocuri traveled daily between heaven and netherworld, they helped to guide ships, and as the shipping of grain from Fayyum to Rome through the Mediterranean was the main source of wealth in Fayum. Another niche in that chapel was decorated by a woman in Roman dress with a rudder in her right hand, obviously "Fortuna-Tyche". Mathews adds that she had the same role of Dioscuri, as she was a guide for shipping; her popularity was still existed till 600 AD. The chapel was also decorated by the mother and daughter goddesses Demeter depicted wore a crown of grain and Kore represented with a basket of grain. A marble relief of Asclepius and Hygeia the Greek gods of health was also found in a room inside the same house.

Mathews (2016), spots light on some features in the panels that have significances; Heron depicted with big ears, it is a tradition from the Pharonic era that some gods have the epithet "who hears petitions", the presence of such ears indicates that the god very merciful, near to his worshippers and always listening to their demands. As the worshippers visit the temple for making petitions to the gods, putting such panels of Heron with ears inside house allow the inhabitants of the house to speak to him any time. Heron also depicted carrying a ceremonial dish to make an offering to the sacred serpent entwined on Lykourgos's staff. The presenting of incense by Heron as offering, giving a message to the worshippers to do the same before his image. The panel also has a ray of sparkling light over the altar, indicating the burning of incense.

It was noticeable that the wall of front rooms haven't got much decorations as these of deeper rooms, as the front room were dedicated to the visitors while the inner rooms were decorated with religious figures as of house 5020, where it contained a wall painting representing many of both Egyptian and Hellenistic deities. Some houses contained semi- dome decorated niches that were served as religious shrines as with house C119 (Simposon, 2014).

The question might be asked at this point did the presence of Roman as Colonist have relation with performing such religious rites in back- rooms; In fact the religious rite was a private family matter, so it needs to be performed away from any disturbance or interruption. Actually this point of view believes that the native Egyptians were suffered from the cruel Roman rule, so they had to perform their religious rites secretly.

III-The Altars and Niches:

According to Mathews (2016), Keinath designates the altars as made of stone or ceramic, it was used for burning the incense so there was a cavity for the fire and for libations there was hollow for collecting the liquid. In fact, the large amount of altars which has been found in Fayyum reflects the importance of these altars in the daily rites, seventy seven altars have been found in Karanis. The altars are very portable so they aren't connected to the panels.

Actually some altars which had been found in Karanis houses; house C50/51 contained altar made of stone. There was also head of god Serapis made of alabaster. House C57 contained libation altar made of limestone and it characterized with a fountain (Yandek ,2013).

Omran(2015), indicated to two paintings from one of Karanis house, it was a mural painting represented God Heron accompanied with "black servant". On the left side there was a representation of the god Lycurgue. At Karanis there was also fresco of Heron was depicted in a niche in Room E of House B50. In the same niche there was representation of goddess Isis while is suckling her son (figure 11). Heron also was depicted as a cavalier in a wall painting inside private house, the owner of the house and his wife were also depicted making an offering on an alter to the god Soknopaios (Omran, 2015).

Amheida was one of the most important towns in the Dakhleh Oasis during the Roman and Byzantine centuries. Documentary sources indicated that it became a city by the fourth century. According to, the walls of Amheida houses were mud-plastered and often contained strips of whitewash along rear walls, around doorways, and wall niches. Probably this whitewash provided lighting of these dark spaces, particularly when lamps were placed in the niches (Boozer ,2005).

One of the most important sites at Amheida in Dakhla Oasis is Serenos house (figure 12); it dates back to the 4th century, it was erected around 330-340. That Roman house gained its name from its last owner who was a city councilor, there was also a school annexed it (Bagnall et al, 2015). By the time Seronos expanded his house. Actually this house is very unique with the narrative scenes; the style of the figures is derived from Greco-Roman traditions as some figures of Odysseus and Penelope (figure 13) (Bagnall et al, 2015).

The house reflected the richness of their owners. Almost 200 ostraca has been found in this house. The central room contains symbolic scenes from classical mythology: Perseus rescuing Andromeda; the homecoming of Odysseus; and the merriment of the Olympian gods undertaken by Hephaistos to illustrate how the adulterous Ares and Aphrodite overcome him (figure 14). Another scene is for Zeus in the shape of an eagle embracing Ganymede (figure 15), Zeus as bull with Europa and Daphne in the process of being transformed into a tree. Another separated piece of structure is one with plaster from the west wall representing Orpheus taming the animals (figure 16). Another important scene is depicted Orpheus plying his lyre to the animals; a banquet and the guests listening to music (figure 17) (Bagnell et al, 2006).

It can be assumed that the presence of all these gods was reflected the popular religion in that era. The homes and its archaeology in Greco- Roman world reflect the presence of domestic cult, which involves the ritual centers dedicated to protective gods, ancestral gods. Whatever the size of the house and the standard of their inhabitants, most of them contain wall niches and shrines, divine images, many offerings like foods and incense. Household images were functioned both as small representations of major temples gods and also as appropriations of these gods and their powers for domestic functions: fertility, protection from demons.

According to Frankfurter (2006), it was not common to find animal offering presented in domestic cult. Actually the niches and portable shrines which kept these images were manufactured on temples, which reflect that these household objects gained its divine power from the gods of temple. Domestic figures were acquired from traders by the temple areas. Actually the domestic shrines created a domestic link with temple processions, for example one might place newly sacred objects from festal shrine visits, and lamps lit for the deities. Festival foods are denoted for domestic religion in Roman Egypt, such as ritual vessels, bread stamps. Lamps (figure 8, 18), were functioned as a mediator that associated the fortune of the household and the power of a regional god during festival time. On other word there was a continuous dialogue between domestic and central religious worlds.

The offering and sacrifices of animals were granted to gods to gain their satisfaction. The head of the family slighted the animals inside houses, gathered his family and friends. Libations rites were performed by pouring water and wine over altars in home shrines and also by burning incense in front of gods' statues or terracotta figures (Sofroniew ,2016).

Hodge (2010), stated that the domestic religious practices were a part of everyday life; people prayed and offered offerings to gods before eating or drinking. The presence of household cult is obvious also in special events, like someone's birthday, the celebration might be occur in front of the household altar, offering of incense, and praying. The poet Tibullus designates a party of a birthday of a daughter, Sulpicia:

Juno of the birthday, receive the holy piles of incense which the accomplished maid's soft hand now offers you. Today she has bathed for you; most joyfully she has decked herself for you, to stand before your altar a sight for all to see...She is making an offering to you, holy goddess, three times with cake and three times with wine, and the mother eagerly enjoins upon her child what she must pray for” (Tibullus 3.12.1-4, 14-15).

Actually the woman's role in religious practices was very essential, as she never forgot her traditional role of performing domestic ritual duties, she was responsible for keeping the lamps lit before sacred images, presenting daily offerings, and burning incenses (McGinnis ,2012).

IV -Figurines

Boozer (2015), stated that they were figures which take different forms; regular or zoomorphic (figure 19) and they used to incite the inhabitants of the house to contemplate in negotiable matters of personality, status and sexuality. The representation of such figures differs according to its mean and significance to the human.

It can be assumed that figurines are an extremely reminiscent. Actually most of authors refer to figurines as "Nude Goddess", as they originally appeared as fertility figures during Pharaonic period, knowing as "death- brides" and they constantly played the same rule during Greco- Roman era, on other side there were not any caches of such figurines (Torok, 2011).

These sacred figurines had important role inside houses, but this role was obscure in the daily life outside the house, actually the lack of such presence reflected that the folks were not believed in high effective of these figurines in their life outside the house.

The Common Types of Figurine:

According to Boozer (2015), The figurines were varied according to the native milieu, so we noticed that the Alexandrian figurines seem to have been secular and imitated Greek Tanagra and Myrina models, while the chora figurines were traditionally Egyptian, representing gods or persons worshiping, so taking on a more religious role than primarily found for such figurines.

Dunand and Zivie-Coche(2004), agreed that people would like to be connected with gods, so they were keeping figurines of gods and goddesses at their houses, some of these figurines were made out of bronzes, but in Greco-Roman era they were made of terra cotta, which spread in Alexandria and imitated the Greek models. In chora the Egyptian style was appeared. But these figurines have never been found in temples.The researcher argues that they have domestic use, people used to pray before these figures. Most houses contained altars where offering were put. The figurines might be hung on a wall. According to papyri dated back to the second century CE, one had a chapel dedicated to Dioskouroi in home, in response to a command from the gods themselves (Dunand and Zivie-Coche, 2004).

Yandek (2013) refers to Orant figures which were wide spread at Karanis, these figurines were usually depicted women in seating form with crossed legs (figure 20). Actually these figurines might help their possessor in his worship; it was noticeable that the poses of these figures were similar to the traditional Egyptian poses of praying. Some of these figures had been represented in Greco-Egyptian style as the case of orants found in house C57; they represented in seating positions, raising their hands as in prayer. But they probably associated with fertility as the figure depicted with some of pregnancy symptoms as the big belly and the swelling of navel. These figurines were not only rested in houses and granaries, but also existed in streets and of course in

temples. Inside houses these figurines usually suspended on the wall or put in an altar as an interior or exterior niche (figure 21).

But did these figurines have static condition; actually people may add or remove some additions to these figurines, like ritual clothes, food and oil during their daily usage or according to specific role on definite days. The arranging of such figurines amid other stuffs, such as lamps, might have specific meaning. The coordination and arrangement of such figurines might change according to different ceremonies and rituals (Boozer, 2015).

Frankfurter (1998), argued that the people by having such figurines and altars in their houses, they tried to create and imitate the religious and spiritual atmosphere of temples to their domestic life. Actually Frankfurter's point of view has been asserted by some household sculptures from Karanis which were smaller sorts of sculptures erected in temples (Boozer, 2015).

The Roman family has important tradition; that the father of the family was responsible for ensure the family cult which lead to the well-being of the whole household. On other word his prayer will guarantee the safety of his wealth and possessions, the perfect life for him and also his family, so he had to perform the religious rituals related to different occasions like marriage, birth and death. It was obviously also that every Roman home had its own shielding divinities (Warrior , 2006)

Thomas stated that the city of Naukratis supplied us with many terracotta figures which reflected the change and development over the time. It seems that early Ptolemaic Naukratis followed the styles that were widespread through the Hellenistic world during the beginning of the 4th century BC. Greek style figures were mostly found in domestic contexts, possibly used for decorating homes, although some of the representations of Greek deities were used as offerings in Greek sanctuaries. Local representations of Egyptian or Greek deities were more suitable for votive offerings in the Greek sanctuaries. It seems that Egyptian subjects, even if made in a Greek style, were most suited in Ptolemaic times to settings in the home. It was especially popular in the early Ptolemaic period, although less so in the Roman period. There are a few representations of warriors, including god Bes (figure 22). A large group of 'Tanagra style' figures include in particular representations of draped women, but also of boys and girls.

It can be conclude that most of houses in Roman Egypt contained niches; where the images of the local gods were mounted. According to texts from Karanis and many other sites there were devotions at domestic altars, and there were some gestures of people who had such shrines, they might bow down their heads.

One of the important representations of these figurines is associated to some festival, obviously of Dionysian character, as the Greeks hold some feasts, complemented by music and choir dance. On other hand in the Ptolemaic period depictions of the male member, besides their fertility meaning, were indicated to the well-being. So they usually were placed near the source of

income like agricultural field, and shops to assure steady revenue. Another group of figurines discovered at Kom Tuman consists of remains of female depictions; all figurines are depicted in frontal images of nude with their arms hanging at their sides and their hands on their thighs (Ivanov ,2007).

The significant of these female figurines:

Actually these figurines linked with domestic rituals, it was used to guarantee sexual life, the stability of the family, the health of the pregnant women and easy birth, and existence for the new baby. So these figurines were frequently put on home altars or shrines, they were dedicated to many gods related to motherhood as Hathor.

McGinnis (2012), agreed with Ivanov (2007), as he confirms that the huge amount of figurines, ostraca, papyri and clay female statuettes show that the women in Greco- Roman were carrying out private rites in homes, in order to increase their fertility. We have a clay figures dedicated to fertility aspects of the cult of Isis. In addition to private rituals inside houses, women also didn't hesitate to travel and visit many shrines and temples to present some votive offerings in order to increase their productive abilities. Sometimes they brought back some objects from sacred places to increase the fertility, the most famous case was the great sanctuary of Isis at Philea which still bearing the furrows, that were made by the nails of women into the stone, as it was believed that the stone of temple would increase the fertility if swallowed.

There was also group of three pottery panels with relief representations of a woman in a kind of shrine or temple, most of women represented naked. There were also depictions for fertility figurines depicted mother and children, and sometimes scenes of suckling. We can assume that such tablets can be connected with any goddess related to childbirth. In case of the fertility figurines, these plaques could be dedicated to a god or function as a votive offering for some benefits: to get pregnant, to give birth, to thank a goddess for a successful delivery or to ask for enough breast milk to feed a baby (figure 23). On other word such figurines were reflected the presence of magical practices and domestic religious practices in different regions of Egypt, and it also indicates to the interaction between Greeks and Egyptian which reflected on the fertility rites, making it very complicated (figure 24)(Ivanov, 2007).

Textiles Dolls:

They were a kind of protective figurines; some of them were used to safeguard fetuses and babies. As newborn death was a deep concern in Roman Egypt: the rate of death was very high among babies; many of them die before completing their first year. We can conclude that people wouldn't hesitate to perform any ritual as using such dolls to protect their children, but in case of the death of child, they buried with him that defensive textile doll.

But why such textile doll was common in Karanis; in fact the rural communities as in Karanis, were more believed in fertility gods as Isis and child- god Harpokrates, for agricultural production and for human

reproduction. These dolls had a ceremonial use in domestic sphere; such textile doll was associated with the terracotta figurines representing Harpokrates and Isis (Dunand and Zivie-Coche ,2004).

Johnson (2003-2004), argued that there are many others interpretations of such textile doll supposing that it was just a toy used in leisure or it was a kind of amulet although its size was differed from the traditional amulet. In any case Karanis textile doll and papyrus figurines were very unique, they were not found in any other place in Roman Egypt.

Carroll (2018), asserted that children at the beginning of their life were faced many risks. So the parents tried hard to safeguard their babies by using different methods; by giving apotropaic jewelry and pendants to their children, to be worn on the body, talismans and amber pieces, boar's tooth and human tooth. Pliny mentioned that using black dog's tooth helped in decreasing fever and wolf's teeth could reduce teething diseases.

Karanis's figurines supposed to be used as amulets as its size was only 7.5 centimeters, knowing also as textile dolls; as it made of wool textile or papyrus strips and wrapped around a wooden stick (figure 25).(Carroll,2018).

Conclusion

From the thesis, the following points can be concluded:-

I-Religion in Greco-Roman Egypt was involved deeply in people's life, it wasn't just rituals and ceremonies performed by the worshipper, it became life style. People relied on gods and goddesses in their life.

II-Many papyri date back to Greco-Roman period reflect the prevalence of domestic religious practices, most houses contained one or more shrines, signifying the possibility of various worship practices. One of the most important sites which characterize with rich architectural features is Karanis, its niche-shrines are very unique, Karanis's houses also had many images of deities, wall paintings, amulets, votives and much other stuff which used in religious rites. Actually the household objects gained its divine power from the gods of temple, as they were manufactured on temples.

III-Among the religious objects and structures inside houses were chapels which was the biggest room in the house, they always contained niches where the figures were put. The chapels might contain some wall paintings that depicted the images of gods as Heron, Disocuri, Isis and Harpocrates.

IV-Other domestic religious objects were figurines, which originally appeared as fertility figures during Pharaonic period, knowing as "death- brides" and they constantly played the same rule during Greco- Roman era, in addition people would like to be connected with gods, so they were keeping figurines of gods and goddesses at their houses.

V-Karanis textile dolls were another kind of protective figurines; some of them were used to safeguard fetuses and babies. As newborn death was a deep concern in Roman Egypt, so these textile dolls which made of wool textile or

papyrus strips and wrapped around a wooden stick, supposed to be used as amulets.

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Figures



Figure 1. God Nilos, after Elaine K. Gazda. ed, Guardians of The Nile, 1978.



Figure 2. Sarapis – Zeus Amun after Elaine K. Gazda. ed, Guardians of The Nile, 1978.



Figure 3. Decorative Niche in House C119 ,after Elaine K. Gazda. Ed. Karanis An Egyptian Town of Roman Times, 2004.



Figure 4. Votive Footprint, after Elaine K. Gazda. ed, Guardians of The Nile, 1978.



Figure 5. Bust of Harpocrates, after Elaine K. Gazda. ed, *Guardians of The Nile*, 1978.



Figure 6. Isis-Thermouthis. Limestone relief, after Elaine K. Gazda. Ed. *Karanis An Egyptian Town of Roman Times*, 2004.



Figure 7. Limestone relief of Isis-Thermouthis. 2nd–4th century AD. KM 25751.

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Figure 8. Lamps of terracotta, after Elaine K. Gazda. Ed. *Karanis An Egyptian Town of Roman Times*, 2004.

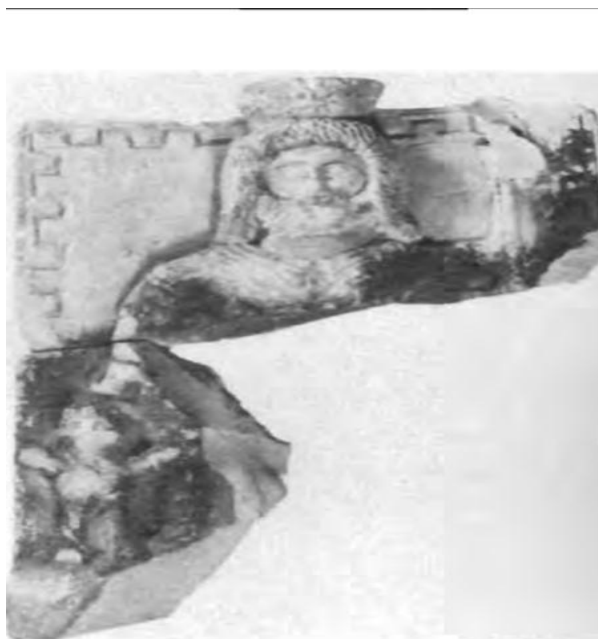


Figure 9. Relief of Sarapis Enthroned, after Elaine K. Gazda. ed, *Guardians of The Nile*, 1978.



Figure 10. Mural of child Harpocrate found in structure C65 at Karanis, after Wahid Omran, "The Cult of Heron in Egypt" 2015



Figure 11. God Heron and Isis Nursing Harpocrates., Karanis. after Wahid Omran, "The Cult of Heron in Egypt" 2015.



Figure 12. Room 1 North wall and Northeast corner Serenos's house after Paola Davoli, "Trimithis: 2019).



Figure 13. Odysseus and Eurleia, Serenos's house, after *Susanna McFadden Amhedi 's Wall Paintings*, 2015.

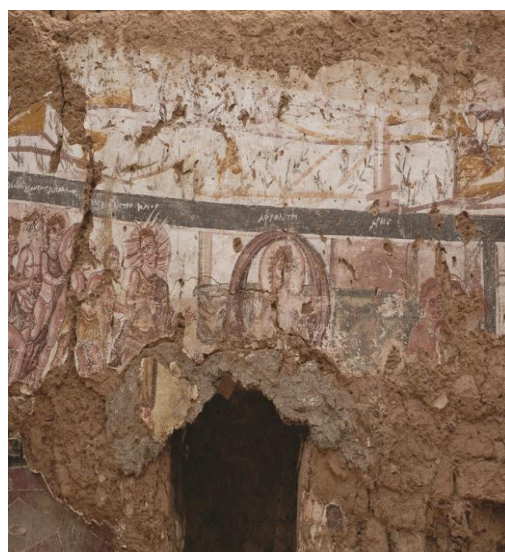


Figure 14. Aphrodite and Ares, Serenos's house, after *Susanna McFadden Amhedi 's Wall Paintings*, 2015.



Figure 15. God Zeus from Serons's house, after *Susanna McFadden Amhedi 's Wall Paintings*, 2015.



Figure 16. Orpheus taming the animals, Serenos's house, after *Susanna McFadden Amhedi 's Wall Paintings*, 2015.



Figure 17. Room 1, west wall, banquet scene, after *Susanna McFadden Amhed*'s *Wall Paintings*, 2015.



Figure 18. Eros with Shell and Torch, after Elaine K. Gazda, ed, *Guardians of The Nile*, 1978.



Figure 19. Clay figurine of a woman. 3rd–4th century AD. Karanis, Egypt. KM 7525.
<https://kelsey-museum.blog/tag/karanis/page/2/>



Figure 20. Seated Orant, after Elaine K. Gazda, ed, *Guardians of The Nile*, 1978.



Figure 21– Standing Orant, after Elaine K. Gazda. ed, *Guardians of The Nile*, 1978.



Figure 22- Terracotta figurine of Bes. Roman Egypt (Fayum), 1st–2nd century CE. Height: 21.7 cm. Museum purchase (David Askren, 1925). KM 4960.

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Figure 23. Faience Bes figurine. 1st–3rd century AD. University of Michigan excavations at Karanis, Egypt. KM 25979.

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Figure 24. Figurines and toys from Karanis, after Elaine K. Gazda. Ed. *Karanis An Egyptian Town of Roman Times*, 2004.



Figure 25. Doll Figurine, wool, mud, hair. 2nd–4th century AD, after Karen Johnson, "Textile and Papyrus Figurines from Karanis ", 2004.

منشآت العبادة في مصر اليونانية الرومانية

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الملخص العربي

كان للحياة الدينية في مصر طابع خاص؛ حيث تغلغل الدين في حياة الناس وكانوا حريصين على الحفاظ على الاتصال الدائم مع الآلهة وخلق وسيط داخل منزلهم. من ناحية أخرى فإن النظام الروماني المادي قد فرض بعض التغييرات على المجتمع الكهنوتي ورجال الدين، ولم يعدوا يلبون احتياجات الناس الدينية، وبالتالي حول الناس حياتهم الدينية الشخصية نحو المنزل، خاصة عندما لاحظوا أن الطقوس المقدسة لم يتم تنفيذها من قبل الكهنة الأتقياء، ولكن من قبل بعض موظفين وعملاء النظام الأجنبي الظالم. كان المنزل مرآة تعكس المفاهيم الدينية لسكانه، حيث احتوت معظم المنازل على العديد من المقاصير، مما يدل على إمكانية ممارسات أكثر من عبادة مختلفة. كان من بين الهياكل الدينية داخل المنازل مكان مقدس يمثل الغرفة الأكبر في المنزل، وكان يحتوي دائماً على كوات حيث تم وضع التماثيل الدينية، كما كان يوجد أيضاً بعض اللوحات الجدارية التي تصور صور الآلهة مثل هيرون وديسكوري وإيزيس وحرثوقراطيس. تميزت منازل مدينة كرانيس بأشياء دينية مختلفة مثل التماثيل ودمى النسيج التي اكتسبت قوتها الإلهية من آلهة المعابد، حيث تم تصنيعها هناك في المعابد. لذلك يهدف البحث إلى التعرف على الكيفية التي استطاع بها الناس خلق بيئة دينية داخل منازلهم، كما يكشف أيضاً أهم العناصر الدينية التي ساعدتهم على تأدية الطقوس الدينية المنزلية.

الكلمات الدالة : الرسومات الجدارية، التماثيل الصغيرة، دمي النسيج.