

A LOOK AT GENDER DIVERSITY THROUGH HISTORY

Many traditionalists argue that transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming folks are phenomena of our generation.

But there is both historical and scientific evidence that they have existed around the world since the beginning of humanity.

circa 2350-2150 BC



ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

Inanna, also known as Ishtar, was the most highly celebrated deity in Ancient Mesopotamia. It was believed she could transform a person's gender.

Her followers and priests were known for their androgyny, blurring or rejecting the gender binary. Recounts of their gender transformations were documented in dedications and poems written to honour the deity.

circa 400 BC, to present day

INDIA'S HIJRAS

Hijras are India's eunuchs, intersex, asexual and transgender people.

With a recorded history of over 4,000 years and revered mention in ancient texts, they are recognized and culturally celebrated as a third gender.



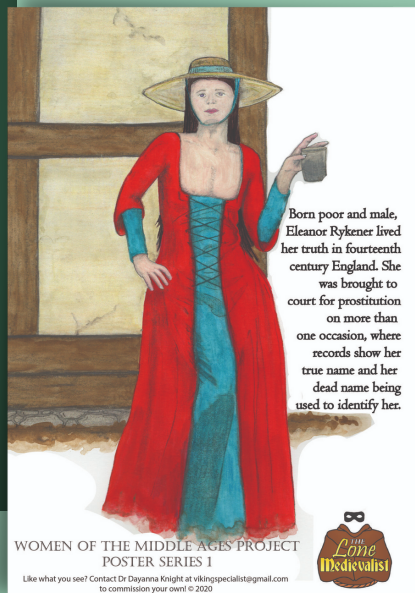
Shiva, a principal Hindu deity, becomes the androgynous Ardhanari after merging with his wife, Parvati. Ardhanari is a figure of great importance to many in the *hijra* community.

EUROPE

Early historical accounts of trans men include **Kalonymus ben Kalonymus** (1286-1328). They expressed torment for being born a man instead of a woman. It is documented as an early instance of gender dysphoria.

Eleanor Rykener, a Briton assigned male at birth, was arrested in 1394 while living as a woman and working as a sex worker. She is documented as a trans woman.

The Middle Ages



INDIGENOUS CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD

Two-spirit is the anglicized term used by many Indigenous cultures across North America who identify as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit. It can describe their gender, sexual, and/or spiritual identity.

Others include the *Xanith of Oman* in Islamic cultures, the Samoan *fa'afafine* and *fa'afatama*, the Zapotec *muxe* in Mexico, the Hawaiian *mahu*, and the Javanese *waria* in Indonesia.



Javanese *waria* in Indonesia. The term combines the Indonesian words for a woman, *wanita*, and a man, *pria*.

MODERN-DAY HISTORY

Karl M. Baer (1885-1956) was a German-Israeli writer. In 1906, he became the first trans person to obtain gender-affirming surgery. In 1907, he was issued a male birth certificate and full legal recognition of his gender identity.

Christine Jorgensen (1926-1989) was an American trans woman. In 1952, she became the first person to be widely known in the United States for undergoing gender-affirming surgery. Her transition was featured in a *New York Daily News* front-page story. She used the platform to advocate for transgender people and published an autobiography in 1967.



Christine Jorgensen in 1954.

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