

Appendix D: God's Wives of Amun

Mutemhet Maatkare

Pinudjem I not only had two sons who became high priest, he also had a daughter who became a high priestess, a so-called “god’s wife” or “divine votaress” of the god Amun. He named her Maatkare after the famous 18th dynasty queen Maatkare Hatshetsup, who also self styled herself as a god’s wife, this being yet another instance of the borrowing of 18th dynasty names by 25th dynasty royalty. A portrait of the second Maatkare is contained in the well known graffiti inscription on the wall of the Luxor temple, in which Pinudjem is shown followed by three of his daughters: Maatkare, still a young girl, and her elder sisters Henttawi, and Nedjemmut.¹ We mention her name and titles not only as confirmation of the common practice of name borrowing in the 21st dynasty, but in order to develop several themes related to our revision.

In the first place Maatkare’s place in history ought to make us doubly cautious in interpreting the monuments. In at least one interpretive stream of 18th dynasty history Menkheperre Thutmose III and Maatkare (Hatshetsup) are considered to be son and daughter respectively of Thutmose 1, precisely the relationship that exists in the 25th Theban dynasty where Menkheperre Thutmose, alias Piankhi, and Mutemhet Maatkare and are offspring of Pinudjem I, who adopted the names of Thutmose I. It remains to be seen how much confusion has been introduced into 18th dynasty history by this duplication of names. We are mindful of the debate that existed throughout the 20th century concerning the succession of kings in the 18th dynasty, the so-called Thutmosid Succession problem. Without going into details of the correctionist theory of the Egyptologist Sethe, supported by no less an authority than Breasted, we wonder to what extent, if any, the 25th dynasty namesake kings and queens actually altered the 18th dynasty monuments to suit their purposes, giving rise to the bizarre genealogical theories of the two famous scholars. The first lesson related to Mutemhet Maatkare is that caution ought to be the order of the day in any future reading of the monuments.

We also need to comment on the rather strange circumstance that exists in the traditional history wherein a solitary 21st dynasty princess adopted the office and

¹Maatkare was considered to be Pinudjem’s wife by early 20th century scholars, but the inscription clearly identifies all three as being “king’s daughters”. Cf. Kitchen TIP 48 A.

title of divine votaress fully three hundred years before the institution emerged in its developed form in the time of Osorkon III (a four hundred year gap in the revised history). To our knowledge no other princess of the 21st dynasty inherited that office. Certainly the title is otherwise unattested. Maatkare, as god's wife, is literally hundreds of years out of place, an anomaly or anachronism that ought to have caused historians to question the time line that assigned her to the eleventh century. In the revised history she is appropriately positioned in the mid to late 7th century, only decades after Osorkon (re-)instituted the tradition by appointing his daughter Shepenwepet to the office. There remains the question where Maatkare fits into the sequence of god's wives of the 7th century B.C.

Our third observation is related to the last question and introduces us to the vexed problem concerning the identity of the king named Kashta, who according to some scholars was the father of Piankhi and whose daughter Amenirdis, according to one interpretive tradition, was installed in office by Piankhi as the adoptive daughter of Shenenwepet I, and later became the god's wife in her stead. A detailed examination of the problem is beyond the scope of this discussion. Sufficient here to outline its details and suggest a likely solution.

The problem referred to is simply stated. Who is Kashta and how do he and his daughter Amenirdis relate to Pinudjem and his daughter Maatkare, since in both cases we have individuals who are said to be the father of Piankhi and also the father of a divine adoratrix. The simplest solution to the problem is simply to argue that Kashta is an epithet, perhaps a title, of Pinudjem, used by this king in various contexts, and that Maatkare as divine votarix assumed the name Amenirdis as her adoptive name. But there are problems squaring this suggestion with the monuments which describe Kashta and his daughter. Thus we suggest an alternative explanation.

In the first place there is absolutely no evidence that Kashta was the father of Piankhi. In fact, the only monument that explicitly connects the two personages identifies Kashta as Piankhi's father-in-law. According to Kenneth Kitchen:

Piankhi's predecessor was Kashta. Their sequence by generation (and so, also, by succession) is indicated by some doorjambs which were found at Abydos from a tomb or chapel of the princess Peksater; she is named as daughter of Kashta and Pebatma, and royal wife of Piankhi. TIP 120

Kitchen may be correct in suggesting that Kashta preceded Piankhi on the throne, but if so it was on the Nubian throne, not the throne of Egypt. We have already

proposed a scenario in which Piankhi, sometime during his first twenty years in office, inherited the kingship in Napata, succeeding the line of kings that ruled the extreme south between the 3rd and 4th cataracts, a lineage which likely included Shabataka, the king of Melukkha, discussed in the first book of our series. Clearly Kashta was in that line. His tumulus is among those excavated by Reisner at El Kurru. Piankhi must have succeeded him. The Abydos inscriptions cited by Kitchen confirm our suggestion that a marriage alliance was in part the means to this end. According to those inscriptions Piankhi married Kashta's daughter Peksater; and according to the great Piankhi stele he ultimately succeeded to the Napatan kingdom. We should have no trouble accepting a cause and effect relationship between the two sets of facts.

The problem of Amenirdis and Maatkare is more complex. According to the traditional history there existed an unbroken sequence of four god's wives spanning the years between the inauguration of Shepenwepet, daughter of Osorkon III, and the adoption of Nitocris, daughter of Psamtik I, who "ruled" in the late 6th century. For the record we tabulate the accepted list of god's wives (see below). For the sake of the uninformed reader we should perhaps point out that the dates, other than the one assigned to Shepenwepet I, represent when the existing god's wife "adopted" her future replacement. We do not know, in the case of any of the named dignitaries, when the god's wife died.

Table 16: God's Wives of Amun According to the Traditional History.
Dates provided by the Revised History.

God's Wife:	Daughter of:	Given by	Approximate Date of Adoption:
Shepenwepet I	Osorkon III	Osorkon III	671-667 B.C.
Amenirdis I	Kashta	Kashta?	664-660 B.C.
Shepenwepet II	Piankhi	Piankhi	???
Amenirdis II	Taharka	Taharka	???
Nitocris	Psamtik I	Psamtik I	514 B.C.

Several aspects of this list are worth noting.

1. The fact that Amenirdis was adopted by Shepenwepet seven years into her “reign” is based entirely on a graffiti found in the desert region of the Wadi Gassus in which adjacent inscriptions refer to the 12th year of an adoratrix Amenirdis and the 19th year of a god’s wife Shepenwepet. Whether these inscriptions are meant to be read together, whether they refer to the first or second god’s wives bearing these names, and the precise meaning of the dates are all the subject of considerable debate.² We accept the relative dates as a possibility only because it seems likely that Shepenwepet would have adopted a “daughter” at an early date.

2. In the first book of our series we dated the “adoption” of Nitocris by Amenirdis II (apparently while Shepenwepet II was still alive) to the year 514 B.C.³ But this creates a major problem, regardless of the precise dates when the other god’s wives were adopted. A quick glance at the chart shows that the combined terms *in office* of two consecutive god’s wives (Amenirdis I and Shepenwepet II) must have spanned, *at minimum* (since Shepenwepet II is still alive and in office at the adoption of Nitocris), the 156 years from 660 B.C. to 514 B.C. This is clearly an impossibility. Of course the critic will argue that our analysis in the earlier book is incorrect and that we must accept a 535 B.C. date for the adoption of Nitocris. But even this would require that the two terms in office add up to 137 years, better - but still all but impossible. Clearly there is some error in the traditional schema, and the conclusion is inevitable that at least one god’s wife has been omitted from the list. We should perhaps note that the difficulty is much the same in the traditional history, where all dates are consistently about 121 years higher than those provided above.

3. The table as presented assumes that Amenirdis is both the daughter of Kashta and the sister of Piankhi. But the only genealogical data given by the monuments shows only that Amenirdis was the daughter of Kashta and thus the (older) sister of Peksater, Piankhi’s wife.. Several of Amenirdis’ inscriptions refer to her father by name. None mention Piankhi as her brother, a relationship which assumes that Piankhi was also Kashta’s son and had married his sister Peksater. That suggested genealogy, supported by many Egyptologists, is absolutely without warrant. It is certain that Piankhi did not give Amenirdis to Shepenwepet as the later’s adoptive

²See the extensive discussion by Kitchen TIP 344

³See *Nubuchadnezzar & the Egyptian Exile*, chapter 5 for the date. We assume that some unusual circumstance necessitated this adoption of two “daughters” by a single “god’s wife.” Certainly the existing “god’s daughter Amenirdis II was old, probably in her seventies since she was likely given up for adoption at the latest around 566 B.C. [a year before the invasion] and may have been in her twenties at the time). She may also have been ill. Alternatively the problem may have been the age and/or health of Shepenwepet II.

daughter, as some suggest. Again there is no documentary support, and the chronology makes that event impossible. We maintain instead that Amenirdis was given to Shepenwepet by Kashta, who was probably related by marriage to Osorkon III. The range of dates when this event likely took place (664-660 B.C.) suggests that the Nubian viceroy Piankh might have had a hand in the matter. How else do we explain how Kashta had such influence in the Theban area other than by assuming some family relationship between him and the Nubian viceroy Piankh. Perhaps they are brothers.

4. The timeline clearly rules out the possibility that Mutemhet Maatkare and Amenirdis I are the same person. Besides, at least one inscription suggests that the prenomen of Amenirdis was Khaneferumut⁴, clearly distinguishing her from Mutemhet.

5. The Nitocris stela, which we examined in brief in the earlier book, does state that Piankhi had a sister who was a god's wife.⁵ But it does not name his sister. In the sequence of god's wives this sister must immediately precede Shepenwepet II. Scholars simply assume it was Amenirdis, but convincing evidence is lacking.⁶ Since we know that Piankhi had a sister named Maatkare who was a god's wife, she must be the unnamed god's wife in the Nitocris stela. And she must have been placed on the throne by Pinudjem, since she already bears the title god's wife in the processional pictured on the mural from the Abydos temple.

6. The god's wife Amenirdis lived into the reign of Shabaka as attested by a document dated in that king's 12th year.⁷ She seems also to have been alive in the days of Shabataka. Since we have argued that the reign of Shabaka overlapped that of Piankhi, and that Piankhi died in 584 B.C., at least a year into the reign of Shabataka, this creates no chronological problem for the revised history.

Collectively the evidence suggests that the list of god's wives should be emended as in table 17 following.

⁴See Kitchen TIP 321

⁵BAR IV 942

⁶For sources see BAR IV 942 note e.

⁷See Kitchen TIP 344

Table 17: God's Wives of Amun - Revised History

God's Wife:	Daughter of:	Given by	Approximate Date of Adoption:
Shepenwepet I	Osorkon III	Osorkon III	671-667 B.C.
Amenirdis I	Kashta	Kashta	664-660 B.C.
Maatkare	Pinudjem I	Pinudjem	c.a. 640 B.C.
Shepenwepet II	Piankhi	Piankhi	c.a. 584 B.C.
Amenirdis II	Taharka	Taharka	c.a. 566 B.C.
Nitocris	Psamtik I	Psamtik I	514 B.C.

Far from being a problem for the revised history, the god's wife Mutemhet Maatkare makes sense out of an otherwise confused sequence of god's wives and lends support to our suggestion that Kashta was the Napatan king contemporary with Piankh and Pinudjem, into whose family Menkheperre married prior to the beginning of the Tefnakht rebellion.

We conclude our discussion by outlining below a hypothetical genealogy representing this revised list of God's Wives of Amun and incorporating some of the data outlined in this chapter. Please note that we have assumed in this instance, following Kenneth Kitchen, that Shabaka is a son of Kashta and Pebatma, and that Shabataka and Taharka are sons of Piankhi. We do not necessarily agree with those conclusions, but they are one set of options worth considering. The reader can easily restore the genealogy on figure 18 on page 237 by making Shabaka a son of Rudamon, and Shabataka and Taharka sons of Shabaka. Nothing else in the figure would necessarily change.

Figure 29: Genealogy for the God's Wives of Amun. Third Possibility for the Genealogy of Piankh.

