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Some Thoughts on the Disappearance of the Office of The God's Wife of Amun

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOD'S WIFE OF AMUN[1]

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ABSTRACT

From its inception, the office of the God's Wife of Amun served as a political vehicle utilized by reigning and / or aspiring kings to establish and consolidate their authority over the Theban area. Ankhnesneferibre, daughter of Psammetichus II, was the last in a long line of women who controlled the influential office of God's wife of Amun. She was arguably the most powerful holder of the office, having formally assumed the titles and duties of the High Priest of Amun in addition to her own. However, shortly after the Persian invasion of Egypt in 525 B.C., Ankhnesneferibre dies, and with her death, the office of God's Wife of Amun disappears, never to re-emerge. It is the aim of this paper to demonstrate that such an abrupt demise of the office of God's Wife of Amun was a direct consequence of the Persian occupation of Egypt. Their royal women continued to wield power using strictly Persian means. They did not need, nor were they required to hold, an Egyptian office to assume more political influence. Moreover, because of their superior military prowess, the Persians did not need to use this office to maintain their authority over Thebes, or any other part of Egypt.

KEY WORDS

God's Wife of Amun, Persian Period, Thebes, power relations, Darius I, Ankhnesneferibre

In the spring of 525 B.C., the Persians succeeded in defeating the armies of Psammetichus III near Pelusium, and with the later sack of Memphis Egypt finally became a Persian satrapy.[2] As part of a larger empire, Egypt became part of the economic machinery of the Persian Empire as a whole. Egypt was now required to pay annual tribute into the imperial treasury,[3] and became physically tied to the rest of the empire by means of the extensive road system that the Persians established all over the empire.

It is now well established that under Persian rule, especially during the First Persian Period, "the continuities in ... Egyptian society ... seem greater than the discontinuities."[4] Indeed, it seems that most Egyptian administrative institutions remained unchanged under Persian rule. However, despite such apparent continuity, the office of the God's Wife of Amun at Thebes seems to disappear soon after the Persian conquest of Egypt.[5] This paper attempts to show that the disappearance of the office of the God's Wife of Amun was the result of deliberate Persian state-policy and a direct consequence of the manner in which women were manipulated in the Achaemenid court.

I. THE GOD'S WIVES OF AMUN AT THEBES

During the Third Intermediate Period, the female holders of the office of God's Wife attained an unprecedented status.[6] A God's Wife was customarily depicted wearing queenly insignia. Like a queen, the holder of the office claimed such titles as *nbt t3wy*, or "Mistress of the Two Lands." But just like a king, she took a

prenomen upon assuming office.[7] A God's Wife of Amun was regularly depicted in scenes that were previously reserved for the exclusive use of the king. Such scenes include performing the royal rites of consecrating offerings and presenting Maᶜat to the gods.[8] The God's Wives of Amun had their own funerary monuments on the West Bank of Thebes.[9] With or without the king, they dedicated chapels on the East Bank[10] and they had their own administrative staffs.[11]

Towards the end of the New Kingdom, as the authority of the king of Egypt declined *vis-à-vis* the increasingly powerful priesthood of Amun at Thebes, the office of the God's Wife of Amun was reinvented to help further the king's claim over the Theban area.[12] A God's Wife now had to be an unmarried daughter of the reigning king.[13] Prior to this time, the title was usually held by the King's Chief Wife. The reinvention of the office of God's Wife was a matter of political necessity. Imposing celibacy on a God's Wife ensured her loyalty to the reigning king, as it prevented her from producing a rival dynasty of her own.[14] Consequently, the succession of divine consorts had to occur through adoption.

As the political fragmentation of Egypt escalated with the collapse of the New Kingdom and the beginning of the Third Intermediate Period, the political aspect of the office of God's Wife of Amun became increasingly important. A reigning / aspiring king would "persuade" the incumbent God's Wife to adopt his daughter as her successor, thus gaining control, albeit indirect, over the Theban area. With the installation of Shepenwepet I, daughter of Osorkon III of the 23rd Dynasty as the God's Wife of Amun, this practice became almost codified. The Nubians were quick to take advantage of the institution of God's Wife to establish their authority over Thebes. They had Amenirdis I, daughter of Kashta, "adopted" into office by Shepenwepet II. She was thus the first Nubian woman to become a God's Wife of Amun. It has been postulated that Amenirdis' appointment to office occurred before the Nubians completed their invasion of Egypt.[15] It was not until c. 715 that Shabako decided to complete the Nubian conquest of Egypt, which had begun several years earlier under his father Kashta.[16]

Similarly, as Psammetichus I strove to fasten his claim over Thebes, after driving the Nubians out of Egypt c. 664 B.C., he had his daughter, Nitocris, "adopted" by Shepenwepet II into office.[17] By doing so, he effectively ousted Amenirdis II, the adopted daughter and presumed successor of Shepenwepet II.[18] The size of the endowment that Psammetichus I arranged for his daughter is a testament to the wealth, and consequently the influence, she probably enjoyed.[19] Thus, despite their different approaches to governing Egypt, the Libyans, Nubians, and Saites all used the office of the God's Wife of Amun as a political vehicle to achieve a smooth transition of power in the Theban area.

In c. 586 B.C. Ankhnesneferibre, daughter of Psammetichus II, succeeded Nitocris as God's Wife of Amun and became the last woman to hold this title.[20] As "heiress apparent," Ankhnesneferibre was also the first woman to assume the title and duties of the High Priest of Amun.[21] That she had survived long enough to witness the Persian conquest of Egypt in the spring of 525 B.C. is evident from remains at Karnak.[22] Although it is highly unlikely that Nitocris B ever succeeded her as God's Wife, it has been established that she did attain the position of High Priest of Amun. It is not known, however, for how long Nitocris B was able (or was allowed) to retain her status as High Priest after the Persian conquest.[23]

Beyond this, very little is known about the Theban theocracy or its role in the administration of the Theban area during the First Persian Period. The question remains: Why

did Darius I not continue the tradition of his Libyan, Nubian, and Saite predecessors by appointing a daughter of his as God's Wife of Amun? Is it possible that, because of cultural constraints, an Achaemenid royal daughter could not hold such an elevated and economically independent position? Even if so, there is evidence to indicate that in times of "extreme political circumstances," Achaemenid royal daughters broke away from the strict custom of marrying only members of the Persian nobility. Darius III offered his daughters in marriage to Alexander III when the latter's armies swept through Persia.[24] While it is always hard to address questions of "why" when studying ancient cultures, an examination of the status of women in Achaemenid Persia and the political situation in Egypt under Persian rule may provide us with some valuable clues.

II. WOMEN IN THE ACHAEMENID COURT

Most of what we know of the role of women in the Achaemenid court comes from the narratives of Herodotus. While his narratives have been shown to be inaccurate,[25] and not only where Persian women are concerned, his work remains the basis for much of our knowledge. A number of terms were used to refer to the women of the Persian court. All of these terms, however, defined women in terms of their relationships to the king. There was no separate designation for "queen."[26] That there was a hierarchy within the ranks of Persian royal women is certain. The "mother of the king" seems to have been at the top of this hierarchy, exercising more authority than a "wife of the king." The extent of such authority, however, was solely determined by the king. Although both a king's mother and his wife were allowed to control their own estates, which could include villages and / or towns anywhere in the Persian Empire, there is no evidence to indicate that royal daughters enjoyed such economic independence.[27]

Despite assertions of Greek authors to the contrary, extant Persian evidence shows that women did not exercise any political power.[28] The "wife of the king" had no say in the selection of the heir to the throne.[29] The accession record of King Xerxes, for example, does not refer to his mother, Atossa, at all, despite the fact that she provided Xerxes with a valuable link to Cyrus, her father and founder of the Achaemenid Dynasty.[30]

The artistic and archaeological evidence is as silent as the textual evidence where Persian women are concerned. Very few objects represent women from Achaemenid Persia,[31] and those that do typically show common women engaged in various menial activities.[32] The fact that no royal women are represented on the palace reliefs from Persepolis,[33] where virtually all other classes of Persian society are depicted, is also quite significant.[34]

Although the position of God's Wife of Amun was initially held by the Chief Wife of the Egyptian king, it was the king's daughter, not his wife, who occupied this influential position in the Late Period. Thus, while examining the positions of the Persian "mother of the king" and "wife of the king" may shed some light on the status of Persian women in general, it is the Achaemenid royal daughters that are of most relevance to this study.

However, as with other groups of Achaemenid royal women, the archaeological evidence for royal daughters is quite sketchy. Archaeologically, the Achaemenid royal daughters are invisible. It is less likely that they were buried in any of the "cists"[35] within the funerary complexes of their fathers, than next to their husbands.[36] Artistically, however, Spycket has argued for the presence of at least one Persian princess. Based on her analysis of a lapis lazuli head found in Persepolis, Spycket has argued that the "delicate" features actually depict a

princess, not a prince as was formerly presumed.[37]

That the king's daughters were recognized as a separate group in Babylonian and Persian documents is evident from the fortification texts, where a king's daughter is referred to as *sunki parki*.[38] Further evidence indicates that they were addressed with the same honorific epithet, *dukšiš*, used for addressing the king's mother and his wife.[39] Other than a few documents detailing travel rations allotted to Artazotre, daughter of Darius I, the textual evidence is mute regarding the wealth controlled by Achaemenid royal daughters.[40]

It seems that the royal daughters' most significant contribution in the Achaemenid court was their role "as pawns in the king's marriage policy."[41] For most of the Achaemenid Period, only Persian nobles were allowed to wed the royal daughters. In most cases, such marriages were a means by which a Persian sovereign could express his appreciation for services rendered by one of his loyal subjects and were often conducted in the context of gift-exchange.[42] Such marriage alliances were also meant to ensure the loyalty not only of Persian nobles, but of satraps and military leaders, who would subsequently develop a vested interest in protecting the ruling regime. As such marriage alliances were conducted only with a limited number of Persian families, they can be regarded as a means of limiting the dissemination of political power.[43] Royal marriage alliances conducted between royal daughters or royal sons and Persian nobles as well as those involving the king himself "were political acts."[44] Darius, for example, took full advantage of this policy and orchestrated his own marriage alliances to secure his political position. By marrying all three surviving daughters of Cambyses II, not only did he succeed in legitimizing his claim to the Persian throne, but he also effectively prevented the royal daughters from uniting with other members of the Persian nobility and producing a rival dynasty of direct descendants of Cambyses II.[45]

III. THE ACHAEMENID REGIME IN EGYPT

A. Local Administration under the Persians

Now, how about the political situation in Egypt under Persian rule? Did it, in any way, necessitate a break from regular Achaemenid policy or cultural tradition? For the most part, the Persians followed a *laissez-faire* policy in Egypt, which resulted in keeping much of the Egyptian administrative system unchanged. As was the case with other Persian satrapies, the old Egyptian capital, Memphis, became the satrapal seat.[46] Upon leaving Egypt, Cambyses appointed Aryandes, a Persian noble, as satrap of Egypt.[47] At the level below the governor, however, the Persians relied heavily on local officials.[48] They, thus, seem to have merely "padded" the existing Egyptian administrative system with a layer of "imperial" Persian officials, who may have had "nationwide responsibility."[49] That few Persian officials were needed to manage the affairs of Egypt is further confirmed by the scarcity of Persian names surviving in the administrative documents, not just from Egypt, but from any of the Persian satrapies.[50] It is worth noting, however, that the Persians employed and / or honoured only those Egyptians who fully cooperated with the new regime and demonstrated loyalty to Persian hegemony. Such officials were occasionally stripped of any significant political power. For although such individuals were

> recruited into the new king's entourage, ... their authority definitely diminished. Udjahorresnet, for example, had been a naval commander under the Saite rulers; following Cambyses' conquest, he was stripped of his military post, granted the

> rank of royal "friend," and assigned a prominent position in the Neith temple at Sais. In other words, he retained an honoured social position within Egyptian society, but forfeited effective political power.[51]

That the Persian satrap was able to maintain a tight grip over all the affairs of the land is further confirmed by a document from Elephantine. In this striking example, the local garrison at Elephantine had to await the satrapal approval for the requisition of new material necessary for the repair a boat![52]

1. Nomes

In addition to utilizing the available supply of human resources, the Persians took over the administrative system developed by the Saites. Thus they retained the Saite division of Egypt into forty-two nomes. However, they further divided Upper Egypt into two major administrative districts, each with its own governor, thereby effectively stripping the nomarchs of their previous control over the economic organization of their domains.[53] One district extended from Hermonthis to Aswan, while the other was comprised of the Theban area. Each district had its own treasury, garrisons, and its own archives in which land was registered and taxes were assessed.[54] The taxes were then sent to the satrapal capital, where they were collected.[55]

2. Temples

Although very little is known about the administration of the Theban region during the First Persian Period,[56] it is most likely that the temple of Amun at Karnak suffered, along with most of the temples in Egypt, a great loss of income. At the time of the Persian conquest, most of Egyptian wealth "was locked in temple estates."[57] The Persians were quick to attempt to free some of that wealth. They did not hesitate to curtail the economic privileges previously lavished on the Egyptian temples, imposing taxes on them, and reducing their "(external) income."[58] The incomes of the temple of Ptah at Memphis as well as those of the temples at Hermopolis Parva and Egyptian Babylon

> were to be allotted as formerly; in place of the former grants, the priests of the others were to be given sites in the marshlands and southland from which they themselves had to bring firewood and timber for boat building. The number of cattle presented under Pharaoh Amasis was reduced by a half.... In agreement with this decree, we find no more gifts of natural products to the temples by the Persian rulers.[59]

Not much else is known about the temples of Egypt. It is likely, however, that the Persians closed some, if not most, of them. The Persians were thus able to effectively strip not only local individuals, but also local institutions of any meaningful power.

B. The Persian Road System

Perhaps the most effective tool utilized by the Persians to maintain control over their vast empire was their extensive road system.[60] They further developed and expanded the (pre-) existing roads of their empire. Thus, the Persians took over the older Assyrian road system in the Near East,[61] and redeveloped the Egyptian "way of Horus," which went through the Sinai and linked Egypt to the Near East through Gaza.[62] In 497 B.C., "a maritime counterpart to the Persian road system"[63] was opened in Egypt: a canal that linked the Pelusiac Branch of the Nile to the Red Sea via the Isthmus of Suez.[64] Four surviving stelae commemorate the opening of this canal.[65] Of the four, two were set in Tell el-Maskhuta and two at Chaluf.[66] This canal was to facilitate passage from the Mediterranean and / or the Nile valley to the Red Sea.[67] The canal may have been used to send ships, possibly

laden with tribute, from Egypt to Persia.[68] Within the Nile Valley, the Nile remained the main "highway," although the Persians further developed other land routes.[69]

The Persian postal system, having such an extensive network to rely on, was even more impressive than the road system that supported it. "Mounted messengers and relay stations spread along the major arteries of the empire" facilitated speedy travel and prompt delivery of urgent messages. These relay stations or "posting-stages served as a communication system, sending messages by 'fire signals' even more rapidly across the extensive Achaemenid realm than the mounted couriers...."[70]

Access to this extensive network was heavily regulated. "At strategic points, such as river crossings and mountain passes, the road was heavily guarded by soldiers to monitor travelers."[71] In Egypt, the Persians restored and used a series of Saite fortresses that linked the coastal route with the Nile.[72] Further evidence survives from Dorginarti of the continued use of Saite forts by the Persians.[73] Not only was it common for "military detachments to escort caravans,"[74] but "surveillance of travelers" is also well documented.[75] Only authorized individuals were allowed to use the "the way-stations along the high ways."[76] In one instance Arsames, satrap of Egypt, issued a decree in Aramaic to allow Nehtihor access to supplies from the way-stations. Nehtihor and his companions were to present this document to the way-stations along their route.[77]

C. Persian Royalty in Egypt

Although the Persians curtailed the wealth of the Egyptian temples and did, on occasion, tax such wealthy establishments when the need arose, Persian rulers continued to appease local religious sentiment by paying lip service to local cults.[78] Cambyses and Darius, for example, honoured the Apis bull, and continued to give the bulls proper ceremonial burials.[79] The inscription of Udjhorresne informs us of a visit paid by Cambyses to the temple of Neith at Sais, in which he "made a great prostration before her majesty, as every king had done."[80] Darius, in an attempt to make "his rule as palatable as possible, ... cast himself in the mould of a legitimate Egyptian Pharaoh."[81] Evidence from the temple of Hibis shows Darius I in the traditional garb of an Egyptian ruler consecrating offerings to the gods and being nourished by Egyptian goddesses.[82]

However, a statue of Darius that may have been erected in Heliopolis still identified him as a Persian ruler and foreign conqueror.[83] It was probably meant to suggest to anyone who saw it that "a Persian man has taken Egypt."[84] The statue was discovered in 1972 near Darius's monumental Gateway at Susa and represents him as a truly universal ruler.[85] Inscribed in Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian, and Egyptian hieroglyphs, the statue emphasizes Darius' Persian ethnicity. While the trilingual cuneiform text invokes Ahuramazda, the Egyptian text "links Darius to Atum of Heliopolis and extols the prowess of the king in traditional Egyptian metaphor."[86] The Egyptian inscriptions further promote Darius I as both an Egyptian monarch and a foreign conqueror.[87] So even when trying to present himself in the garb of an Egyptian ruler, Darius remained "first and foremost Persian."[88]

IV. WHY DID THE OFFICE DISAPPEAR UNDER THE PERISANS?

We have seen that right before the Persian conquest of Egypt, the female holders of the office of God's Wife of Amun had attained an unprecedented status—so much so that Gardiner felt justified writing: "During the Nubian Period, a God's Wife wielded great influence, and was to all intents and purposes the *equal* of the king

her father...."[89] (italics mine). Such was the case during the Nubian Period, and presumably even more so during the Saite Period. I propose that it is precisely because of this unprecedented high status and "great influence" wielded by the female holders of the office that the office of God's Wife of Amun disappeared never to be seen again.

A. Political Power Structure

Under Persian rule, no Egyptian, man or woman, was allowed to hold an office of supreme political significance. The Office of God's Wife was no exception. Consequently, an Egyptian woman could no longer retain office under the Persians. The Persians could still have either utilized the office of God's Wife for their own political gain, or they could have treated it as any other administrative institution in Egypt and "padded" the temple female hierarchy with a top Persian official—in this case, an Achaemenid royal daughter or court lady. However, they chose not to do so. There are several reasons to account for the Persians' reluctance to use the Egyptian model of sending an unmarried daughter to Thebes to assume the role and control the vast wealth of the Amun Temple.

B. Women's Roles

An Achaemenid royal daughter could not fulfil such a role. The Persian administrative model of "installing a layer of Persian officials on top of existing local administrators"[90] could not be applied to the office of God's Wife of Amun. Achaemenid royal daughters were not trained nor were they expected to hold such powerful positions.

As seen above, both the Achaemenid textual evidence and archaeological record are virtually silent on "mortal women," and especially the royal daughters. The accession record of Xerxes, for example, does not include any reference to his mother, Atossa, despite her status as the daughter of Cyrus, the founder of the dynasty. This seems to indicate that Atossa achieved her status not through her connection to Cyrus, her father, but rather by being the mother of a reigning king, Xerxes.[91]

The God's Wives of Amun are not only frequently represented, but they also appear in scenes previously held for the exclusive use of the king. Persian women, on the other hand, are not represented in a single scene from either Persepolis or Susa. Although such a "conspicuous absence" from the artistic record has been explained as an extension of the Assyrian custom of not depicting women,[92] it is still quite telling that while all other classes of Persian society were represented, the women appear nowhere!

Similarly, whereas the God's Wives of Amun had their own funerary monuments on the West Bank of Thebes, the exact site of burial for the Achaemenid royal daughters is not quite known. They may have been buried with their husbands.[93] Royal daughters do not seem to have been buried within the king's funerary complex.

In the Achaemenid court, marriage, not celibacy, was used as a means of controlling the dissemination and transmission of power. This is perhaps the most important point in trying to understand why an unmarried Achaemenid royal daughter could not be sent to Thebes to hold office as a God's Wife of Amun. It seems that controlling and manipulating women's sexuality was a consistent theme in both the Egyptian and the Persian cultures. Whether it was by means of imposing celibacy on the God's Wives of Amun or by imposing certain marriage alliances on the Achaemenid royal daughters, the end goal was always for the reigning king (Egyptian or Persian) to achieve a tighter grip on his domain. In either case, the choice of getting married or remaining single (celibate) was imposed on the

women. It was not the women's prerogative. The choice of which policy to adopt (imposing marriage or celibacy) was predicated on the immediate needs and current political situation in each region. In Egypt, the imposition of celibacy on the God's Wife of Amun began with Aset, daughter of Rameses VI. Prior to that time, the title of God's Wife had usually been held by a king's Chief Wife (*ḥmt nsw wrt*). When the position was reintroduced at the end of the New Kingdom, it had to be reinvented, clearly for political reasons. The authority of the reigning king was fast declining *vis-à-vis* the High Priesthood of Amun at Thebes. Sending an unmarried daughter to Thebes, where she would hold an office of supreme authority, seems to have been the smoothest way to extend the king's authority over that southern region. In the Achaemenid court, the marriage alliances of royal daughters were manipulated to achieve the same goal. They served the double purpose of ensuring the loyalty of Persian nobles and limiting "the number of families marrying into the royal family."[94] For this reason, Achaemenid royal daughters were only allowed to marry Persians. It was not until Alexander III swept through the Persian territories that Darius III was forced to offer his daughter in marriage to Alexander III.[95] This break from tradition was necessitated by the extreme political conditions prevalent at the time.

C. Persian Culture and Identity

The need to break away from cultural tradition never arose. At no point did the Egyptian situation constitute one of the "extreme circumstances" that would necessitate employing equally extreme measures. Several factors contributed to the relative ease with which the Persian handled the political situation in Egypt.

The extensive road system, and the extremely efficient postal system that it supported, led to good communication with Egypt. But perhaps more importantly, it also served as a *vitae militares*, facilitating the rapid mobilization of troops whenever order needed to be maintained.[96] It allowed the Persians, for example, to respond promptly to the Egyptian riots of 404 B.C. It is almost needless to add that the Persians enjoyed superior military prowess that they never hesitated to use. That their military intervention was forceful is apparent from the vivid account chronicled in the narratives of Herodotus.

The effectiveness of the Persian administration of Egypt allowed for the Persian satrap to keep close watch over everything that went on in Egypt. We have seen, for example, that the meagre task of repairing a boat in Elephantine required the approval of the satrap himself.

Moreover, at least some, if not all, of the autonomy previously enjoyed by the nomes and the nomarchs was taken away. By extension, we can safely assume that the Thebaid was no exception.

Likewise, the Persians only supported institutions that supported their hegemony. They curtailed the incomes of almost all the temples of Egypt (including the Karnak temple) and cut down their former tax privileges. Thus, the wealth of the temple of Amun at Karnak was significantly reduced, thereby effectively eliminating the need to closely monitor or control it.

The Persian rulers thought of themselves as "first and foremost Persians."[97] Thus, while they occasionally attempted to portray themselves as Egyptian rulers, adopting Egyptian throne names and offering to Egyptian gods,[98] unlike their Nubian or Saite predecessors, the Persians continued to assert and celebrate their ethnic identity / background, never claiming an "Egyptian-ness" they never had or aspired to.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Historically speaking, the office of the God's Wife of Amun seems to have always been a highly politicized position. When Ahmose, founder of the 18th Dynasty, needed to establish his authority as a unifier of the country, he granted the status of God's Wife to his Chief Wife, Ahmose-Nefertari. But later, when Hatshepsut set the dangerous precedent of using that position as a power base from which she may have gained support for her claim to kingship, the position of God's Wife was marginalized for the rest of the 18th Dynasty.[99] It has been demonstrated above that imposition of celibacy on a God's Wife was more for political than cultic reasons. By becoming a God's Wife of Amun, a king's daughter helped establish her father's authority over the vast wealth of the temple of Amun at Karnak. Prohibiting her from producing offspring of her own ensured that a God's Wife could not use the wealth, and undoubtedly the power and influence that came with it, to further her own political claims by producing a rival dynasty.

The political and economic factors that necessitated the use of this political device under Nubian and Saite rule were eliminated by the advent of Persian rule in Egypt. The Persians' military advantage, their efficient administration of the provinces, including Egypt, and the tight control they kept over their vast empire shielded Achaemenid daughters from the need to break away from their cultural traditions. The office of God's Wife of Amun had always been used as a vehicle for retaining and / or transmitting royal political power; once the political need was eliminated, the office disappeared.

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NOTES

1. This is an expanded version of a talk I gave on November 10, 2000 at the SSEA Scholars' Colloquium

2. A.H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 364; A.B. Lloyd, "The Late Period, 664–323 BC," in B. Trigger *et al.*, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 286; A. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–330 BC*, Vol. 2 (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 662.

3. Lloyd, "Late Period," 331, notes that the 700 talents that Egypt was required to contribute annually is to be considered more a "symbol of subservience," since this amount was "by no means a princely sum for so rich a province." See also E. Bresciani, "Osservazioni sul sistema tributario dell'Egitto durante la dominazione Persiano," in *La Tribut Dans l'empire Perse. Actes de la Table ronde de Paris 12–13 Décembre 1986*, ed. P. Briant and C. Herrenschmidt (Paris and Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 29–33. It is interesting to note that according to Herodotus, regulated tribute / taxation in the Persian Empire did not start until the reign of Darius I. Prior to that, during the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses, "no rules were set for taxation, but the subjects brought gifts to the kings." For a more elaborate discussion of this statement, see H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Gifts in the Persian Empire," in *Tribut Dans l'empire Perse*, 129–45.

4. D. Snell, *Life in the Ancient Near East: 3100–332 BC* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 100.

5. J. Johnson, "The Persians and the Continuity of Egyptian Culture," in *Achaemenid History VIII: Continuity and Change. Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid Workshop April 6–8, 1990. Ann Arbor, Michigan*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt, and M. Cool Root (Leiden : Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1994), 150, n. 5.

6. J. Yoyotte, "Les adoratrices de la Troisième Période intermédiate: A propos d'un chef-œuvre rapporté d'Égypte

pour Champollion," *BSFE* 64 (1972), 31–52.

7. Amenirdis I, for example, took the prenomen: *ḥs^{c}-nfrw-mwt*.

8. E. Teeter, *The Presentation of Maat: Ritual and Legitimacy in Ancient Egypt*, SAOC 57 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1997), 13 ff.

9. B. Porter and R. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings. Volume II: Theban Temples* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 476 ff. (hereafter PM II); U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu. Volume V: Post-Ramessid Remains* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 17 ff.

10. S.A. Al-Rayah, *The Napatan Kingdom (c. 860 B.C. to 310 B.C.)*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Liverpool (Boston Spa, West Yorkshire, UK: British Library Document Supply Center, 1981). Amenirdis I, for example, dedicated the chapel of Osiris, *ḥqs-ḏt* at Karnak with Shebitiqo. For a more detailed discussion of this chapel and a bibliography see J. Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments Thébains de la XXV^{E} dynastie dite Éthiopienne* (Le Caire: IFAO, 1965), 47 ff. See also G. Legrain, "Le temple d'Osiris-Hiq-Djeto," *RT* 22 (1900), 125–36, 146–49; and "Le temple et les Chapelles D'Osiris a Karnak. III: La Chapelle D'Osiris, Maitre de la Vie [illegible]," *RT* 24 (1902), 208–14.

11. Such staff members attained great wealth and influence. See, for example, K.A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 BC)* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1995), 370, for a discussion of the status and wealth of Harwa. See also E. Graefe, *Untersuchen zur Verwaltung und Geschichte der Institution der Gottesgemahlin des Amun von Beginn des Neuen Reiches bis zur Spätzeit* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981); *idem*, "Der autobiographische Text des Ibi, obervermögensverwalter der Gottesgemahlin Nitokris, auf Kairo JE 36158," *MDAIK* 50 (1994), 85–99; M. Bietak and E. Reiser-Haslauer, *Das Grab des ᶜAnch-Hor obersthofmeister der Gottesgemahlin Nitokris* (Wien: Verlag der Österriechischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978).

12. D. O'Connor, "New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period," in B. Trigger *et al.*, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 241. For a discussion of the ritualistic and mythic roles of the holders of this title, see L. Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1986), 98 ff.; A.M. Blackman, "On the Position of Women in Ancient Egyptian Hierarchy," *JEA* 7 (1921), 8–30; M. Giton, *L'épouse du dieu Ahmes Néfertay* (Paris: Belle Lettres, 1975); *idem*, *Les divines épouses de la 18e dynastie* (Paris: Belle Lettres, 1984); S.-A. Naguib, *Le Clergé Féminin D'Amon Thébain à la 21^{e} Dynastie* (Leuven: Uigeverij Peeters en Department Oriëntalistiek, 1990), 211 ff. On the political and politicized role of the God's Wife of Amun, see G. Robins, "God's Wife of Amun in the 18th Dynasty," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1983); G. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 156 ff.

13. Apparently Aset, daughter of Ramesses VI, was the first woman to become *solely* consecrated to her role as God's Wife of Amun. See T.B. Bács, "A note on the divine Adoratrix Isis, daughter of Ramesses VI," *GM* 148 (1995), 7–11. Bács (p. 10) suggests that Aset (Isis) held office for about 25 years, thus surviving into the reign of Ramesses IX.

14. See E. Teeter, "Celibacy and Adoption among Gods' Wives of Amun and Singers in the Temple of Amun: A re-examination of the evidence" in *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente*, ed. E. Teeter and J.A. Larson, SAOC 58 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1999), 405–14. While Teeter asserts that evidence for celibacy is quite scanty, I would like to point out that there is no evidence to indicate that these women were married or in any way attempted to produce offspring of their own. The iconographic and archaeological evidence indicates that these were *single* women. It is my view that from its inception this office was essentially a political institution, not a religious one. I, therefore, agree with Teeter's assertion that it was for political reasons that these women were required to remain unmarried.

15. N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, trans. I. Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 335.

16. Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 378.

17. A. Lloyd, "Late Period," 335.

18. *Contra* R. Caminos, "The Nitocris Adoption Stela," *JEA* 50 (1964), 79. Caminos asserts that Nitocirs was to succeed Amenirdis II at Thebes as Adorer of God, since the Nitocris Adoption Stela reads (p. 74): "I will not do what in fact should not be done and expel an heir from his seat.... I will give her (my daughter) to her (Taharqa's daughter) to be her eldest daughter just as she (Taharqa's daughter) was made over to the sister of her father" *rdi.i n.s s* (p. 78).

19. See tables in Caminos, "Nitocris Adoption Stela," 100–01.

20. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 354; A. Leahy, "The Adoption of Ankhnesneferibre at Karnak," *JEA* 82 (1996), 160. Leahy further notes (pp. 146 and 158) that in her adoption stela, Ankhnesneferibre is referred to as first prophet of Amun, *ḥm-nṯr tpy n Ỉmn*, *before* her formal "accession ceremony" (line 8 of the stela). Apparently she held the title of High Priest of Amun as an "adopted daughter of Nitocris I." This may indicate that, at the time, the position of High Priest was not as important as that of God's Wife. He further argues (p. 162) that although Nitocris B was supposed to succeed her, she apparently never did. The stela was first published in 1904 by G. Maspero, "Deux Monuments de la Princesse Ankhnasnofirbibri," *ASAE* V (1904), pp. 84–92.

21. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 354.

22. H. de Meulenaere, "La famille du Roi Amasis," *JEA* 54 (1968), 187; see also P. Barguet, *Le temple d'Amon-Re à Karnak* (Le Caire: Impr. de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1962), 6 and 14, where her name is associated with Psametichus III's .

23. G. Vittmann, *Priester und Beamte in Theben der Spätzeit*, Beiträge zur Ägyptologie 1 (Wien, 1978), 63.

24. M. Brosius, *Women in Ancient Persia 559–331 BC* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 76.

25. See, for example, P. Calmeyer, "Greek Historiography and Achaemenid Relief," in *Achaemenid History II: The Greek Sources. Proceedings of the Groningen 1984 Achaemenid History Workshop*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1988), 11–26.

26. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 183 ff. She further notes (p. 184): "No evidence could be found to show that the Greek noun βασιλεια, when applied to a Persian royal woman, reflected a specific political status of 'queen.' It was used without distinction to refer to the king's mother and the king's wife, or to a ruling queen."

27. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 186–88. Such economic independence could give the women who enjoyed it considerable political power. Parysatis, mother of Cyrus, for example, had the freedom to "allow" her son "to use the produce of her lands to supply his army."

28. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Exit Atossa: Images of Women in Greek Historiography on Persia," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, rev. ed., ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1993), 20.

29. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 188.

30. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Exit Atossa," 22.

31. A. Spycket, "Women in Persian Art," in *Ancient Persia*: *The Art of an Empire*, ed. D. Schmandt-Besserat (Malibu: Undena, 1980), 43 ff., lists the handful of examples of ivory and bronze female figurines that survive from ancient Persia. Occasionally, it becomes quite difficult to distinguish female figures from male ones, as male figures are often depicted wearing a garment that has "semi-circular folds at the back, large sleeves, and even earnings" (p. 43).

32. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 86 ff. While Brosius asserts that such a "lack of extant representations does not prove that there was a restriction on the representation of women, either because of seclusion or of low status" (p.84), it is quite telling that none survive.

33. M. Cool Root, "The Persepolis Perplex: Some Prospects Borne of Retrospect," in *Ancient Persia*: *Art of an Empire*, 5, notes, however, that a lot of care should be taken when examining reliefs from Persepolis, a city that is believed to have been built for "strictly ceremonial purposes." Hence, "attempts to understand the sculpture of Persepolis have been directly related to attempts to understand the nature of the city. Since the *site* is considered

anomalous, the *sculptures* have in a sense been so considered as well. The architectural reliefs have thus been studied simultaneously as a reflection of *and as primary source* on the presumed ceremonial nature of the city (a circular methodology, of course)."

34. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Exit Atossa," 22.

35. For a detailed description of the funerary complexes of Darius I and his successors at Naqshi Rustam / Persepolis, see M. Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art. Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, Acta Iranica, Textes et Mémoires 9 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 72 ff.

36. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 102.

37. Spycket, "Women in Persian Art," 44.

38. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 29. The text, dated to 486 B.C., the accession year of Xerxes, issues a payment to Artim, the wet-nurse of Patahšah, daughter of the king.

39. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 189.

40. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 71. One Fortification text indicates that she received "a daily travel ration of 90 quarts of flour over a period of four days at the places Kurdusum, Bessitme, and Liduama."

41. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 189.

42. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 76. The first recorded instance where this occurs in the context of "gift-exchange" is the giving of Artaxerxes' daughter to Tissaphernes.

43. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 189. "The most remarkable concentration of interfamilial marriages was between the Achaemenid royal house and the Persian noble families of Oranes and Gobryas."

44. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 190.

45. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Exit Atossa," 26.

46. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 690.

47. A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 92.

48. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 697.

49. Johnson, "Persians and Continuity," 150.

50. Snell, *Life in the Ancient Near East*, 102. See also P. Huyse, "Die Perser in Ägypten: Ein onomastischer Beitrag zu ihrer Erforschung," in *Achaemenid History VI: Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire. Proceedings of the Groningen 1988 Achaemenid History Workshop*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1991), 311–20.

51. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 700. For the autobiography of Udjahorresne, see M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature III* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 36–41.

52. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 691.

53. Lloyd, "Late Period," 334.

54. Lloyd, "Late Period," 336.

55. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 690.

56. It is unfortunate that most general history books tend to avoid any mention of the Theban region when discussing the Persian Period in Egypt. See, for example, Karol Myœliwiec, *The Twilight of Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 135 ff.

57. Snell, *Life in the Ancient Near East*, 108.

58. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 664 ff.; Johnson, "Persians and Continuity," 152, n. 11. Johnson notes, however, that there is very little evidence to indicate that "their [the temples'] (sometimes mammoth) wealth in real and movable property" was affected by this act.

59. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 91–92.

60. D.F. Graf, "The Persian Royal Road System," in *Achaemenid History VIII: Continuity and Change. Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid History Workshop April 6–8, 1990. Ann Arbor, Michigan*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt, and M. Cool Root (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1994), 188; and *idem*, The Persian Royal Road System in Syria-Palestine," *Transeuphratène* 6 (1993), 149–68.

61. Graf, "Road System," 171–72.

62. Graf, "Road System," 184; and E. Oren, "Le Nord-Sinaï à l'époque perse. Perspectives archéologiques," in *Le Sinaï durant l'antiquité et le moyen âge*, ed. D. Valbelle and C. Bonnet (Paris: Editions Errance, 1998), 75–82.

63. Lloyd, "Late Period," 331.

64. C. Tuplin, "Darius' Suez Canal and Persian Imperialism," in *Achaemenid History VI: Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire, Proceedings of the Groningen 1988 Achaemenid History Workshop*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1991), 242 ff.; Graf, "Road System," 185.

65. G. Posener, *La Première domination perse en Egypte*, Biliothèque d'Étude 11 (1936), 48–87. For a detailed description and analysis of the stela, see Cool Root, *King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, 61–68.

66. See Posener, *Première domination perse*, 50 ff., for the Maskhuta stelae, and 63 ff., for the Chaluf stelae.

67. Tuplin, "Suez Canal," 270.

68. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 668 ff.

69. Graf, "Road System," 185.

70. Graf, "Road System," 167–68.

71. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 692.

72. Graf, "Road System," 184.

73. L.A. Heidorn, "The Saite and Persian Forts at Dorginarti," in *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam*, ed. W.V. Davies (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 205–19.

74. Graf, "Road System," 184.

75. Graf, "Road System," 174; Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 693.

76. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 693.

77. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 693. Interestingly, this "passport" issued to an Egyptian native nonetheless is the only such example that has been preserved!

78. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 698 ff.

79. Posener, *Première domination perse*, 30–35. For a description and analysis of the stelae, see Cool Root, *King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, 124 ff.

80. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature III*, 38.

81. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 663–64.

82. H.E. Winlcok, *The Temple of Hibis in el-Khargeh Oasis. Part I: The Excavations* (New York, 1941); N. de Garis Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in el-Khargeh Oasis. Part III: The Decoration* (New York, 1953), see, for

example, pls. 31, 35, 36, 39, and 54. See also E. Cruz-Uribe, "The Hibis Temple Project 1984–85 Field Season, Preliminary Report," *JARCE* 23 (1986), 157–66 and *idem*, *The Hibis Temple Project I: Translations, commentary, discussions and sign list* (San Antonio: Van Siclen, 1988).

83. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 668.

84. Cool Root, *King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, 71.

85. J. Boardman, *Persia and the West: An Archaeological Investigation of the Genesis of Achaemenid Art* (London, 2000), 115.

86. Cool Root, *King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, 69.

87. Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, 668.

88. Snell, *Life in the Ancient Near East*, 99.

89. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 343.

90. Johnson, "Persians and Continuity," 150.

91. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Exit Atossa," 25–26.

92. Spycket, "Women in Persian Art," 43.

93. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 102.

94. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 194.

95. Brosius, *Women in Persia*, 76.

96. Graf, "Road System," 173.

97. Snell, *Life in the Ancient Near East*, 99.

98. E.g., on representations at Hibis temple.

99. G. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (London: The British Museum Press, 1993), 152.