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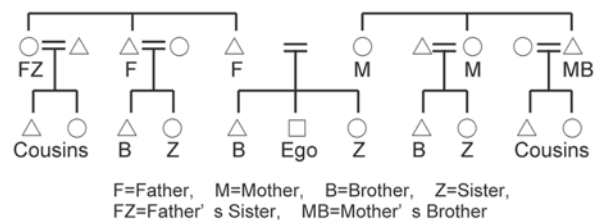
# THE MATRILINEAL ROYAL SUCCESSION IN THE EMPIRE OF KUSH: A NEW PROPOSAL IDENTIFYING THE KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY IN THE 25<sup>TH</sup> AND NAPATAN DYNASTIES AS THAT OF IROQUOIS/CROW

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Various theories about the patterns of royal succession in the 25<sup>th</sup> and Napatan Dynasties have been proposed. Macadam proposed a fratrilineal succession in which kingship passed from brother to brother and then to the children of the eldest brother.<sup>2</sup> Török integrated the patrilineal, matrilineal, and fratrilineal succession systems.<sup>3</sup> Kahn and Gozzoli<sup>4</sup> take the position that the succession pattern in the 25<sup>th</sup> and Napatan Dynasties was basically patrilineal. It is noteworthy that, in Macadam's and Török's theories as well as the patrilineal succession, it is supposed that all kings were sons of kings. I doubted this father-son relationship when I started inquiring into the matrilineal tradition in Kush.

One of the textual grounds for accepting the father-son relationship of the kings is the indirect one

Table 1. The Iroquois kinship terminology



in which some royal women held both the titles of *snt nswt* "king's sister" and *s3t nswt* "king's daughter", and this ground is regarded as decisive. However, this ignores the fact that it has been suggested that *sn(t)* in its extended meaning may mean "cousin," "aunt," "uncle," "nephew," or "niece."<sup>5</sup> If so, a daughter of the previous king who had the title *snt nswt* could be a cousin of the reigning king. It is also possible that the Kushite kingdom was a matrilineal society using a kinship terminology that was different from that of Egypt. Over seventy percent of the eighty-four matrilineal systems in the World Ethnographic Sample by Murdock<sup>6</sup> use either Crow or Iroquois cousin terms.<sup>7</sup> Iroquois and Crow kinship terminologies use the same term for both siblings and parallel cousins.<sup>8</sup> If Kushite society used Iroquois/

- 1 This article is a revised version of my paper originally written in Japanese (K. Saito, "The Matrilineal Succession of the Kingship in the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of Ancient Egypt: A New Proposal based on Kinship Terminology," *Bulletin of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 56-2, 2014, 53-64, written in Japanese with an English abstract). An interpretation of the meaning of *snw nswt* is added anew this time. My special thanks are due to J. Pope for noticing my papers on Kush in Japanese and encouraging me to publish a paper in English. I would like to thank D. Kahn and A. Lohwasser for reading an earlier version of this paper. Their comments greatly helped me improve this paper. All errors are, however, my own responsibility.
- 2 M. F. L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, I, London, 1949, 124-125.
- 3 L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization*, Leiden, 1997, 260-262.
- 4 D. Kahn, "The Royal Succession in the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty," *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 158. R. B. Gozzoli, "Royal Sisters and Royal Legitimation in the Nubian Period (C.760-300 B.C.): Taharquo's Kawa Stelae as a Paradigm" in: W. Goldlewski & A. Łajtar (eds.), *Between the Cataracts. Nubian Studies Conference Proceedings*. Vol.2/2 (Warsaw 2010) 483-494.

- 5 D. Franke, *Altägyptische Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen im Mittleren Reich* (Hamburg 1983) 162. G. Robins, "The Relationships specified by Egyptian Kinship Terms of the Middle and New Kingdom," *CdE* 54 (1979) 202-203.
- 6 G.P. Murdock, "World Ethnographic Sample," *American Anthropologist* (New Series) 59. No.4 (1957) 664-687.
- 7 D.M. Schneider and K. Gough (eds.), *Matrilineal Kinship*, Berkeley, 1961, 717.
- 8 In the Iroquois system of kinship terminology (Table 1), the father and father's brother are referred to by a single term, as the mother and mother's sister; however, the father's sister and mother's brother are given separate terms. In one's own generation, brothers, sisters, and parallel cousins (offspring of parental siblings of the same sex, that is, the children



Crow kinship terminology, the king was not necessarily a son of the previous king even though his *snt nswt* was *s3t nswt*. Therefore, it is indispensable that the possibility of the use of Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology in Kush be considered in order to judge whether Kushite society was matrilineal.

The possibility that the Kushite Kingdom used Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology is suggested by the fact that not all women who were called *snt nswt* were also called *s3t nswt*. In a patrilineal society, all of the king's sisters must have also been the daughters of kings, and the title "king's daughter" was so important that it would hardly ever be omitted. Thus, I came to think that those who only had the title of *snt nswt* were not the king's daughters, and the relationship the king had with those who had both titles might have been different from that with those who had *snt nswt* alone. If the reigning king's sister is not the previous king's daughter, the reigning king is not the son of the previous king.

In fact, the title *snt nswt* was not commonly used in Egypt during the dynastic period. Out of 30 women who had the title of *snt nswt* according to Troy's study,<sup>9</sup> 7 belonged to the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and 14 belonged to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasties. The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasties were exceptional in terms of the prominence of royal women, which might have been related to the frequent use of *snt nswt*. In a patrilineal society, the patrilineal relation to the king was important while the fratrilineal relation was not. For males, the title of *s3 nswt* was truly important, but the title of *sn nswt* was not. It is reported that *sn nswt* appears regularly during the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty

only.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the fratrilineal relation is important in a matrilineal society, as shown below. Therefore, the frequent use of *snt nswt* as well as *sn nswt* in the Kushite texts is worth considering.

In this paper I will first investigate the possibility that Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology was used in the Kushite Kingdom in the 25<sup>th</sup> and Napatan Dynasties. Then, I would like to argue that the Kushite royal succession was basically matrilineal by using a genealogy of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty that has been reconstructed based on Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology.

#### 1. DEFINITION OF MATRILINEAL SUCCESSION

First of all, I would like to clarify the nature of matrilineal succession, which I will discuss in this paper. Priese thought that the Kushite succession was matrilineal based on the statement of Nicholas of Damascus that "the Ethiopians have a particular respect for their sisters; the kings do not leave the succession to their own but to their sisters' sons".<sup>11</sup> Since a high percentage of the kings' wives have the title of "king's sister," it is supposed that brother-sister marriage was practiced in the dynasty. Priese thought that the purpose of this practice was to make the kings' sons the heirs to the throne. Therefore, he concluded that the right of succession was passed to all of the sons of the eldest sister who was married to the eldest brother.<sup>12</sup> However, since the eldest sister should have been a wife of the king, this succession pattern was patrilineal rather than matrilineal.

The succession pattern that Lohwasser proposed is matrilineal but in an extended meaning.<sup>13</sup> According to Lohwasser, the title of *snt nswt* was inherited

of the mother's sister or father's brother) of the same sex are referred to by the same terms, which is logical enough considering that they are the offspring of people who are classified in the same category as Ego's actual mother and father. (W.A. Haviland et.al, *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenge*, Twelfth Edition, Belmont, 2008, 245-246).

In the case of Kush, it is supposed that the brothers and male parallel cousins are referred to by *sn*, and the sisters and female parallel cousins are referred to by *snt*. Since the genealogical information in Kush is not enough to differentiate Iroquois kinship terminology from the Crow kinship terminology, "Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology" is employed in this paper. Although four examples are known in which a parallel cousin (mother's sister's son/daughter) was designated as *sn(t)* in Egyptian texts (Franke, *Altägyptische Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen im Mittleren Reich*, 72-73), the Egyptian kinship terminology was neither Iroquois nor Crow because a mother's sister was not called *mwt* (mother), but *snt mwt* (mother's sister) or *snt*.

<sup>9</sup> L. Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, (Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations 14, Uppsala, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> J. Revez, "The Metaphorical Use of the Kinship Term *sn* 'Brother,'" *JARCE* 40 (2003) 131. J. Revez, "The Role of the Kings' Brothers in the Transmission of Royal Power in Ancient Egypt and Kush: A Cross-cultural Study" in: J.R. Anderson & D. Welsby (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond: Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference for Nubian Studies, British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan* 1 (Paris, Leuven, Walpole, MA 2014) 538.

<sup>11</sup> K.-H. Priese, "Matrilineare Erbfolge in Reich von Kusch," *ZÄS* 108 (1981) 49. Kahn, *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 145.

<sup>12</sup> Priese *ZÄS* 108 (1981) 50, Abb.1d. R. Morkot, "Kinship and Kinship in the Empire of Kush," in: St. Wenig (ed.), *Akten der 7. Internationalen Tagung für meroitische Forschungen von 14. Bis 19. September 1992 in Gosen bei Berlin, (Meroitica 15, Wiesbaden 1999) 192-193*, Table E. Kahn, *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 146.

<sup>13</sup> A. Lohwasser, "Die Auswahl der Königs in Kusch," *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung* 7 (2000) 92, 98, Tabelle 1. A. Lohwasser, "Queenship in Kush: Status, Role and Ideology of Royal Women," *JARCE* 38 (2001) 65.





or a predecessor in some Egyptian inscriptions.<sup>21</sup> Because Alara has the title “Son of Re” in Taharqo’s inscriptions, specifically Kawa IV and Kawa VI,<sup>22</sup> it is possible the erased name of *it.f* after “Son of Re” on Aspelta’s stela was Alara. Therefore, Aspelta’s Enthronement stela cannot be decisive proof of the father-son relationship of the kings. Without direct evidence, the father-son relationships of the kings have been explained by the women called *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt*, as follows.

Kitchen states that: “Taharqa was a brother of Shepenupet II. As Shepenupet II was daughter of Pianky, so Taharqa was a son of Piankhy.”<sup>23</sup>

Kahn states that if Peksater, daughter of Kashta and Pebatma, was a royal wife and sister of Piankhy, as might have been recorded on the NE wall of court B 502 in the Great Amun Temple(B500) at Gebel Barkal, then it becomes clear that Piankhy was a son of Kashta.<sup>24</sup> Kahn also notes that, on a coffin fragment, Istemkheb was called *s3t nswt š3b3k3, hmt nswt wrt snt nswt*, and, apparently, she had a brother (and Shabaka a son) who reigned as king. He concludes that Shebitqo was the son of Shabaqo because Istemkheb was Shebitqo’s wife and sister.<sup>25</sup> In these cases, if *snt* denotes both a sister and a parallel cousin, Piankhy could be a nephew of Kashta, and Shebitqo could be a nephew of Shabaqo.

Dodson states that Shabaqo is shown to have been a son of Kashta by the fact that Amenirdis I calls him her brother.<sup>26</sup> Dodson also states the following: “Taharqo is described as the brother of

Shepenwepet II.<sup>27</sup> As the latter was undoubtedly the daughter of Piye, Taharqo must thus also have been his offspring.”<sup>28</sup> However, if *snt* denotes not only a sister but also a parallel cousin, Shabaka could be a nephew of Kashta and Taharqo could be a nephew of Piye.

If *snt nswt* means the king’s parallel cousin, none of the father-son relationships quoted above can hardly be tenable. It is clear how important it is to consider the possibility of the use of Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology in Kush.

### 3. THE POSSIBILITY THAT KUSHITE KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY WAS IROQUOIS/CROW

It is supposed that the Kushite people spoke Meroitic during the 25<sup>th</sup> and Napatan Dynasties because some traces of Meroitic were present in proper names even though the administrative language was Egyptian.<sup>29</sup> Meroitic belongs to the Nilo-Saharan family, one of the four main language families in Africa.<sup>30</sup> Ehret put forward the tentative proposal that a root of a kin term, “kaam,” began as a term in proto-Nilo-Saharan for siblings and parallel cousins but not cross-cousins. If that proposal holds, it would indicate that proto-Nilo-Saharan society had Iroquois cousin reckoning.<sup>31</sup> Iroquois systems occur today among Nilo-Saharan societies, though less commonly than Hawaiian and Descriptive.<sup>32</sup> In a number of cases, the terminological evidence implies the former presence of the Crow cousin system in languages among Nilo-Saharan societies.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, it is possible that Meroitic shares an origin with the languages among Nilo-Saharan societies that now have or formerly had Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology. Some of the Nilo-Saharan societies

dynasty because there seems to have been rulers who had pre-dated the time of Alara, according to the study of the royal cemetery at el Kurru and the genealogy on Aspelta’s Enthronement stela (K.-H. Priese, “Der Beginn der kuschitischen Herrschaft in Ägypten,” *ZÄS* 98 [1970] 23. T. Kendall, “The Origin of the Napatan State: El Kurru and the Evidence for the Royal Ancestors,” *Meroitica* 15 [1999] 58. Morkot, *Meroitica* 15 [1999] 200). Török and Lohwasser consider Alara as a founder of the dynasty because Alara was mentioned in some later documents (Török, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 124. A. Lohwasser, *Die königlichen Frauen im antiken Reich von Kusch* [*Meroitica* 19, Wiesbaden 2001] 250), and they presume that the last (i.e., the oldest) woman in Aspelta’s genealogy was Alara’s sister (*FHN* I: 249-252; Lohwasser, *Meroitica* 19 [2001] 254).

I suppose that, even if Alara was not a founder of the local ruling family, it can be said that he was revered as a founder of the royal dynasty.

21 Robins, *CdE* 54 (1979) 200.

22 Kawa IV, *FHN* I, 141; Kawa VI, *FHN* I, 173.

23 Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period*, 149.

24 Kahn, *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 159.

25 Kahn, *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 160.

26 A. Dodson, *Afterglow of Empire: Egypt from the Fall of the New Kingdom to the Saite Renaissance*, Cairo, New York, 2012, 145.

27 Literally, Shepenwepet II was referred to as her (Taharqo’s daughter) father’s sister, *snt it.s* (R. A. Caminos, “The Nitocris Adoption Stela,” *JEA* 50 [1964] 74).

28 Dodson, *Afterglow of Empire*, 162.

29 C. Rilly and A. Voogt, *The Meroitic Language and Writing System*, New York, 2012, 6.

30 Rilly and Voogt, *The Meroitic Language and Writing System*, 174.

31 C. Ehret, “Reconstructing Ancient Kinship in Africa,” in: N. J. Allen et al. (eds.), *Early Human Kinship: From Sex to Social Reproduction* (West Sussex 2011) 210-212. Ehret’s statement is made with the reservation that, since a separate reconstructed term for cross-cousin is lacking, it is possible that “kaam” originally included the cross- as well as parallel cousins, in which case proto-Nilo-Saharan would have had a Hawaiian system.

32 Ehret, “Reconstructing Ancient Kinship in Africa,” 212.

33 Ehret, “Reconstructing Ancient Kinship in Africa,” 212, Table 12.1.





are to this day matrilineal.<sup>34</sup> To sum up, it is linguistically and geographically possible that Kushite society had Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology and was matrilineal.

Furthermore, the possibility that the Kushite people used Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology is supported by the text of Taharqo's stela, Kawa IV. It is recorded in lines 16-17 that *hn.tw n=f mwwt nt mwt=i in sn=sn wr s3-R' T-r-r-i m3<sup>c</sup> hrw* (the mothers of my mother were ordained for him by their elder brother, Son of Ra, Alala, justified).<sup>35</sup> Although *mwwt* is translated in *FHN* I as (fore)mothers,<sup>36</sup> I support the opinion that this passage means that Taharqo's grandmother and her sisters were committed to Amen by their brother.<sup>37</sup> From the standpoint of Taharqo's mother, her mother and maternal aunts were referred to as "*mwwt*" in this text. In Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology, a son/daughter calls both his/her biological mother and her sisters (maternal aunts) "mother" (Table.1). A mother's sister is referred to as *snt mwt* or solely *snt* in Egyptian kinship terminology,<sup>38</sup> while no evidence has been reported that a mother's sister is referred to as *mwt* in Egyptian texts. The use of *mwwt* to refer to mother and maternal aunt could be an indication that Kushite kinship terminology was Iroquois/Crow.

In the following section, I will analyze the titles of the Kushite royal women in order to show further evidence that Kushite Kinship terminology was Iroquois/Crow.

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF THE TITLES OF THE KUSHITE ROYAL WOMEN

In this section, I am going to analyze the titles of fifty-nine royal women from the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to the reign of Nastasen who were cataloged in Lohwasser's study (See Appendix).<sup>39</sup> I deal with the kinship titles, namely "king's sister" (*snt nswt*), "king's daughter"

(*s3t nswt*), and "king's mother" (*mwt nswt*). As I stated above, in the patrilineal society, every king's sister is a king's daughter if the kingship is normally inherited from a father to a son. However some Kushite women were called only *snt nswt*. If Kushite society was patrilineal, where the paternal descent was the most important, it is difficult to explain why *s3t nswt* was omitted.

There were three patterns of combination of the titles *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt*: (1) *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt*, (2) *snt nswt* only, and (3) *s3t nswt* only. Those who believe in the father-son relationship of the Kushite kings have not focused on these patterns. They seem to think that these were randomly employed. However, six women<sup>40</sup> were called both *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt* on an artifact or a monument, and they were never mentioned as only *snt nswt* on other objects. Seven of nine king's mothers<sup>41</sup> had the title *snt nswt*, but none of them had *s3t nswt*. The single use of *snt nswt* seems not to be an omission of *s3t nswt*. Seven women<sup>42</sup> were called only *s3t nswt*, and no lacuna of another title are observed on the monuments. It seems that they used only *s3t nswt* intentionally.

Supposing the Kushite kingdom was a matrilineal society using Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology, it can then be explained how the Kushite people used the titles *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt* with considerable deliberateness. Table 3 shows a model of the matrilineal royal family tree with the kinship titles.

A king's daughter (①) whose mother was not a real sister of her father is not a sister nor a parallel cousin but a cross cousin of the king (Ego). The single use of *s3t nswt* means its holder is a king's cross cousin. Those who are called just *snt nswt* are sisters (②) or parallel cousins (③) of the king (Ego). Now, it is necessary to explain the combination of the titles *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt* (④).

In matrilineal royal succession, a husband of a prospective king's mother should not be a king because the succession is not matrilineal but patrilineal if a king's mother is a king's wife. This may also be because the society may lose its balance of interdependence between brothers and sisters, which is necessary to maintain the matriliney.<sup>43</sup> The matriline-

34 Ehret, "Reconstructing Ancient Kinship in Africa," 216, 218, Figure 12.5.

35 I translate *wr* as "elder" according to J. J. Clère, (Review of) M. F. L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa I*, *BiOr* 8.5 (1951) 179 and A. Vinogradov, "[...] Their brother, the Chieftain, the Son of Re', Alara [...]" *Chaiér de recherché de l'Institut de papyrologie et égyptologie de Lille* 20 (1999). Contra Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, 121-122, and *FHN* I, 141.

36 *FHN* I, 141.

37 K. Jansen-Winkeln, "Alara und Taharka: zur Geschichte des nubischen Königshauses," *Orientalia* 72 (2003) 146.

38 Robins, *CdE* 54 (1979) 203-204. Franke, *Altägyptische Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen im Mittleren Reich*, 73, 108.

39 Lohwasser, *Meroitica* 19 (2001).

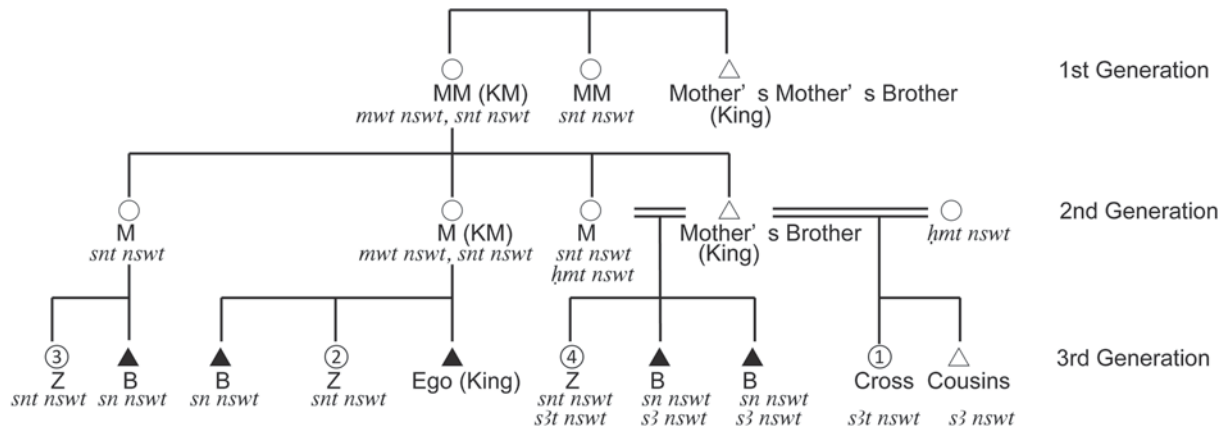
40 The following are those women's dossier numbers in Lohwasser, *Meroitica* 19 (2001) for reference: D.14, D.17, D.19, D.20, D.39, and D.53.

41 Lohwasser, *Meroitica* 19 (2001): D.1, D.5, D.26, D.35, D.42, D.47, and D.58.

42 Lohwasser, *Meroitica* 19 (2001): D.6, D.8, D.22, D.31, D.33, D.36, and D.48.

43 The interdependence of brother and sister is explained as follows: a sister depends on her brother for protection, care, and managerial and authority functions, while the brother depends on his sister for the perpetuation of his

Table 3. A model of the Kushite kinship terminology as Iroquois



M=Mother, MM=Mother's Mother, Z=Sister or Parallel Cousin, B=Brother or Parallel Cousin, KM=King's Mother

▲ = candidates for the king in Ego's generation, who succeed the maternal blood line from the King's Mother in the 1st generation

al descent group must be exogamous,<sup>44</sup> but there is a possibility that brother-sister marriage was practiced in the Kushite royal family for some reason. Some Kushite kings seem to have married their sisters who were not the first candidate for a next king's mother. By marrying his sisters, the king could ensure that his children belong to his matrilineal royal lineage.<sup>45</sup>

A daughter (④) born from a marriage between the previous king and one of his sisters was called *s3t nswt* through her paternal descent and *snt nswt* as a parallel cousin of the reigning king (Ego) through her maternal descent. Therefore, a woman who had both the titles of *s3t nswt* and *snt nswt* was a maternal parallel cousin of the king in the same generation.

According to the above interpretation of Kushite kinship terminology as Iroquois/Crow (Table 3), coherence in the manner of using the kinship titles can be explained. The king's mother had only *snt nswt* besides *mwt nswt* because she was a king's sister but neither a daughter nor a wife of a king. Those who called *snt nswt*, who were the king's sisters or parallel cousins, were not called *s3t nswt* elsewhere because they were not the king's daughters in a matrilineal society.

According to Lohwasser's study, six women<sup>46</sup> had both titles *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt* written together on a monument. They were parallel cousins of the king according to their titles. They could not omit

*snt nswt* in their titles, otherwise they would be taken as cross cousins of the king. Pekereslo has been said to have the both titles *s3t nswt* and *snt nswt*, but her name is written with *s3t nswt* on two blocks from Abydos, and with *snt nswt* on a relief at Gebel Barkal and a stool.<sup>47</sup> The spellings of her name on the objects from Abydos seem different from those from Gebel Barkal. The name with *snt nswt* is read as Pekereslo, but the name with *s3t nswt* can be read as Peksater. Only when her name is written with *snt nswt*, it is enclosed in a cartouche. Thus, I think Pekereslo and Peksater were two different women; the former was the king's cross cousin, and the latter was the king's sister or parallel cousin.<sup>48</sup>

A distinction between a parallel cousin and a cross cousin is characteristic of Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology. It can be concluded that it is highly probable that Kushite kinship terminology was Iroquois or Crow. Since the maternal parallel cousins belong to the same matrilineal lineage as Ego while the cross cousins do not, it is important to distinguish parallel cousins from cross cousins in a matrilineal society. The deliberate use of *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt* to draw a distinction between a parallel cousin and a cross cousin in Kushite texts can be said to be one of the characteristics of matrilineality.

47 Lohwasser, *Meroitica* 19 (2001) 175, D.41.

48 Pekereslo, with or without *snt nswt*, has been treated as one person (St. Wenig, "Pebatma-Pekereslo-Pekar-Tor: Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte der Kuschiten, *Meroitica* 12 [1990] 336-340; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, 175-176). Lohwasser mentions the possibility that Pekereslo with *snt nswt* was different from Pekereslo without *snt nswt* (*Meroitica* 19 [2001] 176).

descent line and the provision of an heir (Schneider and Gough, *Matrilineal Kinship*, 11).

44 Schneider and Gough, *Matrilineal Kinship*, 7.

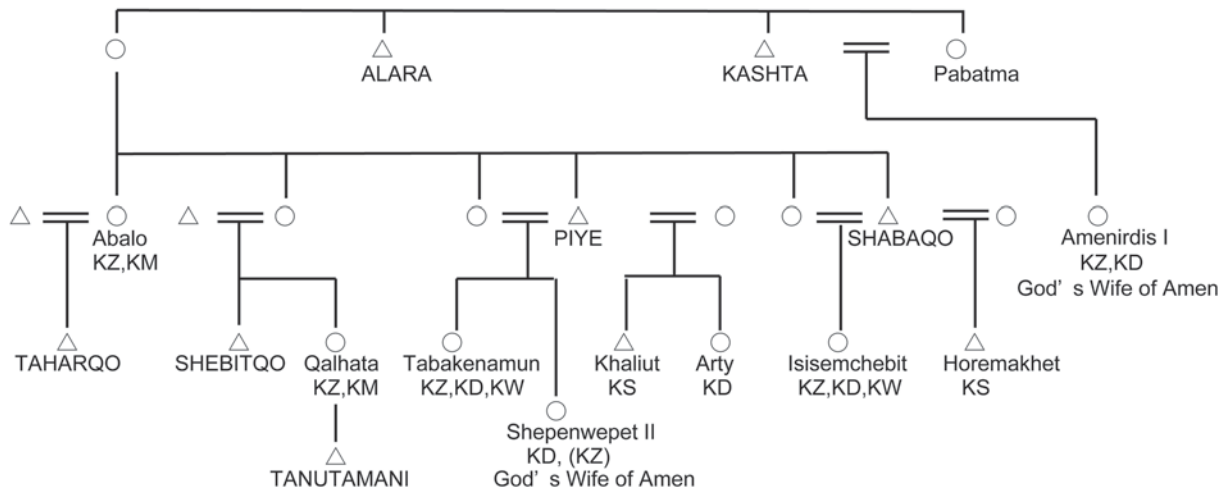
45 It is also possible that brother-sister marriage was practiced in the royal family at the end of hypergamy.

46 Lohwasser, *Meroitica* 19 (2001) : D.14, D.17, D.19, D.20, D.39, and D.53.



Table 4. Reconstructed Genealogy of the 25th Dynasty

(KM = King' s Mother, KZ = King' s Sister, KD = King' s Daughter, KW = King' s Wife, KS = King' s Son)



## 5. SUGGESTED GENEALOGY

Supposing that Kushite society was matrilineal and used Iroquois/Crow terminology, I would like to suggest a reconstruction of the genealogy of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Table 4). While Bányai suggested reversing the order of Shabako and Shebitqo based on the Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-I Var indicating that Shebitqo was already in power in 706 B.C.,<sup>49</sup> I take the conventional order of the kings in this paper. Although I cannot fully examine Bányai's theory here, this is because it has been suggested that Shebitqo could have been in power in 706 B.C. in the conventional order of succession.<sup>50</sup> The inscriptions of Kawa IV and Kawa V also seem to indicate that Taharqo received the diadem after the king who chose him as an heir, who was named Shebitqo in Kawa IV, passed away.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the conventional order rather agrees with my interpretation of the Kushite titles.

The genealogy is reconstructed on the condition that the fratrilineal succession that includes both brother to brother and cousin to cousin succession is inherent in the matrilineal succession, and *sn nswt*/*snt nswt* designate biologically a brother/sister or a

parallel cousin of the king. Only the titles attested in the documents are used.

Taking Kawa IV literally, I supposed that Alara was a brother of Taharqo's grandmother. Amenirdis I was a daughter of Kashta and *snt nswt* of some king.<sup>52</sup> The king should be Piye or Shabako because he should have been in the younger generation of Kashta and in the older generation of Taharqo. Thus, I put Kashta in Alara's generation and while Piye and Shabako were in the same generation.

I think that Taharqo was a cousin of Shebitqo because Taharqo chose a new cemetery. Since the interdependence of brother and sister is necessary for continuation of the matrilineal descent group, a male member does not alienate himself from his descent group, even after marriage; a mother and her sons are buried in the same cemetery as a consequence.<sup>53</sup> Shebitqo was buried at el Kurru while Taharqo was buried at Nuri. This seems to indicate that they were born of two different women. It can be taken that

49 M. Bányai, "Ein Vorschlag zur Chronologie der 25. Dynastie in Ägypten," *Journal of Egyptian History* 6 (2013) 46-129.

50 D. Kahn, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-I Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25," *Orientalia* 70 (2001) 1-18. K. Jansen-Winkel, "The Chronology of the Third Intermediate Period: Dyns. 22-24" in: E. Hornung, R. Krauss and D. A. Warburton (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, Leiden, Boston, 2006, 234-264.

51 *FHN* I, 139, 153. Contra Bányai, *Journal of Egyptian History* 6 (2013) 64.

52 The names of the king were erased (L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo. CGC Nos 1-1294. Teil 2 nos 381-653*. Berlin, 1925, 115).

53 I cannot find a general description of the burial place in a matrilineal society. When it is mentioned in ethnographic reports, it is stated that males are buried with their natal family. In the Minaugkabau society, the husband continues to belong to the house of his mother, even after marriage. If he dies, he is usually buried at the graveyard of his mother's household (Kato, *Matrilineal and Migration*, 58). As for Mosuo in China, "siri" means "from the same roots," and indeed all members of a "siri" have the same grandmother or ancestress, the same clan name, and are buried in the same family cemetery (H. Göttner-Abendroth, *Matriarchal Societies: Studies on Indigenous Cultures across the Globe*, New York, 2012, 111).



Shebitqo and Qalhata shared the same mother, and they were buried with her at el Kurru; Tanutamani, Qalhata's son, was also buried at el Kurru with his mother. Taharqo, as a cousin of Shebitqo had a lower place in the order of succession than brothers or nephews of Shebitqo, but Shebitqo loved him more than all of his brothers and children (probably nephews, including Tanutamani) according to Kawa V.<sup>54</sup> It seems that Taharqo recorded repeatedly the process of his enthronement because cousin to cousin succession needed more approval than brother to brother succession. Taharqo's matrilineal line and Shebitqo's mother's line branched from their grandmother. It seems to me that Taharqo decided to move to a new cemetery in order to underline the inauguration of his matrilineal line.

I think Piye and Shabaqo were brothers because only one of either Piye's daughter, Tabakenamun, or Shabaqo's daughter, Isisemchebit, could be a parallel cousin of Shebitqo and Taharqo if Piye and Shabaqo were cousins. Additionally, I think that Alara and Kashta were brothers, even though their relationship is not supported by evidence from the monuments.<sup>55</sup> This is because Kashta's daughter, Amenirdis I, could not have been a cousin of Piye or Shabaqo if Alara and Kashta were cousins.

In matrilineal succession, the kingship passes to a nephew after fratrilineal succession. As shown in Table 4, Piye and Shabaqo were brothers, and enthroned as nephews of Alara and Kashta. Shebitqo and Taharqo were cousins and ascended the throne as nephews of Piye and Shabaqo. Then Tanutamani became a king as a nephew of Shebitqo. The next king, Atlanersa, can be supposed to be a nephew of Taharqo (Taharqo's sister's son). This explains why Khaliut, Piye's son, and Haremakheth, Shabaqo's son, did not succeed their fathers.

The reason why not all of the queens' names were written in a cartouche can also be explained in the matrilineal context. If the Kushite kingdom was a patrilineal society, the combination of *s3t nswt*, *snt nswt*, and *hmt nswt* indicates the highest status of royal

women. However, the names of Isisemchebit and Tabakenamun (Table 4), who had this combination of titles, were not enclosed in a cartouche. Neither the status of *s3t nswt* nor *snt nswt* was important enough for them to be privileged to use the cartouche, even though they were the wives of kings. In the suggested genealogy, they were parallel cousins of the king (Shebitqo or Taharqo). Because the prime candidates for the next king's mother were the king's real sisters, they were not in an important position in the matrilineal succession.<sup>56</sup> I tentatively suppose that the names of those who had the right to be a king's mother were written in a cartouche.<sup>57</sup> It seems that the fact that some of the queens' names were not written in a cartouche also indicates that Kush was a matrilineal society.

The choice of the God's Wife of Amen can also be explained in the matrilineal context. Amenirdis I and Shepenwepet II were the king's daughters and king's parallel cousins but not king's real sisters. Since the king's real sisters should have been reserved for the next king's mother, the king's daughters were chosen for the God's Wife of Amen, who should be celibate. Even though they, as the king's daughters and king's parallel cousins, did not play an important role in the matrilineal succession, they were chosen to be the God's Wife of Amen because they belonged to the matrilineal royal lineage and were of noble status.

## 6. THE MEANING OF *snw nswt*

There has been much debate on the meaning of *snw nswt* (king's brothers).<sup>58</sup> In Kawa Stela V, lines 13-14, it is written as follows: "As I said, I came from Bow-Land (Nubia) in the midst of the king's brothers (*snw nswt*) whom His Majesty had levied therefrom, that I might be with him because he loved me more than all his (other) brothers and more than all his children. I being distinguished from them by His Majesty."<sup>59</sup>

54 Kawa V (FHN I:153). In a matrilineal clan in Minangkabau, deviations from the succession rules occur if the successor designated by custom is obviously unfit for the post, and a functionary has some powers to indicate whom he would like to have appointed as his successor after his death (P. E. Josselin de Jong, *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan: Socio-Political Structure in Indonesia*, The Hague, 1952, 59). Tanutamani was too young to be a king when Shebitqo nominated Taharqo to be his heir. Tanutamani was enthroned after Taharqo because he was a legitimate heir. However, the kingship was occupied by Taharqo's matrilineal line after Tanutamani.

55 Morkot, *Meroitica* 15 (1999) 208.

56 Only in the case that all of the king's sisters could not bear a son could the king's female maternal parallel cousin be a king's mother. They inherited blood from the king's maternal grandmother.

57 In addition, the names of the God's Wife of Amen were written in a cartouche. I assume that the names of the king's daughters who were chosen for the God's Wife of Amen were not originally enclosed in a cartouche, and their names came to be written in a cartouche after enthronement.

58 Kahn, *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 153-154. Revez, "The Role of the Kings' Brothers". Revez's paper has been mentioned above.

59 *FHN* I:152-153.





Apelt concluded that the terms *sn nswt* and *snt nswt* are fictive and are not real indications of blood relations but designations of a social group from which the next king would be selected.<sup>60</sup> Lohwasser thought the title, *snt nswt*, was hereditary starting from Alara's sisters. The daughters of *snwt nswt* in turn were *snwt nswt*, and the sons of *snwt nswt* were *snw nswt*. The *snw nswt* comprise the group from among which the next king was selected.<sup>61</sup> This means that the title of *sn nswt* indicates no relationship to the king in the same generation. According to this theory, a king could be a remote relative of his predecessor. Revez agrees to a large extent with Apelt and Lohwasser's hypothesis that the title of *sn nswt* was not a real indication of blood relationship but designated instead as a social group, although he would not go as far as to say that *sn nswt* has no biological meaning whatsoever, since collateral succession is substantiated by the written Kushite sources.<sup>62</sup>

If the Kushite royal succession was matrilineal and the Kushite people used Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology, then *sn nswt* designates the king's real brother or maternal parallel cousin. In matrilineal succession, sons of the sisters are legitimate heirs to the male position. A group of sons of sisters of the previous king had the right to the throne through their mothers, who were daughters of the previous king's mother (Table 3. ▲). After the enthronement of one of them, other members of the group became the king's brothers or parallel cousins, and they were called *snw nswt* in the enthronement records. In the case of fratrilineal succession before the kingship passed to a nephew, the candidates for the next king were brothers or parallel cousins of the reigning king, and they were called *snw nswt*. In either case, *snw nswt* indicates a group of king's brothers and parallel cousins who had the right to the throne. Their right to the throne was biologically determined. I would say that the title of *sn nswt* was a real indication of blood relationship to the king in the same generation. In the same way, the title of *snt nswt* designates a sister or a female parallel cousin of the king in the biological sense.

Four kings were *sn nswt* or in *snw nswt*: Taharqo, Aspelta, Irikeamanote, and Nastasen. Taharqo was in the midst of the king's brothers (*m kb snw nswt*),<sup>63</sup> and he was distinguished from them by Shebitqo. In this case, Taharqo was a brother or a cousin of Shebitqo.

As for Aspelta, when he was placed before Amen-Re as a candidate for the next king, one of his titles was *sn nswt*.<sup>64</sup> In this case, *sn nswt* means that Aspelta was a brother of Anlamani. Irikeamanote was among the king's brothers when Talachamani passed away.<sup>65</sup> In this case, *snw nswt* means brothers and/or cousins of Talachamani. It is also possible that Irikeamanote was one of the nephews of Talachamani because his relationship to Talachamani is uncertain.

In the stela of Nastasen from year 8, Nastasen's legitimation is recorded.<sup>66</sup> Amen of Napata told Nastasen to come when he was in Meroe, and Nastasen had all of the *snw nswt* (king's brothers),<sup>67</sup> who were in Meroe summoned and said to them, "Come, go, (and) look for him with us (i.e., me), namely, our prince." Then, the king's brothers said, "We should not go with you because it is you that are his 'good son.'" The meanings of some of the words are uncertain, and it seems that some pronouns were misused in this inscription. It was interpreted in this condition that Nastasen asked the "king's brothers" to come with him in order to look for a new king. However, it seems more appropriate to take it that Nastasen asked the "king's brothers" to come with him because the new king was selected from among them. It seems that the later interpretation is more accordant to the replay of the king's brothers; "We should not go with you because it is you that are his 'good son.'" I think that the "king's brothers" were Nastasen's brother(s) and/or maternal parallel cousin(s) who had the right to the throne.

While a kind of election was recorded in the enthronement records of those four kings, the succession pattern in Kush was not subject to a free election. A next king was chosen from among the *snw nswt* who were biologically qualified candidates for the throne. The recorded elections were procedures in choosing the most appropriate one from among the candidates. Although seniority must have had the highest priority, personal qualifications must have been considered sometimes, as ethnographical-

60 D. Apelt, "Bemerkungen zur Thronfolge in der 25. Dynastie," *Meroitica* 12 (1990) 29. Kahn *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 153.

61 Lohwasser, *BzS* 7 (2000) 92, 98, Tabelle 1. Lohwasser, *JARCE* 38 (2001) 65.

62 Revez, "The Role of the Kings' Brothers," (2014) 542.

63 Kawa Stela V line 13, *FHN* I, 153

64 Aspelta Enthronement Stela line 18, *FHN* I, 239-240.

65 Kawa IX lines 3-4, T. Eide, T. Hägg, R. P. Holton and L. Török (eds.), *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum: Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD*. Vol. II From the Mid-Fifth to the First Century BC, Bergen, 1996, (Henceforth *FHN* II) 400-401.

66 Berlin Ägyptisches Museum 2268 lines 4-11, *FHN* II: 475-477.

67 The hieroglyphs for king's brothers can be read as *nfrwy nswt*. It has been translated as "king's brothers," and I follow this conventional translation. See Lohwasser, *BzS* 7 (2000) 88, n.12.



ly reported.<sup>68</sup> When the king competed with other candidates for the throne, he must have felt the need to underline his legitimacy. As a result, *snw nswt* were frequently mentioned. In the patrilineal succession in Egypt, the presence of brothers was a threat to an heir apparent. That was why *sn(w) nswt* was rarely mentioned in monumental inscriptions before the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The emergence of *snw nswt* during the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty indicates a new pattern of royal succession, i.e. the matrilineal succession, in which “king’s brothers” played an important role.

Kushite society was originally matrilineal, and the kings in the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty followed their own tradition regarding royal succession. The Kushite people spoke Meroitic, which did not have a written form at that time. They adopted the Egyptian language in order to record their activities. When they translated a Meroitic kinship term meaning brother and male parallel cousin into Egyptian, they used *sn*. In consequence, *snw nswt* in the Kushite inscriptions came to designate both brothers and male parallel cousins of the king.

#### 7. CONFORMITY OF MATRILINEALITY WITH KUSHITE THEOLOGY

The fully Egyptianized theology in Kush seems to indicate that patrilineality, which was obvious in Egyptian theology, was also prevailing in Kush, but I think otherwise. The divine sonship did not interfere with the matrilineal succession. The king as the divine son of the god succeeded the throne of his uncle or brother.

In Kush, the legitimacy of royal power as based on the ruler’s divine sonship was stated as a recurrent topos in royal documents from Piye onwards.<sup>69</sup> Alara’s covenant with Amen is one example. In the covenant, Alara’s sisters were committed to Amen, and then Alara asked Amen to grant kingship to his sisters’ offspring. Accordingly, Amen appointed “his son” Taharqo a king, which means that Amen was his father and one of the royal women was his mother. Török states that, conceptually, the covenant

implies the adoption of the ruler’s divine sonship and thus the acceptance of the Egyptian-type patrilineal inheritance.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, in the case of the divine birth of Hatshepsut and Amenhetep III, the god Amen-Re visited their mothers in the guise of their husbands, the ruling kings, and Hatshepsut and Amenhetep III are conceived.<sup>71</sup> This indicates the earthly patrilineal succession as well as the divine birth. However, the Nubian Amen never took on the guise of the earthly king. Since the biological father does not play an important role in matrilineal succession, he could be anonymous. Therefore, when the Kushite people adopted Egyptian theology in order to bestow divinity on the king, they treated Amen as the king’s father, leaving the biological father anonymous. Furthermore, because the preceding king is not a father of the next king in matrilineal succession, the deceased king could not occupy the place of Amen as a father of the next king.<sup>72</sup>

As for the role of Osiris in the Kushite succession, he played the role of the father of the king, but was not his predecessor. Kahn states that, by identifying Osiris, Isis, and Horus, respectively, with the deceased king, the queen mother, and the heir to the throne, the Kushite pattern of succession resembled the Egyptian pattern of succession based on primogeniture, i.e., the eldest son succeeds his father on the throne upon his death.<sup>73</sup> However, it seems to me that the text describing the coronation of Taharqo (Kawa V, ll.18-19) deliberately avoids saying that the king succeeded the throne of his father. It says, “She found me appearing on the throne of Horus, [...] She was exceedingly joyful after seeing the beauty of His Majesty, (just) as Isis saw her son Horus appearing on the throne of his father Osiris.”<sup>74</sup> The divine sonship of the king as an incarnation of Horus is evident, but it does not say that the king appeared on the throne of his father.

The Kushite people borrowed the concept of the divine sonship from Egyptian theology in order to bestow divinity upon the king, but this does not necessarily mean that they also adopted patrilineality.

68 In the Minangkabau society, a person outside the proper line of inheritance sometimes captures the traditional status position because of his money, fame, academic title, or other distinction (Kato, *Matriliney and Migration*, 216). Herodotus’s description of Aithiopia saying that the man among the citizens whom they find to be the tallest and have strength in proportion to his height they find fit to be king (*FHN* I: 326) may be a misunderstanding. It may have referred to the choice of the king from among the biologically qualified candidates, not among the citizens.

69 Török, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 267.

70 Török, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 234.

71 M. Ayad, *God’s Wife, and God’s Servant: the God’s Wife of Amun (c.740-525 BC)*, London and New York, 2009, 7.

72 Contra Gozzoli, “Royal Sisters and Royal Legitimization in the Nubian Period,” (Warsaw 2010) 485-486.

73 Kahn, *MittSAG* 16 (2005) 158.

74 *FHN* I: 154.



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would say that the deliberate and coherent way the kinship titles were used indicates that the Kushite people used Iroquois or Crow kinship terminology. The genealogy of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty when reconstructed according to Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology shows a pattern of political power succession from a maternal uncle to his nephew, which is typical of a matrilineal society. I would like to argue that *snw nswt* designates the king's real brothers and maternal parallel cousins in the biological sense, and they were biologically legitimated heirs to the throne. The prominence of *snt nswt* and *sn nswt* in the inscriptions is the very testimony of matrilineal royal succession in Kush. Although identification of Kushite kinship terminology as Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology needs more discussion, the idea of interpreting the royal succession in the 25<sup>th</sup> and Napatan Dynasties as matrilineal seems quite promising.

## SUMMARY

In this paper, I would like to argue that the royal succession of the Kushite Kingdom was matrilineal. One of the textual grounds for accepting the father-son relationship of the kings is the indirect one that some royal women held both titles *snt nswt* (king's sister) and *s3t nswt* (king's daughter). However, if the Kushite people used Iroquois or Crow kinship terminology, which uses the same term for both siblings and parallel cousins, *snt nswt* denotes both a king's sister and a king's parallel cousin. If so, even though a woman had the titles *s3t nswt* and *snt nswt*, she could be a parallel cousin of the reigning king as well as a daughter of the previous king, and the reigning king could be a nephew of the previous king. The coherent way the kinship titles of the royal women, i.e., *mwt nswt*, *snt nswt* and *s3t nswt*, were used, as shown in this paper, indicates that Kushite kinship terminology was Iroquois/Crow. The genealogy of the 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty when reconstructed according to Iroquois/Crow kinship terminology shows the pattern of the succession of the kingship from a maternal uncle to his nephew, which is typical of a matrilineal society.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Aufsatz möchte ich für eine matrilineare Erbfolge im kuschitischen Königtum argumentieren. Eine der auf Texten basierenden Grundlagen für die Akzeptierung einer Vater-Sohn-Beziehung der Könige ist indirekt, indem einige der königlichen Frauen die beiden Titel *snt nsw* (Königsschwester) und *s3t nsw* (Königstochter) tragen. Wenn jedoch die Kuschiten die Irokesen bzw. Crow-Terminologie der Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen verwenden, die den gleichen Ausdruck für Geschwister und Parallelcousins gebraucht, dann bezeichnet *snt nsw* sowohl eine Königsschwester als auch eine königliche Parallelcousine.

Auch wenn eine Frau die Titel *snt nsw* und *s3t nsw* trägt, kann sie die Parallelcousine des regierenden Königs und die Tochter des Vorgängers sein. Der regierende König kann ein Neffe des Vorgängers sein. Die kohärente Weise, in der die Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen der königlichen Frauen (*mwt nsw*, *snt nsw*, *s3t nsw*) verwendet wurden, lässt darauf schließen, dass die kuschitische Verwandtschaftsterminologie dem Irokesen/Crow-System entspricht. Die Genealogie der 25. Dyn., wenn sie anhand der Irokesen/Crow-Terminologie rekonstruiert wird, zeigt das Muster einer königlichen Erbfolge vom Onkel mütterlicherseits zum Neffen, was typisch für matrilineare Gesellschaften ist.

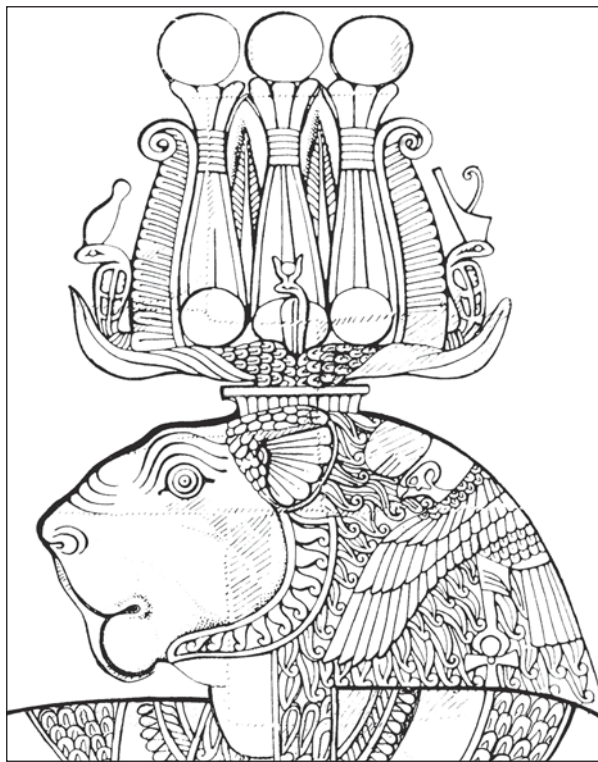


APPENDIX. ROYAL WOMEN WITH KINSHIP TITLES  
(based on Lohwasser *Meroitica* 19 (2001) 141-191, 245 Tabelle VIII)

Name (Dossier No.)	<i>mwt nswt</i>	<i>snt nswt</i>	<i>s3t nswt</i>	Relationship to the king
Abalo (D.1)	*	*		King's mother
Amanitakaye (D.5)	*	*		King's sister
Malotaral (D.26)	*	*		
Nasalsa (D.35)	*	*		
Pelcha (D.42)	*	*		
Qalhata (D.47)	*	*		
Sakachaye (D.49)	*			
...salka (D.50)	*			
Tesmallo (D.58)	*	*		
Acheqa (D.2)		*		King's sister or
Batahaliye (D.13)		*		king's parallel cousin
Irpep (D.18)		*		
Malotarachta (D.25)		*		
Matiqen (D.30)		*		
Naparaye (D.34)		*		
Pabatma (D.40)		*		
Piye-arty (D.44)		*		
Sen... (D.51)		*		
Takahatamani (D.57)		*		
Chensa (D.14)		*	*	King's parallel cousin
Henuttachebit (D.17)		*	*	
Irtiru (D.19)		*	*	
Isisemchebit (D.20)		*	*	
Paabtameri (D.39)		*	*	
Pekereslo (D.41)		*	*	
Tabakenamun (D.53)		*	*	
Amenirdis (D.6)			*	King's cross cousin
Arty (D.8)			*	
Katimalo (D.22)			*	
Meritamun (D.31)			*	
Neb... (D.36)			*	
Mutirdis (D.33)			*	
Sachmach (D.48)			*	



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