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Priestess, queen, goddess

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Solange Ashby

**Priestess, queen, goddess**

The divine feminine in the kingdom of Kush

*Solange Ashby*

The symbol of the *kandaka*—"Nubian Queen"—has been used powerfully in present-day uprisings in Sudan, which toppled the military rule of Omar al-Bashir in 2019 and became a rallying point as the people of Sudan fought for #Sudanxit—a return to African traditions and rule and an ouster of Arab rule and cultural dominance. The figure of the *kandake* continues to reverberate powerfully in the modern Sudanese consciousness. Yet few people outside Sudan or the field of Egyptology are familiar with the figure of the *kandake*, a title held by some of the queens of Meroe, the final Kushite kingdom in ancient Sudan. When translated as “Nubian Queen,” this title provides an aspirational and descriptive symbol for African women in the diaspora, connoting a woman who is powerful, regal, African.

This chapter will provide the historical background of the ruling queens of Kush, a land that many know only through the Bible. Africans appear in the Hebrew Bible, where they are frequently referred to by the ethnically generic Hebrew term כוּשִׁי, which is translated “Ethiopian” or “Cushite.” Kush refers to three successive kingdoms located in Nubia, each of which took the name of its capital city: Kerma (2700–1500 BCE), Napata (800–300 BCE), and Meroe (300 BCE–300 CE).

Both terms, “Ethiopian” and “Cushite,” were used interchangeably to designate Nubians, Kushites, Ethiopians, or any person from Africa. In Numbers 12:1, Moses’ wife Zipporah is called כוּשִׁי, which is translated as either “Ethiopian” or “Cushite” in modern translations of the Bible. The Kushite king Taharqo (690–664 BCE), who ruled Egypt as part of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, is mentioned in the Bible as marching against enemies of Israel, the Assyrians (2Kings 19:9, Isa 37:9). Perhaps best known to Christians is the Apostle Philip’s teaching and baptism of the “Ethiopian” eunuch, an official of the “Candace of Meroe,” which occurred on the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:27): “Now there was an Ethiopian (Greek: Αἰθιόπος) eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury.” This New Testament reference in imprecise Greek describes the powerful treasurer of the Kingdom of Meroe and its *kandake*, the revered “Queen Mother.”
The biblical allusion to the Candace of Kush places us squarely in the period to be discussed in this chapter. As the Acts of the Apostles purports to describe the period immediately after the death of Jesus, it must recount events of the first century CE. This is precisely the period when Kushite queens reached the pinnacle of their power, ruling jointly with their husbands and in at least three instances, holding the throne of Kush as sole rulers.

Review of previous scholarship

Frankly, not much has been written on the queens of Kush. Short articles^4 and book chapters^5 describe the status, role, and iconography of the women who ruled one of the great political powers in the ancient world. In contrast, much has been written about the queens of Egypt who infrequently and with great difficulty attained sole rule of their kingdoms. Yet Egyptian queens are acclaimed as the most powerful women of the ancient world. The exhibit Queens of Egypt, which was on display at the National Geographic Museum in 2019, presented the queens of Egypt in a slightly patronizing way that undermined the fact of their power, while it also completely ignored the culturally aligned and geographically proximate rule of the queens of Kush. Not surprisingly, the history of sole rule by powerful queens in the Kingdom of Kush is completely overlooked in the book associated with the exhibit, When Women Ruled the World: Six Queens of Egypt. In it, author Kara Cooney claims:

In one place on our planet thousands of years ago, against all the odds of the male-dominated system in which they lived, women ruled repeatedly with formal, unadulterated power. Like Nitocris, most of these women ruled as Egyptian god-king incarnate, not as the mere power behind a man on the throne. Ancient Egypt is an anomaly as the only land that consistently called upon the rule of women to keep its regime in working order, safe from discord, and on the surest possible footing – particularly when a crisis was under way.6

The omission of Kushite queens from an analysis of female power in the ancient world could be due to two factors: first, Egyptologists tend not to know much about Kush; second, Egypt has been associated with the Mediterranean world, while Kush is relegated to Africa. For as long as the discipline of Egyptology has been around, there has been a division between those who would see ancient Egypt as part of the Near East, the biblical world, the eastern Mediterranean (mainstream Egyptologists in academia) and those who seek to situate ancient Egypt in its African context (primarily scholars of African descent from other disciplines).7 This means that Kush languishes in obscurity, because it is not incorporated into studies of the ancient world, nor is it included in Africana Studies, which unfortunately still tends to begin the study of African history with European colonialism and slavery in Africa. In this paradigm, which is a result of the failings of both Egyptology and Africana Studies, Egyptian queens merit historical examination, while Kushite queens are ignored into non-existence. This chapter is one small step toward rectifying that omission; a full-length work on the queens of Kush is long overdue.

Queenship in Kush

Nubia refers to a geographic location in the Middle Nile valley, the area between the First and the Fourth Cataracts of the Nile,8 which today comprises southern Egypt and northern Sudan. The people who lived there in antiquity are called Nubian, as are the modern people who still call the area home. In modern times, the Nubian people have been displaced by successive dam-building schemes in Egypt and Sudan, which have flooded Nubia9 (Figure 2.1).
Priestess, queen, goddess

Kerman queens (2700–1500 BCE)

Due to Kerma’s eschewal of writing, we are unable to identify the rulers of Kerma by name. Kings of Kerma were buried in large tumuli, mound burials surrounded by subsidiary interments, sacrificed retainers, and cattle. High-status female burials within the king’s burial complex may have belonged to queens. One individual’s elite burial goods may be illustrative of the dual role of a Kerman queen: female complement to her royal husband and priestess. The woman buried in K1503, a subsidiary burial in royal tumulus KX, which was the second royal burial of the Kerma Classic period (1750–1550 BCE), was interred with rich grave goods: imported objects from Egypt, a faience scarab seal indicative of economic agency, and items that seem to indicate the ritual status of a priestess. Wearing a silver headdress evocative of the ram’s horns of the god Amun, she wore an elaborate costume, which included a leather skirt with a silver beaded drawstring (Minor 2018, 252). Evidence suggests that the beaded, multicolored leather skirt was associated with a select group of Nubian women who may have served as priestesses. Predating the Kerman examples, tattooed females excavated from a C-Group Nubian cemetery at Hierakonpolis in Upper Egypt were buried in similar leather skirts. Even earlier Nubian priestess-queens were buried in the Eleventh Dynasty funerary complex of Mentuhotep II (2055–2004 BCE) at Deir el-Bahari in Egypt (Ashby 2018, 67, 73).
Because Napatan rulers adopted the use of Egyptian hieroglyphs to decorate their monuments, we can describe more fully the titles and roles of their queens. Napatan queens were buried in the Kushite royal cemeteries at el-Kurru and Nuri in Sudan near the ancient capital of Napata and the sacred mountain of Gebel Barkal at the Fourth Cataract, where the ram-headed god Amun was worshiped. In life, they served to birth the next royal generation, to legitimate the rule of their sons, and as priestesses in the cult of the god Amun. They were installed as singers, sistrum players, and God’s Wives of Amun. Napatan queens were revered as kings’ daughters, kings’ sisters, and kings’ mothers. Both Napatan kings, Taharqo and Aspelta, traced their female lineage to the dynasty’s founder to proclaim their right to assume the Kushite kingship. In several inscriptions, Taharqo traced his mother Abar’s descent from the sister of the dynastic founder Alara. Similarly, Aspelta listed seven generations of female ancestors to trace his ancestry back to the founding of the Napatan dynasty. Both kings claimed descent from Alara’s sister, Pebatma (Haynes and Santini-Ritt 2012, 172). Pebatma bore the titles Sistrum Player of Amun-Re, King of the Gods; sister of the king; daughter of the king; and Divine Mother of the Divine Adoratress (Amenirdis I) (Fontes Historiae Nubiorum I, 145). In her ritual relationship with the god Amun, Pebatma partnered with Amun to conceive and then birth the divine-human king.

Napatan queens (800–300 BCE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>Queen(s)</th>
<th>Progeny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alara</td>
<td>Kasqa</td>
<td>→ Tabiry, wife of Piahkhy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashta</td>
<td>Pebatma</td>
<td>→ Khensa, Abar, Peksater, Neferukakashta, wives of Piahkhy → Amenirdis I, God’s Wife of Amun → Shabaqo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piankhy</td>
<td>Khensa, Abar, Tabiry, Peksater, Neferukakashta</td>
<td>→ Shepenwepet II, God’s Wife of Amun → Taharqo, son of Abar → Arty, wife of Shebitqo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabaqo</td>
<td>Qalhata</td>
<td>→ Tanwetamani → Isisemkhebit, wife of Shebitqo → Piankharty, wife of Tanwetamani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shebitqo</td>
<td>Arty, Isisemkhebit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taharqo</td>
<td>Naparaye, Tabekenamun, Takhatamani, Atakhebasken, ...salka</td>
<td>→ Amenirdis II, God’s Wife of Amun → Nesishutefnut, son of Takhatamani → Atlanersa, son of ... salka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanwetamani</td>
<td>Piankharty, Malqaye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some scholars have connected the matrilineal succession in Kush to a larger African practice and have noted its continuation in medieval kingdoms of the Sudan right up until the imposition of British colonial rule in 1916 (Fluehr-Lobban 2004, 5). The presence and participation of the king’s mother were essential in Napatan coronation rites. Taharqo, Anlamani, Aspelta, and Irike-Amanote all note the presence of their mothers at their coronations (Haynes Santini-Ritt 2012, 172). As part of her ritual role in the coronation, the king’s mother delivered a speech to Amun requesting him to grant her son the Kushite kingship (Ibid., 173). In several Kushite coronations, the king’s great wife is depicted taking part in the ceremonies along with the king’s mother: [Taharqo (690–664 BCE), Tanwetamani (664–655/53 BCE), Harsiotef (early fourth century BCE), and Nastasen (late fourth century BCE)] (Ibid).

The king is always accompanied by female members of his family — in one scene by his mother and in the other by his wife. It is significant that they assist him on the occasion of
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this crucial ceremony by shaking a sistrum and libating, exercising priestly functions at this most important moment inaugurating the king’s reign. Their presence is not coincidental but purposeful; they were participants in the ceremony which epitomized Kushite kingship, implying that the feminine counterpart of the king was eminently important. There is no representation of the coronation during Napatan times that excludes the king’s wife or his mother.

(Lohwasser 2001, 68)

Hathoric associations were strong in the cultic role of the Kushite queens. Hathor was the goddess of love, music and dance, childbirth, and divine drunkenness. Lana Troy says of Egyptian royal women: “The role of the royal women is not distinct from that of the goddess Hathor but is rather her mortal manifestation and complement” (Troy 1986, 54). Similarly, Kushite queens were mortal manifestations of the goddess Hathor, which was reflected in the titles they held: Great One of the i3mt-scepter/Mistress of the i3mt-scepter,¹³ Great One of the ḫts-scepter,¹⁴ Sistrum Player,¹⁵ and Chantress¹⁶ (Troy 1986, 190–2). The titles Mistress of the i3mt-scepter and Great One of the ḫts-scepter both refer to cultic implements carried by priestesses of Hathor. The title wrt ḫts, “great one of the ḫts-scepter,” is an archaic title found frequently in the titulary of royal women of the Old and Middle Kingdom in Egypt (Troy 1986, 79). The ḫts-scepter has ritual associations with the carrying chair (Troy 1986, 81), which itself is strongly associated with the Egyptian queen in her ritual roles as early as the predynastic period and in the Pyramid Texts, which adorned the burial chambers of the Old Kingdom Egyptian kings of the late Fifth Dynasty and the Sixth Dynasty (ca. 2350–2100 BCE) (Troy 1986, 80–1).

Similarly, the i3mt-tree is a symbol of the goddess Hathor. While this title appears in Egypt as early as the Thirteenth Dynasty (1773–1650 BCE), its early importance for Kushite royal symbolism is attested in the royal building program of the Kushite king Taharqo (690–664 BCE) in Egypt, where the king, who is depicted performing the ḫts-ceremony, holds an i3mt-tree in his hand (Troy 1986, 80–5).

However, the title held by most of the Kushite queens was that of “Chantress,” singer of the prayers and praises of the god. The royal women participated in worship by communicating directly with the god through the vehicle of their voices raised in a singing prayer (think Aretha Franklin, not Gregorian chants) accompanied by the rhythm of the sistrum, a bronze rattle sacred to Hathor.

God’s Wives of Amun

A potent avenue to political power for Kushite royal women of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (747–656 BCE) was to serve as God’s Wife of Amun and the Hand of God, both titles held by the Kushite princesses Amenirdis I and Shepenwepet II. Attested in Egypt first in the early Eighteenth Dynasty, the God’s Wife of Amun was the powerful complement to the Egyptian king. Created for the first queen of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Ahmose-Nefertari, the position of God’s Wife of Amun entailed much more than sacred duties. King Ahmose’s Donation Stele confirms that he created and funded the Second Priesthood of Amun for his sister-wife Ahmose-Nefertari. The benefices of that office were granted to the God’s Wife of Amun in perpetuity (Bryan 2000, 229).

The position of God’s Wife of Amun granted royal women of the Eighteenth Dynasty independent sources of income and, therefore, political power. Kushite kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty employed this tradition to place their daughters in the highest seat of power in Thebes. This Upper Egyptian city served as the capital of the Eighteenth Dynasty and was the site of
the powerful temple of Karnak dedicated to the god Amun. As Kushites gained control of Egypt, Kashta's daughter, Amenirdis I, was adopted by the previous God's Wife of Amun. In this position, she served as the virtual ruler of Upper Egypt. Amenirdis I, in turn, adopted her niece, Shepenwepet II, daughter of Piankhy. Amenirdis II, daughter of Taharqo, was the third Kushite God's Wife of Amun. While it is said that Kushite rulers adopted the Egyptian practice of assigning royal women the role of God's Wife of Amun in order to assume control of Egypt, placing Kushite royal women in the service of Amun was a tradition practiced in Kush before their conquest of Egypt. Alara dedicated his sisters as sistrum players in the temples of Amun in Kush, and Anlamani repeated the practice with four of his sisters, who were dedicated to Amun temples in Napata, Kawa, Pnubs, and Sanam (Török 1995, 96). Associating royal women with the power and wealth of the temples of Amun in Egypt and Kush served a similar purpose: to create a collateral line of power for the royal women who surrounded and supported the king, perhaps granting legitimacy to his right to rule through their royal lineage. The office of God's Wives of Amun reached its pinnacle of power during Kushite rule.

Most Kushite royalty chose to be buried in their homeland. However, several Napatan queens of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty were buried at Abydos, the site of the sacred burial of the god Osiris and of ritual burials (cenotaphs) of generations of Egyptian kings. Abydos is the only site in Egypt with Kushite royal burials except for those of the God's Wives of Amun at Medinet Habu (Leahy 1994, 175).

**Meroitic queens (300 BCE–300 CE)**

While the level of power attained by Napatan queens was highly unusual in the ancient world, Meroitic queens consolidated even greater power, resulting in a series of sole-ruling queens during the first century BCE and the first century CE. Because no king list equivalent to those found in Egypt has been discovered thus far in Meroe, our understanding of the chronological succession of Meroitic rulers is still deeply unresolved. Regnal years and even place of burial have yet to be firmly established and agreed upon by most scholars. This section will discuss five independent ruling queens of Meroe based on the following provisional chronological order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queen</th>
<th>Burial Beg N (Begrawiyah North cemetery at Meroe) Bar (Gebel Barkal)</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shanadakhete</td>
<td>Beg. N. 11?</td>
<td>First century BCE or first century CE¹⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanirenas</td>
<td>Bar. 4? Beg. N. 21?</td>
<td>25 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawidemak</td>
<td>Bar. 6</td>
<td>Early first century CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanishaketo</td>
<td>Beg. N 6</td>
<td>Early first century CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanitore</td>
<td>Beg. N 1</td>
<td>Mid-first century CE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Meroitic era was characterized by a strong return to indigenous practices. It was during this period that the Meroitic hieroglyphic and cursive scripts were developed, which allowed inscriptions to be crafted in the native language of the kingdom instead of the Egyptian hieroglyphs that had predominated in the Napatan period. Similarly, we see a prominence given to the worship of indigenous deities: Apedemak (lion-headed creator god), Amesemi (falcon-crowned goddess, consort to Apedemak), Arensmuphis, and Sebiumeker (hunter and guardian gods). These Meroitic gods were worshiped in conjunction with deities shared with the Egyptian pantheon: Hathor, Isis, Osiris, Amun, and Mut.
Meroitic queens carried several Meroitic-language titles that indicated their political and ritual roles: *qore* and *kandake*. The former title was used exclusively by the ruler, male or female. Of the five queens listed in the preceding table, three used the title *qore*, which would indicate that they ruled as monarchs: Amanirenas, who ruled with her husband Teriteqas and continued to rule after his demise; Nawidemak; and Amanishakheto, whose dazzling jewelry is on display at the Egyptian Museum in Berlin and Munich. The title *kandake* was held by the “queen mother.” In the Meroitic royal ideology, the *kandake* was the king’s sister and mother of the legitimate heir to the throne. Of the five Meroitic queens listed, three held the title *kandake*: Amanirenas, Amanishakheto, and Amanitore, who reigned as co-regent with her husband Natakamani. It appears to have been common knowledge among Greek and Roman scholars of the time that “[t]he Ethiopians do not publish the fathers of the kings, but hand them down as sons of the Sun. But the mother of each they call Candace.”

The period of successive sole-ruling queens (mid-first century BCE to mid-first century CE) is considered the Golden Age of the kingdom of Meroe. The queen buried in Beg N 11, perhaps Shanadakhete, was the first ruling queen of Meroe. The pylons in front of her burial pyramid show the powerfully built queen in the posture of subduing her enemies, a pose reserved in Egypt solely for kings. Her successor, King Tanyideamani, inaugurated the Meroitic writing system and established an administrative hierarchy to control newly claimed territories in Lower Nubia. Amanirenas may have been the “one-eyed Candace” referred to by Strabo (*Geography* 17 1.54) who engaged Roman troops in battle as they attempted and failed to extend
their conquest of Egypt by moving south into Lower Nubia. Both Amanirenas and Nawidemak were buried in the northern royal cemetery at Gebel Barkal, perhaps as a result of their battles to hold those territories and repel the Roman invaders.

The multitude of artifacts that bear the name of Queen Amanishakheto attest to the power and wealth of her reign, as does the cache of jewelry removed from her funerary pyramid by the Italian treasure hunter Giuseppe Ferlini. The Meroitic Golden Age came to fruition during the reign of Natakamani and Amanitore, who are credited with reviving the use of Egyptian-language inscriptions, creating a new iconography for their funerary chapels, and inaugurating a prolific royal building program that included renovation and construction of temples at Amara, Sai Island, Tabo, Napata, Dangeil, Meroe, and Wad el ‘Naqa. 27 It was during this Golden Age of ruling queens that Nubian priests began arriving at the temples of Lower Nubia (Philae and Dakka) to conduct rites on behalf of their Meroitic royal patrons. Over the course of two centuries, these priests and administrators would make large royal donations of gold, ordain local priests, plant sacred trees at the temple and adjacent burial of Osiris, and perform the uniquely Nubian funerary rite of pouring milk libations for the resurrection of their deceased king or queen. 28 The appearance of religious inscriptions by Meroitic priests, ambassadors, and even rulers (Teriteqas and Amanirenas, co-rulers, left inscriptions at Dakka; Yesbokheamani had his name inscribed in cartouches at Philae) in the Egyptian temples of

Figure 2.3 Pyramids at Meroe. © Chester Higgins / All Rights Reserved.
Priestess, queen, goddess

Dakka and Philae confirms the power and reach of the kingdom of Meroe during the first three centuries of the Common Era.

**Female power in the ancient African world**

While Egyptian ruling queens presented themselves as male by wearing the traditional kilt and false beard of a king, ruling queens of Meroe were extravagant in the depiction of their powerful feminine presence. Their voluptuous bodies with full breasts and wide, curvy hips suggested physical power. As the female complement to the king, Kushite queens established Maat, divine right order attained by balance in all things. Both female and male essence was necessary to achieve this balance. The king’s potency as the “bull of his mother” was matched by the sacred sexuality of the queen, who served as an earthly manifestation of the goddess Hathor. Female sexuality as the essential enlivening element of creation can be seen throughout the imagery of Nile Valley religion: in the myth of Isis conceiving her son Horus by hovering over the corpse of her deceased husband Osiris; in the appearance of nude women as sacred dancers of Hathor in the rejuvenating rites of the king’s Sed-Festival, celebrated after 30 years of his reign; or in the funerary rites performed to resurrect the dead. The Nubian funerary ritual of offering a libation of the breastmilk of Isis at the grave of her brother-husband Osiris demonstrates the Kushite belief in the enlivening powers of sacred female sexuality.

Meroitic queens are often depicted with their breasts bare on temple walls and in their funerary chapels. Displaying evidence of their fecundity, queens alluded to their reproductive abilities and allied their power with that of the goddesses who bestowed divinity on the king by suckling him. Breast milk as the vehicle by which divinity was transmitted from a deity to the monarch is not unique to Kush. In Egypt, the king is suckled by a goddess at his birth, at his coronation, and during his funerary rites as a means to resurrection through the consumption of this magical fluid. In Kush, however, queens too had access to this divine liquid and, perhaps, allude to their ability to produce it themselves by being depicted bare breasted in scenes of power depicted on ritual objects and temple walls.

While the audacity of the queens of Egypt who attained sole rule is striking in the ancient world, where Mesopotamian, Greek, and Roman queens were often simply breeders of the next generation, the power of Egyptian queens pales beside the status and concomitant respect accorded to the queens of Kush. Depicted as the same size as their husbands, accorded independent wealth, and allowed access to divinity through suckling from the goddess, the royal women of Kush should be remembered as shining examples of members of a society that revered its mothers and the power of their sacred sexuality.

Kushite kings showed concern to demonstrate their legitimacy to rule by tracing their female line back to esteemed foremothers. This is the definition of a matrilineal society. While it was neither egalitarian nor patriarchal, the centrality of women to Kushite royal legitimacy and to local Nubian kinship ties demonstrates the importance of women in this African civilization. That the Kushite history of powerful women (kandakes) served as a potent symbol in the protests that toppled the Arabized dictator al-Bashir is stunning and testifies to the enduring centrality of women in this culture. Among the demands for an end to corruption, dictatorship, and state-sanctioned violence, some protestors in Sudan have also called for a rejection of Arab identity and a return to indigenous African traditions in Sudan, calling their movement #Sudanit. This suggests a powerful confrontation of ideologies as the misogyny present in the
three major monotheistic religions is rejected and replaced with a native tradition of honoring women as mothers, as bearers of a sacred sexuality, and as complementary, essential participants in a society in balance.

Notes

1 The Meroitic royal title *kandake* is rendered Kandaka in popular culture and in some scholarly writing. I will use *kandake* to be consistent with the writing of the name in Meroitic script.

2 www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48126363?thisFB&fbclid=IwAR2IXlyh8NtVGHPibUFla_SLYaZQTjCCKWq6BPVHiBCcT_5CPAAfJBlk. From the article: “The hashtag #Sudaxit has been popular with the protesters and harks back to Sudan’s African, rather than Arab, identity. This graffiti says: ‘We demand that Sudan leaves the Arab League. We are black people, the sons of Kushites’” – a reference to the ancient kingdom of Kush.


7 To date, most universities situate the study of Egyptology in the Department of Near Eastern Studies or some variant on that name. Many Egyptian artifacts are housed in a “Semitic” museum or displayed in galleries of the Ancient Near East. By contrast, scholars of African descent such as Martin Delaney, William Leo Hansberry, W. E. B. DuBois, Cheikh Anta Diop, and many more have stressed the inherent Africanity of Egypt and Nubia. For the history of this scholarly tradition, see Debora Heard, In the House of the Lion and the Ram (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2021), 11–19. This glaring divide has been bridged occasionally by conferences such as Manchester University’s 2009 “Egypt in its African Context.”

8 A cataract is an area of the river where boat traffic is impeded by rocks, which create rapids. The cataracts of the Nile are numbered north to south. The First Cataract, just south of the town of Aswan and immediately north of the island temple of Philae, has traditionally served as the border between Egypt and Nubia. The Fourth Cataract at the southern end of Nubia is in the vicinity of the sacred site of Gebel Barkal, where the god Amun was venerated.

9 Nubians have been relocated to Kom Ombo in Egypt and New Halfa in eastern Sudan as a result of the complete flooding of their homeland by successive dams built in Egypt and Sudan. https://time.org /commentary/analysis/nubians-the-egyptian-state-and-the-right-of-return/. A diasporic community exists in Cairo, Alexandria, and Khartoum as well as in Saudi Arabia and other lands of the Gulf, Europe, and the United States.
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13 Amenirdis I, Shepenwepet II, Khensa, Takhatamani, Naparyae, Shepenwepet II, …salka, Khalese.

14 Amenirdis I, Khensa.


16 Amenirdis I, Shepenwepet II, Peksater, Khensa, Abar, Tabekenamun, Takhatamani, Naparyae, …salka.


18 “The new date for Queen Shadanakhte would place her among six (sic) other Meroitic rulers: Teriteqas, Queen Nawidemak, Queen Amanirenas, Queen Amanishakheto, Amanikhabale, Natakamani, and Queen Amanitore who, based to some extent on classical sources, are believed to have reigned from the late first century BC to the end of the first century AD.” Janice W. Yellin, “The Chronology and Attribution of Royal Pyramids at Meroe and Gebel Barkal: Beg N 8, Beg N 12, Bar 5 and Bar 2,” Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections 6:1 (2014): 80.

19 Amanirenas as qore: Kawa (REM 0628), Meroe City (REM 1003).


23 Amanirenas as kandake: Dakka (REM 0092), Meroe City (REM 0412), Stela of Akinidad (REM 1003), where the queen is both both qore and kandake. See also Fontes Historiae Nubiorum, vol. 2, 715–23.

24 Amanishakheto as kandake: Obelisk from Meroe, Stelae from Naqa, Königstadt Naga. Naga Royal City, ed. Karla Kröper, Sylvia Schoske, and Dietrich Wildung (Berlin–Munich: Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst München, 2011), figs. 34, 217 (Kat. 11), figs. 37, 213, 218 (Kat. 14); Stela from Qasr Ibrim (REM 1511).

25 Amanitore as kandake: Naqa Lion Temple inscription (REM 004), Beg. N 1 funerary chapel; RCK vol. 3 pl. 18f. See also Fontes Historiae Nubiorum, vol. 3, 901–2.


29 A recent publication claims: “Another less common look of the Meroitic queen shows her bare breast, wearing only a long, often patterned, skirt” (Haynes and Santini-Ritt 2012, 184). However, I have identified five examples of Meroitic queens depicted with their breasts bare in their funerary chapels. Royal
Cemeteries of Kush, vol. 3 (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1952): Kanarta (Pl. 3A), Nawidemak (Pl. 13A), Bar. 4 Amanirenas (?) (Pl. 13C), unknown queen Bar. 3 (Pl. 14A), and Amanishakhtet (Pl. 16A). This number does not include the numerous goddesses depicted topless or the bare-breasted mourners who may have been queens or female members of the royal family. Figure 2.2 of this chapter shows Queen Amanitore bare breasted on her bark stand dedicated at Wad ban Naqa. For Bar. 4 as the burial place of Amanirenas, see Yellin 2014, 82–5, esp. 84.

30 See note 2.

Bibliography


