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Original article

FILIATION BY USING THE MOTHER`S NAME DURING THE MIDDLE KINGDOM: EXAMPLES FROM LOWER NUBIA

Faraman, A.

Egyptology dept., Faculty of Archaeology, Aswan Univ., Aswan, Egypt
E-mail address: ahfaraman@yahoo.com

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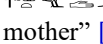
Abstract:
In ancient Egypt, there were various personal names were associated with the mother and her role in the society. These titles held great importance and reflected the high regard for motherhood in Egyptian society. This study specifically focuses on the personal names commonly used by the Egyptian state employees in Lower Nubia during the Middle Kingdom period; who took pride in incorporating their mothers` names as an important part of their personal identities, represented in their personal names. Additionally, these individuals established themselves as being engendered from their respective mothers, similar to the way their father`s acknowledged. It is remarkable that many individuals were primarily identified with their filiation to solely the mother. The study aims to uncover the underlying motivations behind the practice of using only the mother`s name for filiation purpose. Through textual evidence and personal names shows the outlines of the subject. The results may assist in better understanding and appreciating the diverse cultural practices around filiation with the mother`s name.

1. Introduction

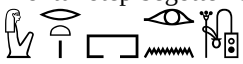
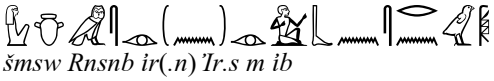
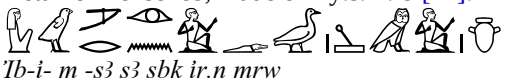
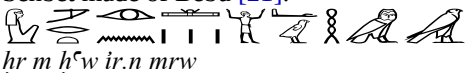
Throughout history, the personal name has held significant importance in distinguishing individuals both in their lifetime and in the realm beyond. It was regarded as one of the human key constituents; the name was also frequently employed as a synonym for the term "KA", emphasizing its significance [1,2]. During the late old kingdom, it was customary to include the name of one`s father, mother, or both in addition to the personal name. This practice became increasingly common during the Middle Kingdom on. This procedure was adopted to ensure a precise and unambiguous identification of individuals [3]. It was more common for individuals to be affiliated with their father`s name rather than their mother`s name. However, there were certain situations where it was crucial to acknowledge the affiliation with the mother`s name, particularly in official documents of high importance, such as petition of accusation, contracts, and financial matters [4,5]. In situations involving multiple wives, it becomes necessary to identify children by incorporating their mother`s name into their personal name. This is particularly relevant in cases of polygamy since the Old Kingdom onward [6,7]. It was widely accepted that an individual`s given name is bestowed upon them at the time of their birth. The mother is typically responsible for giving birth to the name together with the body of her child, while the father announces it. The belief emphasizes the significant role of the mother in this process, overshadowing that of the father [8,9]. In addition, religious texts related to the afterlife of each individual state that the responsibility of naming children lies with the mother;  "made by his father, said (named) by his mother" [9-11]. Personal names could be comprised of single word or an entire sentence. They also had historically held various aspects of significance and structures. They could be associated with religious beliefs or belonging to deities, by incorporating clearly the name of the deity, or even their divine epithet. In addition, they indicated a relationship with the god. Individual`s names could also symbolize common animals of the Egyptian surrounding like dog, mouse, or common plants such as the lotus flower. They even include names of the ruling kings. Names which express military impression, priestly function, administrative involving or professional titles were also exited. However, it remains quite common for personal names to principally indicate the filiation to one`s parents [2,12-18]. Actually, filiation was defined in ancient Egypt through two methods. The first involved simply in adding "*s3.f*" employed during the Old Kingdom, and "*s3*" during the Middle Kingdom onward between an individual`s name and their father`s name [19]. the second method was to use the formula "*ir.n*" followed by the father`s or the mother`s name, and "*ms.n*" followed by solely his mother`s name. Moreover, it was commonly assumed that the first method of definition could also refer

to social lineage, while the second method was restricted to only biological lineage [20].

2. Methodology

In ancient Egypt, it was common to identify individuals by including the name of their father. However, there were certain circumstances and examples where individuals were also identified by incorporating the names of both parents. Table (1) presents a curated collection of individuals found in different sites in Lower Nubia. they have chosen to incorporate both their mother`s and father`s name into their personal names, along with their profession.

Table (1) a curated collection of individuals found in different sites in Lower Nubia in Middle Kingdom

Inscription	Conjunction	Profession
 Mnṯuḥtp sꜣ ʾIntf ms.n sst Montohotep son of Intef, born to (by) Ss(t) [21].	*ms.n*	Townsman (?)
 Mnṯuḥtp ms.n bwbwi Montuhotep begotten by Bubwy [21].	*ms.n*	Unknown
 *s šir.n prt* Sesh, made of Heret [21].	*ir.n*	Scribe (?) Could be also his personal name and profession
 *šmsw Rnsnb ir(.n) ʾIr.s m ib* Retainer Renseneb, made of Iry.s.m.ib [21].	*ir.n*	Follower
 *ʾIb-i- m -sꜣ sꜣ sbk ir.n mrw* Ib-i-m-sa son of Sobek made of Meru [21].	*ir.n*	Recipient of the offerings of the ruler
 snbṯ irt.n bbw Senbet made of Bebu [21].	*ir.n*	Unknown
 *ḥr m ḥˁw ir.n mrw* Horemhaw made of Meret [21].	*ir.n*	Messenger of the administrative library
 Rdw(i)- sbk ms.n nbt it Redwisobek born to Nebetit [21].	*ms.n*	Acquaintance of the King. The revered one.
 Nḏsir (*.n*) *sbk ddu* Nejes made of Sobek-Dedu [21].	*ʾIr* (instead of *ir.n*) The preposition could be eroded	Buttler
 Nny ms.n ḫpr -Rˁ ir.n snfru Neny born to Sat- kheper-Ra engendered by Senefru [21].	*ms.n*	Intendant. Leader of the mines.
 šnfrw ms.n sbk ḥtp Senefru born to Sobek-hotep [21].	*ms.n*	Preceeded by *htp-di-nsw* formula
 ʾIwsnb ir.n ḫbwnyns Iuseneb born to Khebunenes [21].	*ir.n*	Overseer of the house of reckoning cattle.
 ḥsbd ms.n ḥtpṯu Khesbed born to Hotepthu [21].	*ms.n*	Prospector of the Hare city

3. Results

The material presented in this study offers a valuable illustration of textual evidences and personal names of Egyptian officials in Lower Nubia during the Middle Kingdom. It sheds light on an important cultural aspect of the Ancient Egyptian civilization. Through the formula structure and the significance, they provide insights into a prevalent situation observed in Ancient Egypt, where the inclusion of the mother`s name along with their individual personal name is necessary under specific circumstances. These circumstances include: defining an individual in tribunal cases, handing adoption cases, ensuring clear identification and eliminate any potential ambiguity between the siblings of the same family, inheritance procedures, wages and distinguishing one person from another in situations where names are similar. Furthermore, the examples delve into the significant role and elevated status of mothers in Ancient Egypt.

4. Discussion

4.1. *Formula structure*

The examples given show two types of filiation formulas: the first and much more common one is "*ḫ ir.n ḫ*" which encompasses both biological lineage and social relationships. The second one is "*ḫ ms.m ḫ*" which is solely focused on biological lineage. However, both of them had been used as genitive formula in order to tie the personal name of the individual together with his father`s and mother`s name in legal documents and related matters. As a result, including the names of their mothers became essential to differentiate one person from another and accurately identify the rightful owner of each name. Sometimes both the two formulas were used to define symbolic and divine lineage of the Egyptian Kings of the late period [20,22-26]. Actually, the formula "*ḫ ms.n ḫ*" was regarded as a way to ensure rebirth for the owner of the name and guarantees continuity in the afterlife. This emphasizes the significance of this verb in the context of religion [27].

4.2. *Impression and significance*

The material provided above clearly indicates that they belong to state employees. None of them are ordinary workers or hold lower ranks. However, the high ranked employee such as the viceroy on Nubia was not acknowledged or identified by their familial lineage. It sufficed to simply mention their personal name in relation to their profession [28]. But in specific and limited situations, it is observed that individuals of high rank are sometimes identified solely by their mother`s name; this occurs particularly when the mother comes from a prestigious lineage [29]. Examples given also involve individuals who have chosen to exclusively identify themselves by their mother`s names. Textual resources indicate instances where children born to women from esteemed families, who committed adultery. Consequently, their children were not acknowledged by their father`s name. This situation was deemed acceptable to conceptualize within literary frameworks [30-33]. Additionally, adoption in ancient Egypt was a known practice, as evidenced by textual documents. Cases of adoption involved both adults and children, and were documented trough legal and contractual means. The adoption of children was seen as a way to secure an heir for families who were unable to conceive or raise children to their own [34-36]. Personal names of the community of workmen serves as compelling evidence to support the notion that when individuals share the same personal names, an additional name of his father, mother or even an adjective is used to distinguish between them. This is done to avoid confusion and differentiate between the two individuals [37]. This practice was particularly prevalent in ancient Egypt, where mines and quarries housed a multitude of individuals belonging to various classifications. It was customary of these individuals to leave their names as graffiti. Thereby ensuring clarity and distinction [38].

4.3. *Mother`s status*

From the Old kingdom on, children were typically identified based on their lineage to their parents. It was customary to refer to them as "son of" or "daughter of" followed by either the father`s or mother`s name. It was rare to mention both parents` names together. Adults were also distinguished using a similar method. But when they presented individually, they were identified by combining their personal name with the names of their father and mother [39-42]. Actually, in ancient Egyptian society, the role of the mother had great significance. This is evident in the iconography found in both funeral and daily life monuments of the old kingdom. These depictions portray the mother in a highly respected position, demonstrating the profound importance of the mother-son relationship, even in royal cases, sons were consistently portrayed as children in the presence of their mothers. The portrayal of both individuals and kings was depicted with a childlike attitude and in a lesser scale that didn`t accurately represent reality. This particular case was clearly evident –for instance- in the royal statuary depicting king Pepy II portrayed as a child in the presence of his mother queen Ankhnesmerire. At the individual level, mothers were portrayed as being present alongside their sons on funeral stela and false doors in a manner that conveyed equal status and respectable posture [39,43]. In the realm of magic, and often found in late funerary documents, individuals were commonly acknowledged with the name of the mother. Sometimes they become identified as "the one who was laid by his mother before the god". They also were connected with goddess`s names Which held a significant role in both social, political and religious contexts [3]. The term used to denote "mother" was also employed to designate one of the prominent goddesses in ancient Egypt, the goddess Mut, who served as the consort of Amun, patron god of Egypt during the New Kingdom [44]. Since the early history of Egypt, the status of mothers held great importance, from a political standpoint, as early as the second dynasty, queen Nymaathap held the title "mother of the royal sons". This title continued to the late period; the women who held this title held a crucial position. She was responsible for giving birth to the successor king. Ensuring the continuation of the lineage within the royal family [43,45, 46]. The mother`s esteemed status likely stems from her

significant role in the process of rebirth in the afterlife, as she was believed to be direct connection to the creation of the new life in the world beyond [47].

5. Conclusion

Personal names served as an important mean to differentiate individuals from one another. The aforementioned examples demonstrate a distinct pattern of filiation, indicating that many personal names of state employees were defined only with the mother`s name. in addition, it should be noted that these mother`s name were sometimes placed before the father`s name when used in conjunction with them. Also these examples show a great significance and importance were placed on personal names. Therefore, two key considerations that should be taken into consideration:

***) Identification with the mother`s name together with the father`s name**; as a result of the practice of polygamy, children adopted a naming convention that combined their mother`s name together with their father`s name. in order to ensure clear identification and eliminate any potential ambiguity between the siblings of the same family. In the realm of safeguarding inheritance rights, this approach offered a sense of confidence and protection across a range of areas including legal documents, inheritance proceedings, wages, and other related matters. Additionally, personal names held significant importance as they were considered essential to an individual`s identity, serving as a means of upholding their rights throughout their life and ensuring their memory endured for generations to come. Furthermore, there were instances where individuals shared the same personal names as others, including their father`s names, resulting in identical spellings and pronunciations. This created a necessity to distinguish between individuals in order to properly determine compensation and penalties for each person. As a result, including the names of their mothers became essential to differentiate one person from another and accurately identify the rightful owner of each name.*

***) Identification with solely the mother`s name,** examples had been examined involve individuals who have chosen to exclusively identify themselves by their mother`s names. This practice could potentially be deemed as an illegal form of lineage. Literature resources indicate instances where children born to women from esteemed families, who engaged in adultery, their children were not acknowledged by their father`s name for a significant duration. The act of engraving his own name onto the rock demonstrates the worker`s desire to establish his identity by incorporating his mother`s name into his own. This serves as a way for him to commemorate himself during his lifetime and even in the afterlife.*

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