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A FEMALE SCRIBE IN THE TWENTY SIXTH DYNASTY [IRETRAU]

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A FEMALE Scribe IN THE Twenty Sixth Dynasty
 [IRETRAU]

By

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ABSTRACT

This research studies Iretrau’s title ‘šš-s-hm.t’ which was mentioned several times in her tomb. This is a clear reference to literacy. It is notable that Iretrau and her position as a scribe is one of the most complicated issues, due to the lack of texts written by her as a male scribe, as well as the absence of writing tools in her tomb. However, there are many other reasons for looking at Iretrau as a literate woman who held a scribal position with actual duties according to previous indications. The fact that Iretrau used the very plain title of scribe suggests that she was not involved in the administration of the institution directly or assigned certain tasks such as holding a position in a specific office or bureau. She depended solely on her professional status as a Scribe Šš-s-hm.t’ and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife of Amen ‘šms.t šš-s-hm.t’ and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife of Amen ‘šms.t šš-s-hm.t’ and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife of Amen ‘šms.t šš-s-hm.t’ and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife of Amen ‘šms.t šš-s-hm.t’ and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife of Amen ‘šms.t šš-s-hm.t’ and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife of Amen ‘šms.t šš-s-hm.t’ and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife of Amen. This reflects her role as the wife of a vizier and mother of a vizier. Undoubtedly, this independence was related to an increase in the power of the God’s wife of Amun institution which was also reflected. Iretrau seemed to be a great change-maker in the administration system, simply by being a female scribe, because the power structure of ancient Egypt was dominated by men entirely, whereas women were not allowed to be part of the governmental bodies or to occupy any governmental positions. On the contrary, Iretrau broke these rules by working outdoors, something which was not applicable to non-royal women. Iretrau’s status as a Female Scribe and a Chief Attendants was probably similar to the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. Proof of this is the fact that she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen. It is worth questioning the reason why Iretrau does not appear as a scribe in her tomb the same way the male scribes appear in their tombs. Could it be that the position of the male scribe was not appropriate for her, but at least it is imperative to see the tools of a scribe in her tomb, while countless scenes show male Scribe at work!

KEYWORDS: Iretrau, Naaes, Female Scribe, Elite, Psamtichus I, Twenty Sixth Dynasty, Education, Female Literacy, Gender, TT 390.
I. INTRODUCTION

Titles and what they indicate about roles and status in ancient Egypt remain problematic to the modern scholar. Scholars translate the titles, but rarely have detailed understandings of the functions of these titles, especially in the case of women. Probable occupations as indicated by titles are too often dismissed as honorific or purely ceremonial, not entailing any real responsibilities¹. There were some occupations, such as the military which were only for men. Both women and men could be cultic singers, although women more often performed this role².

The occupation of a Scribe was one of the most important occupations in ancient Egypt. Those people who had successfully taken up the arduous task of learning to read and write. This was considered an elite class that has been instrumental in Egypt, especially when it came to the successful execution of their many famous monumental building projects. Scribes played a central role in the Egyptian administration and were universally held in high regard³.

There were occasional female scribes and administrators⁴, but there are few discussions regarding whether a female scribe had responsibilities different from those of a male scribe⁵. Also, there are far fewer indications of women participating in physical activity than there are showing men at work and play. While this may or may not mean that there were fewer activities in which women participated, it does suggest that the men had control over such things as tomb paintings, writing and so on⁶.

In the Late Periods two women appeared as female scribes; «Iretrau» is referred to unambiguously as a female scribe in Twenty Sixth-Dynasty⁷. There was another woman called «Naaes» who bears the office of scribe on her stone stela provenance to Dra Abu’l-Naga. Unfortunately, the inscription is not clear but nonetheless, the word «scribe» is legible⁸.

This research is examining the case of «Iretrau» «the female scribe in Twenty Sixth-Dynasty», plans to study the following:

- Iretrau's Identity.
- Her education; how she learned the basics of the scribal occupation?
- How she achieved this position in Thebes?
- Accepting her as a scribe with real duties.

¹LI 2010: 26  
²MATIĆ 2016: 175.  
⁴MATIĆ 2016: 175.  
⁵SABBAHY 2013: 2.  
⁶BRIAN 1976: 5.  
II. IRETRAU’S IDENTITY

She has been identified as the mother of «Nespakashuty D», who was the vizier of «Psamtichus I», as was his father, according to the texts in her tomb, her parents were the Divine Father «Ipwer» and «Tashaiu».

III. IRETRAU AS A FEMALE SCRIBE «SS SHM.T» AND HER EDUCATION

Iretrau’s title of the scribe is mentioned numerous times in her tomb. It means that Iretrau appeared as a shred of clear evidence for female literacy. She probably arrived at Thebes in 656 BC, when Nitocris was installed in her Theban office; she was probably associated with the God’s Wife of Amun-Re and held true bureaucratic responsibilities.

However, we must wonder about her education and how she learned the basics of the scribal occupation, especially since it is very rare to find female scribes between male scribes throughout ancient Egyptian history, but we cannot decide that women in ancient Egypt were illiterate, especially in cases of queens which had political roles, God’s Wives, and female priests, in addition to the deity of writing in ancient Egypt, was a female «Seshat», and she held the title of female scribe. The ambitions of the
ancient Egyptian elite for their sons centered round giving them proper scribal training and setting their feet on the bureaucratic ladder, the ideal being that the son should inherit the office of his father.

On the other hand, women were excluded from the official bureaucratic structure, and it was boys who were sent to school and encouraged to devote their efforts to becoming scribes. Since women could not join the bureaucracy. They did not need for the skills of literacy, and therefore no need for formal training in them19.

But this does not necessarily mean that women never learned to read and write20. May be they learned directly; by communication with their parents and brothers who learned indirectly in schools.21 Then those daughters who grew up in literate families could pass on their knowledge to their daughters22.

In elite families while women could never hope to hold office, they might have been able to write letters to each other, keep household and business accounts, and read or copy literacy texts23.

There were many literate women in the ancient Egyptian civilization, although their number was much lower than literate men24. For example, we have letters written by women. The earliest comes from the Old Kingdom [Sixth Dynasty, Cairo Linen CG 25975] and was written about a dispute by a wife concerning her deceased husband25. One Twentieth Dynasty letter tells the recipient; «and you shall see this daughter of Khonsmose and have her write a letter and send it to me». Perhaps, she really had written by her own hand26. Therefore, we must assume exceptional cases of women who became qualified to be scribes, and if we apply this via through Iretrau it means she learned, and became a literate woman by communication with some member of her family especially that she was from an elite family [a wife and a mother of viziers], which qualified her to be a female scribe in institute of God’s Wife.

her students. There is also an incomplete scene of a man, from his tomb in (Kom Al-Hisn in Delta), with ten girls. he was teaching them how to play music with a tool in each of his hands while girls hold one tool, then he appeared with female singers. The matter here relates more to religious education than religious performance because, in the many pictures of the temples, no man participated as a conductor of the orchestra. These scenes were about teaching musical education See, BRUNNER 2011: 82-85, Pls. 3-4.

19ROBINS 1993: 111.
20ROBINS 1993: 111.
21BRUNNER 2011: 85.
24ZINN 2012: 3.
26ROBINS 1993: 113. We cannot say if these women were really literate, and unfortunately there is no firm evidence one way or another. There is no document that we know for sure was penned by a woman or was meant to be read directly by woman. With letters sent to and from women we must always reckon with the possibility that they were written by a male scribe or read out by one to the recipient. In addition, the apparent exclusion of women from scribal activities in the Old Kingdom is also attested by the absence of female ‘lector priests’; ROBINS 1993: 111; FISCHER 2000: 27; ZINN 2012: 3.
IV. The Complicated Matter of Iretrau's Title as a Scribe

It is notable that discussion of Iretrau and her position as a scribe is one of the most complicated issues, especially in the absence of texts written by her like most of male scribes. However there is abundant evidence, both written and pictorial, for women in ancient Egypt. We can glimpse the lives of royal, noble, as well as peasant women. However, there are limitations on how clearly we can comprehend their actual status and role in ancient Egyptian society, especially since most of the pictorial evidence we have is from tombs which only royalty or nobility could afford to build. The reliefs and statuary in them show a perfect world meant for the eternal after life, not as a truly realistic depiction of their everyday life or their professional life.

Iretrau is not depicted or shown seated on the ground with crossed legs or one knee standing up, holding a partly unrolled papyrus. But, maybe this was not suitable for women, and that’s why Iretrau was not represented in this form.

The group of literate women in ancient Egypt which Iretrau was one of them do not seem to have developed any surviving literary genres unique to themselves, such as a female is equivalent to the male wisdom texts which would have advised to young women.

The exact duties of Iretrau remain unclear in the God’s Wife of Amen institution, although other scribes, men as far as the evidence indicates, are known in the same institution as Scribes for the Domain of the Divine Adoratrice. In addition to other titles include: Scribe and Chamberlain, Scribe and Overseer of Chamberlains, Scribe of Documents for the domain, Temple Scribe and Seal Bearer.

Since Iretrau used the very plain title of scribe, perhaps it does indeed suggest that she was not directly involved in the administration of the institution or assigned a specific office or bureau. There is no reason to assume that Iretrau identified herself as a scribe on her tomb.«Graefe» emphasized that by his suggestion: «however, that the entire administration of the god’s wife of Amun institution was in the hands of men, overseen by the Great Steward of the God’s Wife of Amun, there is no reason to assume, however, that the ‘ss.w shm.t’ would have only acted in a private, secretarial nature for the God’s Wives of Amun».

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27SABBAHY 2013: 1.
V. \textbf{ACCEPTING HER AS A SCRIBE WITH REAL DUTIES}

We have many reasons for accepting Iretrau as a literate woman who held a scribal occupation with actual duties according to previous indications such as:

The word «seshet», the feminine form of the male title «sesh» «scribe» was found occasionally in the Middle Kingdom. However, this form is taken by some scholars to be merely a shortened form of a female title which has been understood to mean «painter of her mouth» or «cosmetician». This interpretation would seem to be strengthened by the fact that the title is listed in association with the title of hairdresser\textsuperscript{35}.

Archaeologically, there are examples of female scribes known from stelae and scarabs of the Middle Kingdom\textsuperscript{36}. Apparently the right to use a title and a name on a scarab seal was «confined to a privileged few by virtue of their office», which suggests that, at least in the Middle Kingdom, the title of female scribe indicated actual duties rather than an honourific status\textsuperscript{37}.

Although, almost all bureaucrats were men in the New Kingdom, there were occasional examples of female scribes, administrators, and some women who helped their husbands\textsuperscript{38}. During the reign of Hatshepsut, women became increasingly active in the Theban clergy. They may also have held a scribal status indicating an administrative position\textsuperscript{39}.

Furthermore, we have visual proof of female literacy in the New Kingdom since traditional scribal palettes published from five different Theban tombs were depicted under women’s chairs or on the side of a double chair such as TT84 [Iammedjeh also holds a rolled papyrus], TT69 [Menna], TT162 [Kenamun], TT147 [unknown], and TT148 (Amenemope). Some of the women with the scribal kit under their chair also held titles of Songstresses of Amun [\textit{smfyn n’t Imn}], or singers in the Amun-temple\textsuperscript{40}.

Palettes bearing the names of Maketaten and her sister Meritaten, daughters of the pharaoh Akhenaten give the impression of being scribal rather than painting palettes, due to the use of only red and black ink as well as writing pens. They might therefore indicate female literacy at least among princesses\textsuperscript{41}.

Women appear to have taken on significant administrative responsibilities in Thebes by the end of the New Kingdom, as the Late Ramesside Letters, feature a number of

\textsuperscript{35}\textsc{Robins} 1993: 111.
\textsuperscript{36}\textsuperscript{Wb.} vol.3, 481; \textsc{ward} 1986: 16-18; \textsc{Li} 2017: 38.
\textsuperscript{37}\textsc{Li} 2010: 37 note 31; \textsc{Li} 2017: 38.
\textsuperscript{38}\textsc{Robins} 1993: 111- 114, 116; \textsc{sweeney} 2011: 3.
\textsuperscript{39}\textsc{Li} 2010: 50.
\textsuperscript{40}\textsc{Li} 2010: 50, note 50; \textsc{Zinn} 2012: 3.
\textsuperscript{41}\textsc{Brunner} 2011: 81; \textsc{Zinn} 2012: 3; \textsc{Tools found in Tutankhamun’s tomb. Unfortunately this is not a clear evidence that the princesses were good at writing, the tools are indeed used and certainly owned by them, but the usual writing tools include only the black and red ink the necessary for writing while the palette included six colors which means that it is closer to drawing than writing See, Brunner 2011: 81.}
women who held responsibilities regarding paying and provisioning the workers of the Theban necropolis.\(^{42}\)

This possibility of the existence of female scribes from the New Kingdom may offer a parallel to the appearance of female scribes during the Eighth-Sixth centuries BC. At the same time, throughout the course of the New Kingdom and into the Third Intermediate Period there was an increased desire for women to participate in forms of status expressions.\(^{43}\) It is therefore clear that ancient Egyptian women were fully capable of functioning as scribes and we may accept that Iretrau was a Female Scribe with actual duties.

VI. Iretrau’s Prerogative as a Female Scribe

The scribes were always represented as having belonged to a privileged class, a form of intellectual elite. That they were highly esteemed can be found in the texts of ancient papyri and is generally reported in modern books on life in Ancient Egypt.\(^{44}\) Iretrau was a unique woman because she belonged to those elite.

Iretrau seemed to be a great change in the administration, simply by being a female scribe, because as we know the power structure of ancient Egypt from the king down, was all males.\(^{45}\) While women could not participate in the government bureaucracy or in temple administration to an appreciable extent,\(^{46}\) Iretrau also broke women’s systemic rule by working outdoors a reversal of what we know about non-royal women. For example, one of the most common female titles is «nbt pr» «Mistress of the House» that women remained at home in charge of the running of household affairs, as we see in documents and tomb scenes where women are shown engaged only in household duties of child-rearing and food preparation, as opposed to men, who were engaged in activities outside the household.\(^{47}\)

Finally, we can imagine that Iretrau did not pay taxes depending on the definition of «Scribe» profession that contains among others, the following statements: «His

\(^{42}\)WENTE 1967: 16–17; LI 2010: 37 note 29; LI 2017: 38. There is some evidence for the learning of foreign languages in New Kingdom schools, a fact that historically corresponds to the era of Egyptian imperialism and the extension of Egyptian foreign relations. This evidence, which includes, for example, lists of foreign words or names, is far from conclusive, since it shows more an acquaintance with foreign vocabulary, possibly used in Egyptian texts, rather than mastery over a foreign language. Nevertheless, the occasional use of foreign languages in Egyptian administration (as was the case, for example, at el-Amarna and the famous diplomatic correspondence in Akkadian), was surely a result of some training in foreign languages that could have taken place either in the Egyptian capital or in foreign schools. In addition to these subjects, sports, music, and other arts could have also featured in Egyptian education. The evidence for the treatment of such subjects is, however, scarce; LAZARIDIS 2010: 6.

\(^{43}\)LI 2010: 50.

\(^{44}\)GOUDSMIT 1974: 78.

\(^{45}\)SABBAHY 2013: 1.

\(^{46}\)FISCHER 2000: 46.

\(^{47}\)GOUCHER & LE GUIN 1998: 302. Furthermore, Households were not self-sufficient. Women were responsible for supplying household needs through the exchange and sale of garden provisions, cloth, and other goods. It is likely that in managing the household economy, they could also accumulate wealth. See; GOUCHER & LE GUIN 1998: 302.
profession was the foremost of all the professions. To practice it was an honor. The scribe did not pay taxes. He was an educated man » 48.

VII. THE REFLECTION OF HER POSITION ON HER TOMB (TT 390)

The monumental tomb of Iretrau marked one of the first instances where non-royal women had monuments on a scale never before seen in Egyptian history. TT39049, is one of the major Late Period tombs on the west bank of Asasif50, Iretrau belonged to a prominent Thinite family, therefore her family necropolis is located in Abydos51. By the time of her arrival at Thebes, she had to choose a new place for her tomb. She decided on the Kushite necropolis52, in South Asasif on the Southside of Qurna53, while few women even among the higher-ranking elite had tombs that reflected this level of personal career orientation. So given Iretrau’s monumentally sized tomb must be associate with her position as a Scribe and a Chief Attendant54.

Her spacious tomb contains two pillared halls that were never finished. The walls and pillars of the halls are almost completely devoid of decoration except for some remains of paintings55, Iretrau’s position appeared in every scene; at first in the double scene on the outer lintel of the first pillared hall where the bark of Re in the center, adorned by Nitocris followed by Iretrau on the left, then Shepenwept II followed by Iretrau adoring Atum on the right.

Standards of the Western Horus, and the Benu-bird are at each end, accompanied by remains of her titles as a Scribe and a Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife [FIGURE 1]:

\[Wsir \, rh.t \, nsw \, Irtr-\,ir-w \, Spst \, m35.t \, hrrw \, s3.t \, n \, It-ntr \, (n) \, Imn \, Tp-wr \, m35.t \, hrrw \, mwt.s \, nb.t \, pr \, Spst \, t3-\,s1w \, m35.t \, hrrw.\]

48GOUDSMIT 1974: 78.
49This tomb was visited by ‘J. G. Wilkinson’ ‘R. Hey’ and ‘J. Burton’ in 1820, then explored and recorded by ‘K. R. Lepsius’ in 1840, then observed and photographed by ‘D. Eigner’ in 1970. It was finally rediscovered in 2001 by the South Assasif Conversation Project: PISCHIKOVA 2009: 19 note 44.
50Asasif is a part of the Theban necropolis, situated in front of the valley of Deir el-Bahari, The royal temples of Deir el-Bahari (Mentuhotep Nebheptre, Hatshepsut and Thutmose III) rise above the plain of the Assasif valley; see, KAMPP-SEYFRIED 1999: 802; POLZ 2001: 140-142; BUDKA 2015: 111-129.
52This necropolis located in the South Assasif area, south of Qurna on the Theban West Bank, is not well-known, having been practically lost by the beginning of the Twentieth Century, and only recently re-discovered and re-explored. The importance of the necropolis for the history of private tomb decoration is difficult to overestimate, as it contains the tombs of the Mayor of Thebes and the Fourth Priest of Amun Karabasken (TT 391), and that of the First aq-priest of Amun, Karakhamun (TT 223). These are the earliest known Kushite decorated tombs in the Theban necropolis, built during the reign of Shabaqo to Shebitqo; PISCHIKOVA 2009: 11-30.
56PM 11, 441; LD vol. 3. 272 [a]
[Deseaced, the king’s Acquaintance Iretrau, Justified, Daughter of the Divine Father of Amun Ipwer, Justified, her mother, Mistress of the House, Noblewoman,«Tashaiu», Justified]

There is an offering-text of the deceased with the name of her father in the ceiling:

htp di nsw wsir ūnty imn̲t nfr ￿ nb 3bdw di.f h3 m m lnkt n Kšw 3pdt n kš n wsir šms.t ṣ3.t (n) dw3.t nfr Irtr-ir-w m3.t ḥrw š3.t ṣ3.t it-nfr (n) Imn Ip-wr m3t hrw.

[An offering which the king gives to Osiris, Foremost of the westerners, Great God, lord of Abydos, to give a thousand of bread, a thousand of beer, oxen, and birds for the spirit of the deceased, the Chief Attendant of the God’s Wife Iretrau, Daughter of the Divine father of Amun Ipwer, Justified].

In addition to remains of her titles on the pillars⁵⁸, she appeared in the outer lintel of the inner room, seated alone before offerings at the left end, with her titles as a Scribe and a Chief Attendant [FIGURE 2]⁵⁹. Finally, Iretrau appeared with libation-vases before Osiris in the niche containing a false door [FIGURE 3]:

htp di nsw Wsir wn-nfr nfr ￿ hKš di.f htpw nb(w). n kš n wsir š3.t šmtr šms.t ṣ3.t (n) dw3.t nfr Nit-Ikr t nhq dt š3.t nsw nb tāwy Psmtk m3t ḥrw Irtr-ir-w m3t ḥrw.

[An offering which the king gives to Osiris wennfer «Onnofris», the Great God, Lord of Eternity, to give all offerings for the spirit of the deceased, the Female Scribe, a Chief Attendant of Divine wife Nitocris, Daughter of the Lord of the Two lands, Psmatik, Justified, Irtrau, Justified].

Certainly, these scenes with texts reflect the high position of her as a Female Scribe and a Chief Attendant of the God’s wife of Amun [Nitocris]. It mostly depicts her as young and beautiful⁶¹, which means she was one of the elite women who were only shown young and beautiful in the perfect state they should be in forever. This is the opposite of non-elite women who could be represented in daily life scenes in the tombs, showing the activities of the tomb owner’s estates. In these scenes, the women are active and working: weaving, making beer, serving food, baking bread. Their figures are not bound by the same conventions as elite women, because what is important is showing the production of food and goods, not the people doing it⁶².

⁵⁷PM I, 441; CHAMPOLLION 1929: 511(b).
⁵⁸PM I, 441; CHAMPOLLION 1929: 511[near top right].
⁵⁹PM I, 441; LD.3, 272 [b]; CHAMPOLLION 1929: 510, 511.
⁶⁰PM I, 441; LD.3, 271 [b]; CHAMPOLLION 1929: 511 [A, B].
⁶²SABBAHY 2013: 2.
In addition to appearing alone in most of the scenes; which means she was the most important person here not the secondary person as we usually find in the case of non-royal women who shared the tomb of their husbands according to an elite male perspective. Accordingly means Iretrau was an anon royal woman who utilized the privilege of royal women who owned single tombs. Furthermore, Iretrau did not share her status with her husband like most of women, nor did she derive her status from her husband. Iretrau’s husband was of higher rank than she was and was buried in his own ancestral cemetery at Abydos, while her son, also a vizier, had his own tomb in the hills overlooking the Asasif plain. Undoubtedly, Nespakashuty wanted to be buried next to his mother [FIGURE 4], so he attempted to usurp the tomb of Karakhamun because the tomb of his mother was adjacent to it.

Thus, it can be argued that the monumental tomb of Iretrau marked the culmination of a development of the increasingly overt independence of women. This growth of independence was undoubtedly linked to the growth in power of the God’s Wife of Amen institution, also reflected in the high-status cemetery of the «Singers in the Residence of Amun» at Medinet Habu, and perhaps even earlier in the burial groups of Tashebet in TT192, whose husband was also absent, and of Diesenesyt at Deir el-Bahri.

Finally, it is questionable why Iretrau does not appear as a scribe in her tomb like male scribes in their tombs? Could it be that the seat of the male scribe was not appropriate for her, but at least it is imperative to see the tools of a scribe in her tomb, while countless scenes show male Scribe at work?

VIII. GENERAL Commentary:

The ladies had prominent positions, and several were important and influential and played a major role, but overall were one step behind the men. Low-born men could improve their lot by becoming scribes, as could the women, but it seems that there were far fewer female-scribes than males. Men could become priests, while ladies could become priestesses, but the most important religious figures seem to have been men, and, of course, the High-Priest was the Pharaoh, who was, almost always, a man.

Whatever the actual meaning of «seshet», the contrast between its use and that of the masculine form sesh is striking. «Sesh» is one of the basic male titles of all periods occurring repeatedly on the monuments. Even if we were to accept all the occurrences of «seshet» as signifying the female equivalent of a male scribe, the number would be pitifully small.

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63SABBAY 2013: 1.
64LI 2010: 126.
65PISCHIKOVA 2009: 12, 19; BOOTH & BOOTH (eds.) 2012: 5 FIG. 5.
67BRIAN 1976: 3.
There are no depictions from any period of working female scribes, nor can we prove that these few «seshet» were employed in the state bureaucracy. Since they may rather have held a position in a large private or royal household. Clearly, the existence of a few women called «seshet» does not destroy the basic gender distinction in the elite class between men who were scribes and could hold government office, and women who were not in general, and did not hold office.

It seems that the old Egyptian society did not accept women in many jobs, even as ruling queens. Notable examples are the female kings Neferusobek and Hatshepsut who had to negotiate between their female sex and their kingship, which was socially defined as male. Neferusobek was sometimes represented wearing a royal kilt and a nemes headdress over a dress. Sobekneferu «circumvented» the problems created by her gender by proclaiming herself a «female Horus», to be like the king of ancient Egypt who ruled because he was the god Horus, son of Osiris, and the rightful heir to the throne, [FIGURE 5]. Hatshepsut took this one step further when she became king, and for state purposes simply she had herself portrayed as a man. She is represented with a combination of male and female elements and she adopted the image of a male king. Hatshepsut is depicted wearing the «nemes» headdress and a false beard. She is dressed in the royal kilt, traditionally worn only by male rulers. For example, her statue in the [Metropolitan Museum, New York], showed her as a male. She has no breasts and her face looks like that of a man although the waist is thinner than the hips, suggesting a woman.

IX. CONCLUSION

Iretrau was a literate and qualified woman, with many titles and occupations «a Female Scribe and a Chief Attendant of the Divine Adoratrice».

Iretrau did not depend on her husband’s position or her son, to reach these positions. This may have been due to the power of the position of God’s Wife in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. Despite this increased power and independence of women a part from their husbands and fathers, women in general and even queens were still one step behind men in ancient Egypt.

Iretrau’s status as a Female Scribe and a Chief Attendants was probably similar to the great Steward of the God’s Wife of Amen, especially since she was buried in an exclusive tomb in Asasif like the great Stewards of the God’s Wife of Amen.

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70ROBINS 1993: 113.
72SABBASY 2013: 1.
73SWEENEY 2011: 3; On the other hand, Hatshepsut’s kingly titulary capitalized upon her female sex to build identifications with goddesses that would have been impossible for male kings; she is often described with female nouns and pronouns; SWEENEY 2011: 3.
74OLVIER 2008: 95, FIG. 52.
A FEMALE SCRIBE IN THE TWENTY SIXTH DYNASTY [IRETRAU]

HOW TO CITE


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[FIGURE 1]: Double scene in outer lintel of the first hypostyle Hall.
*LD. vol.3 (1842-1845), 272 [a]*.

[FIGURE 2]: Iretrau seated before offerings at the left end in the outer lintel of the inner room.
*LD. vol.3 (1842-1845), 272 [b]*

[FIGURE 3]: Iretrau with libation vases before Osiris in niche.
*LD. vol.3 (1842-1845), 271 [b]*.
[FIGURE 4]: Iretrau’s tomb (TT 390) is adjacent to the tomb of Karakhamun.
BOOTH & BOOTH (eds.) 2012: 5, FIG. 5.

[FIGURE 5]: Torso of Sobeknefru wearing a king’s head-dress and kilt,
Dynasty Twelve, Louvre Museum, E 27135.
CAPEL & MARKO 1996: 30 FIG. 7.
كاتبة في الأسرة السادسة والعشرين "ارت رو"،

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الملخص

تناولت هذه الورقة البحثية لقب الكاتبة الخاص بالسيدة "ارت ايرو"، والذي ذكر عدة مرات بنقوش مقتربتها. وتعد "ارت ايرو" ومكانتها ككاتبة؛ هي من أكثر القضايا تعقيدًا، نظرًا لعدم ظهور نصوص كتبت بواسطةها كما هو الحال عند الكاتبة الذكور، فضلاً عن عدم وجود أدوات الكتابة في مقتربتها. ومع ذلك، هناك العديد من الأسباب الأخرى التي تتيح النظر إلى اعتبار "ارت ايرو" امرأة متعلمة، ومتعلقة لمنصب الكاتبة ولديها واجبات فعلية. ومما لا شك فيه هو ارتباط ذلك بزيادة القوة المؤسسية الخاصة بالزوجة الإلهية لأمون رع خلال العصر المتأخر، واعتبار "ارت ايرو" صانعة تغيير كبير في نظام الإدارة من خلال تقلدتها لهذا المنصب، فمن المعروف هيمنة الرجال على السلطة في مصر القديمة، في حين لم يسمح للنساء بأن يكونوا جزءًا منها.

الكلمات الدالة: ارت ايرو، الكاتبة، الأسرة السادسة والعشرون، الزوجة الإلهية، مقبرة 390، النوع الاجتماعي، محو الأمية ثلاثات.