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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
EDITORIAL FOREWORD . . . . .	1
THE TOMB OF TIA AND TIA: PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE SAQQÂRA EXCAVATIONS, 1983 . . . . .	Geoffrey T. Martin . . . . . 5
ABYDOS, TEMPLE OF SETHOS I: PRELIMINARY REPORT . . . . .	John Baines . . . . . 13
THE SURVEY OF MEMPHIS, 1982 . . . . .	D. G. Jeffreys, J. Malek, and H. S. Smith . . . . . 23
OLD KINGDOM MODELS FROM THE TOMB OF IMPY: METAL- LURGICAL STUDIES . . . . .	R. Maddin, T. Stech, J. D. Muhly, and E. Brovarski . . . . . 33
THE HEREDITARY STATUS OF THE TITLES OF THE CULT OF HATHOR . . . . .	Marianne Galvin . . . . . 42
THREE RECENT FINDS IN THE VALLEY TEMPLE OF UNAS . . . . .	Ahmed Mahmoud Moussa . . . . . 50
THE GUROB SHRINE PAPYRUS . . . . .	H. S. Smith and H. M. Stewart . . . . . 54
AN UNUSUAL PRIVATE STELA OF THE TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY FROM COPTOS . . . . .	Aly O. A. Abdallah . . . . . 65
THE BAB EL-GUSUS TOMB AND THE ROYAL CACHE IN DEIR EL-BAHRI . . . . .	Andrzej Niwiński . . . . . 73
TWO CONFUSING COFFINS . . . . .	M. L. Bierbrier . . . . . 82
THE DATE OF THE REUSED FALSE DOOR OF NFRTM-M-S3.F AT SAQQÂRA . . . . .	William A. Ward . . . . . 87
CRIME AND ADULTERY IN ANCIENT EGYPT . . . . .	C. J. Eyre . . . . . 92
STATE ARCHIVES IN GRAECO-ROMAN EGYPT FROM 30 BC TO THE REIGN OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS . . . . .	W. E. H. Cockle . . . . . 106
HERBERT WALTER FAIRMAN . . . . .	A. F. Shore . . . . . 123
SIR ERIC TURNER . . . . .	Peter Parsons . . . . . 128
EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES ACQUIRED IN 1982 BY MUSEUMS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM . . . . .	Janine Bourriau . . . . . 130
BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS: A pleated linen dress from a Sixth Dynasty tomb at Gebelein now in the Museo Egizio, Turin, <i>by</i> Rosalind Hall and Lidia Pedrini, p. 136; A bronze mirror with the titles <i>rht nsw hm(t)-ntr Hwt-hr</i> , <i>by</i> Caroline Ellis, p. 139; Spinning-rings from Qoseir el-Qadim, <i>by</i> Gillian Eastwood, p. 140; La vingt-cinquième statue de Senmout, <i>by</i> Robert Hari, p. 141; Encore Ro-setaou, <i>by</i> Christiane M. Zivie, p. 145; Three miscellaneous fragments in Liverpool, <i>by</i> S. R. Snape, p. 146; A new fragment of a Ptolemaic priestly decree at Durham, <i>by</i> W. J. Tait, p. 149; Lycophron on Isis, <i>by</i> Stephanie West, p. 151.	
REVIEWS	
WILLIAM KELLY SIMPSON, <i>The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II, G7110-20, 7130-40 and Subsidiary Mastabas of Street G7100</i> . . . . .	Reviewed by René Van Walsem . . . . . 155

	PAGE
BAUDOIN VAN DE WALLE, <i>La Chapelle de Neferirtenef</i> . . . . .	Hartwig Altenmüller . . . . . 158
FRANZ-JÜRGEN SCHMITZ, <i>Amenophis I. Versuch einer Darstellung der Regierungszeit eines ägyptischen Herrschers der frühen 18. Dynastie</i> . . . . .	Cl. Vandersleyen . . . . . 160
RAINER HANKE, <i>Amarna-Reliefs aus Hermopolis. Neue Veröffentlichungen und Studien</i> . . . . .	Donald B. Redford . . . . . 162
THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, <i>The Temple of Khonsu—Volume I: Plates I-110</i> . . . . .	P. Vernus . . . . . 163
VIRGINIA CONDON, <i>Seven Royal Hymns of the Ramesside Period. Papyrus Turin CG 54031</i> . . . . .	Jan Assmann . . . . . 165
ABDULLA EL-SAYED MAHMUD, <i>A New Temple for Hathor at Memphis</i> . . . . .	W. J. Murnane . . . . . 168
FRANCE LE CORSU, <i>Isis, Mythe et Mystères</i> . . . . .	J. Gwyn Griffiths . . . . . 169
RICHARD MERZ, <i>Die Numinose Mischgestalt</i> . . . . .	E. Hornung . . . . . 170
MARCELLE BAUD, <i>Le Caractère du dessin en Égypte ancienne</i> . . . . .	William H. Peck . . . . . 171
EDGAR B. PUSCH, <i>Das Senet-Brettspiel im Alten Ägypten</i> . . . . .	Peter A. Piccione . . . . . 172
JOHN J. BIMSON, <i>Redating the Exodus and Conquest</i> . . . . .	John van Seters . . . . . 180
RAPHAEL GIVEON, <i>The Impact of Egypt on Canaan</i> . . . . .	W. A. Ward . . . . . 182
JOHN RUFFLE, G. A. GABALLA, AND KENNETH A. KITCHEN (EDS.), <i>Orbis Aegyptiorum Speculum. Glimpses of Ancient Egypt</i> . . . . .	E. Hornung . . . . . 185
LOUISE A. SHIER, <i>Terracotta Lamps from Karanis, Egypt</i> . . . . .	Donald M. Bailey . . . . . 185
ROGER S. BAGNALL AND K. A. WORP, <i>The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt</i> . . . . .	J. R. Rea . . . . . 187
ROGER S. BAGNALL AND K. A. WORP, <i>Regnal Formulas in Byzantine Egypt</i> . . . . .	J. R. Rea . . . . . 189
R. McL. WILSON, <i>The Future of Coptic Studies</i> . . . . .	K. H. Kuhn . . . . . 190
P. L. SHINNIE AND MARGARET SHINNIE, <i>Debeira West. A Mediaeval Nubian Town</i> . . . . .	A. J. Mills . . . . . 193
Other Books Received . . . . .	. . . . . 194
INDEXES . . . . .	Alan B. Lloyd . . . . . 197

## LIST OF PLATES

PLATE I	Herbert Walter Fairman	<i>facing p. 123</i>
PLATE II	Sir Eric Turner	<i>facing p. 128</i>
	( <i>at end</i> )	
PLATES II-V	The Tomb of Tia and Tia	
PLATE VI	Abydos, Temple of Sethos I	
PLATE VII	Memphis 1982	
PLATES VIII-XI	Old Kingdom Models	
PLATES XII-XIII	Three Recent Finds in the Valley Temple of Unas	
PLATES XIV-XV	The Gorub Shrine Papyrus	
PLATES XVI-XVII	An Unusual Private Stela	
PLATES XVIII-XIX	Two Confusing Coffins	
PLATES XX-XXI	Museum Acquisitions, 1982	
PLATES XXII-XXIII	A Pleated Linen Dress	
PLATES XXIV-XXV	La Vingt-Cinquième Statue de Senmout	
PLATE XXVI	A Ptolemaic Priestly Decree	

## THE HEREDITARY STATUS OF THE TITLES OF THE CULT OF HATHOR

By MARIANNE GALVIN

FROM a total group of 469 persons holding some H̄athoric title during the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period, approximately 339 recorded biographical material in their tombs that included some genealogical information. Of these 339, only a small number of persons recorded having a relative who also held a H̄athoric title.<sup>1</sup> A close examination of this genealogical information makes it possible to determine whether certain patterns of familial participation occurred within the cult of H̄athor and whether those titles held by family members bore a hereditary status.

### Mother/Daughter Relationships

Approximately seventy-eight priestesses recorded having one or more daughters, and approximately twenty-seven priestesses recorded the name or titles belonging to their mother. Only nine out of this total of 105 relationships indicated that both the mother and the daughter served as Priestess of H̄athor.

In Cusae, at least eight women who had at least one daughter can be identified. Two of these had daughters who held H̄athoric titles. One woman, named *Mrr rn nfr Tbi*, served as Priestess of H̄athor.<sup>2</sup> She recorded four daughters and three sons in her tomb inscription. All four of her daughters held the title of Priestess of H̄athor as well as the distinction of *špss-nsw* which their mother also held. None of *Mrr*'s sons, nor her husband, held a H̄athoric title. One other woman also from Cusae, named *Nfrw rn nfr Ffi*, held the title of Priestess of H̄athor and the distinction of *rht-nsw*.<sup>3</sup> She recorded one daughter and two sons. Her daughter, H̄etyaḥ, served as Priestess of H̄athor Mistress of Cusae, and *rht-nsw*. *Nfrw*'s sons and her husband did not hold H̄athoric titles. *Nfrw*'s daughter, H̄etyaḥ, married into one of the leading nomarch families at Cusae, and her husband, Pepi-ankh the Middle, held several H̄athoric titles, as did many of his immediate family members.<sup>4</sup> H̄etyaḥ had three daughters and seven sons, none of whom held any H̄athoric titles, although her daughters did hold the distinction of *rht-nsw* and *špss-nsw* in common with their mother and their grandmother, *Nfrw*.

<sup>1</sup> Approximately 130 persons recorded no family member at all; ninety-four recorded a spouse only; three recorded their spouse's family only; all the remainder recorded either a son, a daughter, a sibling, a parent, or a person of non-specific relationship.

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Quibell, 'Rapport', *ASAE* 3 (1902), 256-7.

<sup>3</sup> A. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, IV (London, 1924), pl. xv; A. Kamal, 'Le tombeau nouveau de Meir', *ASAE* 15 (1915), 209-58.

<sup>4</sup> Blackman, loc. cit.

Therefore, in Cusae, there do appear to have been a significant number of Ḥathoric titles, but these do not indicate clear evidence that the title of Priestess of Ḥathor, or Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Cusae, was being inherited by a daughter from her mother. It must be remembered that in only two out of a total of eight families did a mother and daughter both hold Ḥathoric titles. Cusae is known to have been a major centre for the cult of Ḥathor during the Sixth Dynasty.<sup>5</sup> The cult of Ḥathor permeated several levels and aspects of life at Cusae. It was desirable to hold a Ḥathoric title. Therefore, it is probable that those daughters who held a Ḥathoric title did not inherit it from their mother but rather chose to participate in the cult of Ḥathor themselves because of the social, religious, and/or political import that that title held. This will be borne out in the following section, where it will be shown that a mother who held Ḥathoric titles had daughters and sons not holding such titles but a daughter-in-law who did.

From Saqqâra, at least forty-nine women who had at least one daughter can be identified. Only two of these women had a daughter who also served in the Ḥathoric cult. Again, the statistics would indicate that the titles of the Ḥathoric cult in Saqqâra were not inherited by a daughter from her mother.

From Dendera, at least ten women having one or more daughters can be identified. One of these had a daughter who also held a Ḥathoric title. That woman served as Priestess of Ḥathor, Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Dendera, and *ḥkrt-nsw-wt*.<sup>6</sup> She had four daughters and two sons. Neither her sons nor her husband held Ḥathoric titles, and, although all four of her daughters held the distinction of *ḥkrt-nsw-wt*, only one held a Ḥathoric title. She served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Dendera. Allam mentions these two women as a possible indication of 'die Erblichkeit des Amtes'.<sup>7</sup> However, it is here suggested that one example of a mother and daughter both holding Ḥathoric titles does not substantiate a hereditary status. The fact that there is only one mother/daughter relationship out of a total of ten possible such relationships would indicate that these titles did not hold a hereditary status.

In Hamamiya, three women who had at least one daughter can be identified. One of these had a daughter who also held a Ḥathoric title. Khentkawes served as Priestess of Ḥathor and *rḥt-nsw*.<sup>8</sup> She recorded three sons and four daughters in her tomb inscription. Only one of her children, a daughter named Ifi, held a Ḥathoric title. Ifi served as Priestess of Ḥathor, Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of the Sycamore, Priestess of Ḥathor in all her Places. It is probable that Ifi earned her numerous titles on her own merit as her mother held only one of these titles.

Thus, three main geographical areas are discernible here: Cusae, Saqqâra, and

<sup>5</sup> S. Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult (bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches)* (Berlin, 1963), 23-5; Blackman, *op. cit.* 1, 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> L. Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches* (CGC), II (Berlin, 1937), 122-3; H. G. Fischer, *Denderah in the Third Millennium B.C. down to the Theban Domination of Upper Egypt* (Locust Valley, NY, 1968), figs. 31, 31 a; W. M. F. Petrie, *Denderah 1898* (London, 1900), pl. ix.

<sup>7</sup> Allam, *op. cit.* 55.

<sup>8</sup> E. Mackay and W. M. F. Petrie, *Bahrein and Hemamieh* (London, 1929), pls. ix-x, xviii, xx-xxiv; Fischer, *op. cit.* 24-5; V. Stuart, *Funeral Tent of an Egyptian Queen* (London, 1882), 83-6, pl. 14.

Dendera (since Hamamîya lies in close proximity to Dendera, it can be linked with it here). In all three areas the statistics would clearly indicate that the Ḥathoric titles were not being inherited from a mother by her daughter.

### Mother-in-law/Daughter-in-law Relationships

Twenty-three priestesses recorded information concerning their mothers-in-law. Eleven of these indicated that their mother-in-law also held Ḥathoric titles.

From Cusae, five mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships are identifiable. Three of these revealed that both women held Ḥathoric titles. Pernofret served as *rht-nsw*, Priestess of Ḥathor, and musician priestess.<sup>9</sup> She had ten sons but apparently no daughter. Four of her sons married and three of those four married women who held Ḥathoric titles. Two of the daughters-in-law served as Priestess of Ḥathor,<sup>10</sup> and the third served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Cusae and chief musician priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Cusae.<sup>11</sup>

With regard to Pernofret's title of musician priestess, none of her own children held this position. However, one daughter-in-law, Ḥetyaḥ, did hold the title of chief musician priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Cusae. Ḥetyaḥ's own mother held the title of Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Cusae, but she held no musician priestess responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, her daughter could not have inherited such a title from her. Pernofret had no daughter to inherit such a position, and none of Ḥetyaḥ's daughters held a Ḥathoric title, so they did not inherit from their mother. Although Pernofret and Ḥetyaḥ both held musician priestess titles, it seems unlikely that Ḥetyaḥ, who served as chief musician priestess, could have inherited this position from her mother-in-law who served simply as musician priestess. Rather, it would seem more likely that both women earned their positions independently.

From Dendera, three mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships are known. All three indicate that Ḥathoric titles were held by both women. However, all three relationships stem from the same family including three generations. *Hnwt-sn* served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Dendera.<sup>13</sup> Her husband served as Overseer of the Priests and Herdsman of the Thentet-cattle. They had at least one son who also served as Overseer of the Priests and Herdsman of the Thentet-cattle. The son married two women, both of whom served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Dendera.<sup>14</sup> The first wife had one son and one daughter, neither of whom held Ḥathoric titles. However, the son married a woman who was Priestess of Ḥathor and Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Dendera.<sup>15</sup> She, in turn, had two daughters and four sons. Only one of her children held a Ḥathoric title. That was a daughter who served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of Dendera. Thus, this particular family was deeply involved in the

<sup>9</sup> Blackman, op. cit. IV, pl. xv; Kamal, loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Quibell, op. cit. 254-8; M. Chaban, 'Sur une nécropole de la VI<sup>e</sup> dynastie à Koçeir El-Amarna', *ASAE* 3 (1902), 250-4.

<sup>11</sup> Blackman, op. cit. IV, pls. iv, vii, ix; Kamal, loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 42 and n. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Petrie, *Denderah* 1898, 50; Fischer, op. cit. 114, 142.

<sup>14</sup> Petrie, op. cit. 16, 47, pls. viii, viii b; Fischer, op. cit., figs. 31, 31 a; Allam, op. cit. 55.

<sup>15</sup> Petrie, op. cit., pl. ix; Fischer, op. cit., figs. 31, 31 a; Borchartdt, loc. cit.

cult of Ḥathor. However, it must be remembered that it is only one family, and, therefore, should probably not be accepted as characteristic of all Denderite families associated with the Ḥathoric cult.

From Abydos, only one mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship is known and both women held Ḥathoric titles.<sup>16</sup> From Thebes, there are two mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships known. In one, both women held Ḥathoric titles.<sup>17</sup>

From the Gîza–Saqqâra area, twelve mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships can be identified. Four of these indicate that both women held Ḥathoric titles. Merysʿankh held, among several other titles, the title of Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of *ʿTwnt*.<sup>18</sup> Her tomb inscription records one daughter and two sons (as well as her mother). None of these held a Ḥathoric title. One of her sons married a woman named *Nbw-ḥtp* who served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of the Sycamore in all her Places. She could not have inherited this title from her mother-in-law as Merysʿankh did not hold that title. There is no indication as to whether *Nbw-ḥtp* herself had any children.

*Hnwt-sn* served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of the Sycamore, and Priestess of Ḥathor in all her Places.<sup>19</sup> She had two sons and two daughters, none of whom held titles of Ḥathor. One of her sons married Ḥetepheres, who served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of the Sycamore.<sup>20</sup> She, in turn, had four sons, none of whom held titles of the cult of this goddess.

Khentkawes, who served as Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of the Sycamore, had at least one daughter and one son.<sup>21</sup> None of her children held Ḥathoric titles. Her son's wife was *Tist*, who served as Priestess of Ḥathor and Priestess of Neith.<sup>22</sup> Curiously, Khentkawes's sister-in-law was also Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of the Sycamore.<sup>23</sup> So, in this one family, two brothers, neither of whom held a Ḥathoric title, each married a Priestess of Ḥathor. None of their children held Ḥathoric titles although one daughter did become a Priestess of Neith, and one son married a Priestess of Ḥathor. This would appear to be a clear-cut case against the hereditary status of these titles and also a clear indication of the social influence that those titles and the cult of Ḥathor held.

Ḥathoric titles held a certain prestige that was desirable, and probably they were indicative of a certain attitude of devotion, respect, or intelligence that was desirable

<sup>16</sup> Borchardt, op. cit. II, 64.

<sup>17</sup> M. Saleh, *Three Old Kingdom Tombs at Thebes* (Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 14) (Mainz, 1977), 18–22; P. E. Newberry, *ASAE* 4 (1904), 97–100; Allam, op. cit. 58; Fischer, op. cit. 29 (11).

<sup>18</sup> W. K. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III* (Boston, 1974), G7530; Fischer, op. cit. 23; C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler, Ergänzungsband* (Leipzig, 1897–1913), pl. xxxiv; A. Mariette, *Les Mastabas de l'ancien Empire* (Paris, 1889), 549; H. Gauthier, *Le Livre des rois d'Égypte* (Cairo, 1907), 80, 90–1; S. Hassan, *Excavation at Giza*, IV (Cairo, 1929–60), 125.

<sup>19</sup> H. Junker, *Giza*, III (Vienna, 1929–55), 9, pl. 9, grave 5170; J. de Rougé, *Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques copiées en Égypte* (Paris, 1877), pl. lxiv; MFA Boston XL G2200, A5981, A5875, A5873.

<sup>20</sup> Junker, op. cit. III, 9, pl. i; de Rougé, op. cit., pl. lxiv.

<sup>21</sup> A. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *Das Grab des NiankhChnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz, 1977), 5, 3b, pls. 46–7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 81b.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 4, 3a, p. 146.



and admirable. In the process of choosing a spouse such qualities may have been sought out. Further, the society of acquaintances of eligible males and females from which one would have chosen a spouse may have been influenced by a mother's participation in the Ḥathoric cult. A mother might even have suggested a suitable spouse from a family that she knew as a result of her own participation in the cult. This would seem even more probable when it is remembered that most of these mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships are known from the three major Ḥathoric centres: Cusae, Dendera, and Gîza. Certainly, within the close-knit noble community of Cusae the cult of Ḥathor was exploited for its religious and political and social potential. Ḥathoric titles seem to have permeated every family for several succeeding generations. It is logical, as well as predictable, that the members of a noble-class family would have sought out other members of the nobility when looking for suitable spouses, which, in Cusae, would have also meant a family affiliated with the cult of Ḥathor. This was not a coincidence but rather a predetermined, desirable socio-religious and political aspect of the obligations of the noble class in Sixth Dynasty Cusae.

In Dendera and in Gîza, the community was much more diverse. There are no clear-cut socio-economic lines to be traced, but, certainly, the process of choosing a marriage partner would still have been affected by one's personal community and by those qualities which one's family held as ideal. For a son whose mother held a position as priestess, it is likely that this would have provided certain criteria for choosing a wife as well as providing a certain community from which to choose.

### **Conclusions for all Female/Female Relationships**

Out of a total of 154 female/female relationships,<sup>24</sup> only twenty-seven priestesses indicated having one or more female relatives who also held a Ḥathoric title. With the exception of the group of mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships, there is no consistent pattern to indicate that Ḥathoric priestly titles were being inherited within female/female relationships. For the group of mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships, it is probable that the high percentage of cases of both women serving as Priestess of Ḥathor should be viewed as a manifestation of the social implications of the cult of the Ḥathor, of the community that it formed, and of the pervasiveness of that cult with respect to the lives of its adherents.

### **Husband/Wife Relationships**

Approximately 220 priestesses recorded biographical information concerning their husbands. Eighteen of these indicated that both spouses held Ḥathoric titles. Only four husbands held the title of Priest of Ḥathor. Thirteen held an administrative title for the cult of Ḥathor. Ten were Overseers of the Priests, two

<sup>24</sup> The 154 females include fourteen sister/sister relationships, in which only one occurs with an indication that both held Ḥathoric titles, and twelve females of non-specific relationship where it is clear in five cases that both held Ḥathoric titles.

were Inspectors of the Priests, and one was the Overseer of the Transport. Clearly, these statistics would indicate that it was not common practice for a husband and wife both to hold a priestly title in the cult of Ḥathor during the Old Kingdom or the First Intermediate Period. And, as no woman held an administrative title in the cult of Ḥathor, the statistics would also indicate that one spouse did not inherit Ḥathoric titles from the other.

### Father/Daughter Relationships

Approximately thirty-six priestesses recorded their father's name and titles. Only one of these indicated that her father also held a title in the cult of Ḥathor. She was *Ifi Mry*, who is attested in Gîza.<sup>25</sup> Her father was the Overseer of the Priests of Ḥathor Mistress of Dendera and the Overseer of the Thentet-cattle.<sup>26</sup> *Ifi Mry* obviously did not inherit her titles from her father, and, as it is here clearly shown that the Priestess of Ḥathor did not receive or inherit her title from her father or her mother, it is perhaps wisest not to assume that any priestess of an Egyptian deity inherited her title from her father until a statistical analysis can prove otherwise. Therefore, the attitude such as is expressed by M. Sauneron that '... dès l'Ancien Empire, les exemples de femmes prêtresses de déesses et même de dieux ne manquent pas: dames de la haute société ou simplement filles de prêtres ayant reçu en héritage la fonction de leur père...' must be re-examined.<sup>27</sup>

### Father-in-law/Daughter-in-law Relationships

Approximately eighteen priestesses recorded the name and titles of their father-in-law. Two of these priestesses, both having the same father-in-law, claimed that he held the title of Herdsman of the Thentet-cattle.<sup>28</sup> These two women did not inherit their priestly title from their father-in-law.

### Mother/Son Relationships

Approximately 118 priestesses recorded having one or more sons. Three of these indicated that they had one or more sons who also held Ḥathoric titles. In Gîza, a total of sixty-two mother/son relationships can be identified. One woman, named *Nbw-ḥtp*, who served as Priestess of Ḥathor and Priestess of Ḥathor Mistress of the Sycamore, had five daughters, none of whom served in the Ḥathoric cult, and one son, who served as Priest of Ḥathor.<sup>29</sup> Another Priestess of Ḥathor, named *Nbw-Țrt*, was married to a man who held several priestly titles in the cult of Rēꜥ but no Ḥathoric title. Their two sons both served as Priest of Rēꜥ-Ḥathor in the sun temples of Neferirkarēꜥ and Userkaf.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Hassan, op. cit. II, 169-78.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.; Allam, op. cit. 51-6; Fischer, op. cit. 25-6.

<sup>27</sup> S. Sauneron, *Les Prêtres de l'Ancienne Égypte* (Netherlands, 1960), 67.

<sup>28</sup> Fischer, op. cit. 114, 142; Petrie, op. cit. 47, 50, pl. xi; Borchardt, loc. cit.; Allam, op. cit. 55.

<sup>29</sup> Mariette, op. cit. 196-201, D11; Borchardt, op. cit. I, 84-7; II, 28-30.

<sup>30</sup> L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo* (Berlin, 1911), 48-9, Abb. 55.

In Cusae, a total of twenty-four mother/son relationships are identifiable. One of these mothers indicated that four of her ten sons held Ḥathoric titles.<sup>31</sup> As her husband and several other relatives also participated in the cult of Ḥathor, it would certainly seem that a family devotion is indicated here. It should not, however, be considered as an indication that these sons inherited their titles from their mother.

### Conclusions for all Female/Male Relationships

In a group of female/male relationships totalling 418, only twenty-five indicated that one or more male relatives also held a Ḥathoric title. Seventeen of the males held an administrative title and seven held the title of Priest of Ḥathor.<sup>32</sup> No consistent pattern exists to indicate a hereditary status within this female/male grouping.

### Father/Son Relationships

Approximately 209 father/son relationships can be identified. Only two families indicated that both father and son participated in the cult of Ḥathor. In Cusae, a total of twenty-four father/son relationships can be identified. One family recorded that eight males over a period of three generations held titles within the cult of Ḥathor. The eldest member of the family was Sobkhotpe, who was the Chief Nomarch of the XIVth Nome.<sup>33</sup> He was also the Overseer of the Priests of Ḥathor. He was succeeded in both these titles by his sons Pepi-ankh the Elder, Pepi-ankh the Middle, Pepi-ankh Heni, and one grandson, Pepi-ankhnes Hepi, who claimed only the title of Overseer of the Priests. Therefore, a succession of Nomarchs and Overseers can be determined in Cusae during the Sixth Dynasty.<sup>34</sup> It seems reasonable to say that both these titles were being passed from father to son in the same noble family during the Sixth Dynasty in Cusae.

In Dendera, approximately seven father/son relationships can be identified. Only one indicated that both held Ḥathoric titles. *Mrry* held the titles of Overseer of the Priests, Overseer of the Thentet-cattle, and Chief of the *D:t*-robe, all three of which his father had held before him.<sup>35</sup> *Mrry*, in turn, had at least one son and one grandson, neither of whom held Ḥathoric titles. Therefore, although it would appear that *Mrry* inherited his titles from his father, it was not necessarily a traditional practice for a son to inherit in this way. This would be substantiated by the fact that of the six other men who held the title of Overseer of the Priests and

<sup>31</sup> Blackman, op. cit. iv, pls. iv, vii, ix, xiv, xv; Kamal, loc. cit.

<sup>32</sup> The seventeen administrators span a time period from the Fourth to the Eleventh Dynasties and appear in both Upper and Lower Egypt. Six of the seven priests have been attested in the Giza-Saqqâra area during the Old Kingdom. It would appear that the statement made by Henry G. Fischer that no men held the title of Priest of Ḥathor in Dendera after the Sixth Dynasty until the Eleventh Dynasty can be extended to the whole of Egypt (Fischer, op. cit. 8). Further, it would appear that Giza was the Ḥathoric centre that realized the majority of male participation in the cult of Ḥathor by means of the title of Priest of Ḥathor or by a non-administrative position.

<sup>33</sup> Blackman, op. cit. iv, 6, pl. xv; Kamal, loc. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Blackman, op. cit. I, 13; Allam, op. cit. 32.

<sup>35</sup> Fischer, op. cit. 114, 142; Petrie, op. cit. 50, pl. xi; Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches*, II, 122-3.

Chief of the *D:t*-robe in Dendera, none recorded a father or son or any male relative who also held a Ḥathoric title.

In Gîza, approximately ninety-nine father/son relationships are identifiable. None of these indicate that both father and son held Ḥathoric titles. The same is true for Thebes, where eight such relationships are identifiable, for Aswan, where six are known, and for Tehna, where nine are in evidence. Therefore, it would seem that, as a general practice, a son did not inherit any Ḥathoric title from his father. Sixth Dynasty Cusae would mark a clear exception to this finding.

### **Conclusions for Male/Male Relationships**

From a group of 209 father/son relationships, only seven indicate that both father and son held Ḥathoric titles. Six were recorded in Cusae and one in Dendera. All seven pairs of men held and inherited one or more administrative titles of the cult of Ḥathor. None held or inherited the title of Priest of Ḥathor. It is, therefore, reasonable to say that there existed no consistent pattern suggesting the inheritance of priestly titles by a son from his father in this cult. However, there does exist a consistent pattern suggesting the inheritance of Ḥathoric administrative titles, such as Overseer of the Priests, in Cusae during the Sixth Dynasty.