

Bronze Door Hinge Bearing Names of God's Wives of Amun
The British Museum

From Egypt
25th-26th Dynasty, 760-650 BC

Inscribed with the names of Amenirdis I and Shepenwepet II



This hinge is of massive proportions, and probably belonged to one of the many monumental doorways of a Theban temple. Although there are extensive remains of the stone parts of these structures, little remains of the door and doorway furniture and fittings, which were often taken down and reused.

The hinge is inscribed with the names of Amenirdis I and Shepenwepet II, both of whom successively held the office of God's Wife of Amun. Amenirdis was the sister of King Piye, who was the first major ruler in Egypt of the Kushite Dynasty (referred to as the Twenty-fifth Dynasty). He installed his sister in this important religious office in order to maintain control of the southern region of Egypt, administered from Thebes. The holder of the office was celibate, and the successor was adopted by the current holder. Amenirdis adopted Piye's daughter, her own niece, Shepenwepet II.

The names of the women appear in cartouches because they were considered to be the spouses of the god, and also because they were members of the Kushite royal family. The name of Piye, in the central cartouche, has been deliberately erased. This was probably done during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty when native Egyptian rule was restored.

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