



Historically Speaking

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Gender representations in SINON OF KIRRA and MENTU THE NUBIAN

ANISSI and Male Dominance

Both of these books are focused on maritime trade and the travels of those ships. The only time in those two books that we find a female on the ship is at the end of MENTU THE NUBIAN. However, we do see women in the setting of Sinon's home, at taverns during the ship's many stops (especially in Phasis with Femi), and among the townspeople of those places. The most significant woman among those trading stops is Sappho, when the ships come to Lesbos. I want to address a few of the key women in those first two books of the series.

Krissa - She is Sinon's mother. She is meant to reflect the traditional role of the wife and mother. She is a strong woman who knows how to function in the traditional role while keeping her own humanity.

Katana - She is the servant, purchased to assist Krissa. She is offered 'freedom' but chooses to stay with the family more as a family member than a servant. She is quiet and unassuming, but has a special relationship with Mentu.

Sappho - The educated and talented poet and philosopher on Lesbos. She is the only historical figure in the books. She is in all three, and with the exception of timeline accuracy, I have attempted to make what we know of her life blend into the books.

Femi - Sinon's love interest. She is of different cultural background than Sinon. He is immediately infatuated with her. She is a confident and self-determining young woman. She works in a traditional woman's role initially, but breaks away from that when her father dies.

Anissi - Mentu's mother. She is very traditional in her culture to begin, and moves into a non-traditional role as a result of the events around her. She becomes a mother figure for Amaros and Duwana, and leads them to become warriors along with her. She is driven by revenge early on, but moves to a mother dedicated to searching for her lost son.

Amaros - Companion of Anissi. She and Duwana save Anissi and then become her surrogate daughters, fellow warriors and companions. She is the gentler and more gregarious of the two.

Duwana - Companion of Anissi. Duwana is tougher and not as socially inclined as Amaros. She and Amaros are both fiercely loyal to Anissi.

Anissi comes from a very different culture than the Greek. The Nubian and Egyptian cultures seem to be less concerned with gender dominance, though I must say that my research has found much more information on the Egyptians than on the Nubians. It appears that they had some commonality and there was a period when Nubian rulers had control of much of Egypt. Between those two societies, it appears to me that the Nubians were the least male dominant. There are warrior Queens revealed in the Nubian history.

Anissi is not a queen, but she is a warrior and she trains Amaros and Duwana to be warriors as well. She moves from a simple village life to that of a liberator and seeker of justice. She seeks revenge against those who destroyed her village, killed her husband and stole her son, Mentu, to sell into slavery. Then she becomes dedicated to finding and liberating her son. She lacks confidence in the beginning of each step of her evolution, but becomes stronger as she finds success in what she has to do. By the time she is well into her search, she is very forceful in dealing with the captains of the ships they travel on. That dynamic is interesting because these men of the sea have a variety of reactions to such a woman. Some are offended, some are amused and some are impressed.

ANISSI (the book) is still in development. I am just about done with the second draft, and this book more than any other I have written so far is going to go through major changes in the next draft. I am hoping to accomplish a strong treatment of gender issues in this book. There will be other issues that I am hoping will be just as strong.

