

# Comparison between thutmose iii and napoleon i

[History](#), [French Revolution](#)



James Henry Breasted, an American archaeologist and historian, described Thutmose III as “ the Napoleon of Egypt”. [1] Today this association of the Egyptian Pharaoh to Napoleon I, ‘ Emperor of the French’, persists among modern archaeologists and historians. The purpose of this essay is to evaluate this comparison, and to conclude to what extent it is accurate.

Thutmose III was an Egyptian Pharaoh and the sixth ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty, whose reign lasted for fifty-four years between 1479 to 1425 BCE.

Following his father’s death in 1479 BCE, however, at ten years old Thutmose III was considered too young to succeed to the throne. As a result, his father’s widow, Queen Hatshepsut acted as his co-regent. For the next twenty-two years, though, she effectively ruled Egypt individually, even assuming the formal titular of kingship. It was only after Queen Hatshepsut’s death in 1457 BCE that Thutmose III was able to rule as Pharaoh. By this time Thutmose III was already an experienced military commander.

He had been trained as a soldier since he was a teenager and had apparently flourished in the role, appointed to lead Hatshepsut’s army in the six years previous to her death. During this time Thutmose III fought a major campaign in Nubia, and perhaps another, for which there is only tentative evidence, in addition to liberating Gaza from the rebels. As a result, he developed strong ties to the Egyptian army whilst acquiring experience in military organisation, strategy, tactics and logistics, as well as generalship.

These qualities were demonstrated in Thutmose III’s first major campaign as pharaoh, in which the Canaanites, led by Durusha, the king of Kadesh, had

decided to revolt in an attempt to free themselves of Egyptian influence after the death of Queen Hatshepsut. The battle commenced near Megiddo, which is now in Israel, as Thutmose III led an army of about ten-thousand men on a rapid march. Executing tactics and strategy which, while dangerous, were superior, he forced the Canaanites to scatter and flee into to the city.

The Egyptians then besieged the city, which fell after another seven months. This absolute victory at the Battle of Megiddo is also the first known battle with precisely detailed events, as a part of the Annals, a listing of the seventeen campaigns led by Thutmose III as recorded on the walls of the temple to Amun at Karnak. If we examine and analyse the full text, two-hundred and twenty-three lines long (making it the longest, and possibly the most important, archaeological source in Egyptian history [2]) with an allowance for egotism it is largely reliable, and therefore useful.

It illustrates that this first major campaign only marked the beginning of a long period of Egyptian expansion under a determined and relentless Thutmose III, who was obviously a successful military general. In subsequent campaigns he advanced north, steadily up the coast of Lebanon, capturing secure harbours, as well as safe transport and supply routes for Egypt's army through the sea. By his sixth campaign, Thutmose III had also captured most of the inland cities, including Kadesh. 3] It was not until his eighth campaign, however, that Thutmose III asserted true dominance in the region, as he crossed the Euphrates River and defeated the Mitanni forces in Naharin, who posed a serious threat. Thutmose III's subsequent campaigns were merely showings of force to ensure the continued loyalty and payment of tribute of

almost three-hundred and fifty cities. With his gradual advance along a strategically well-planned route, and his careful, methodical preparation over a number of years, Thutmose III had conquered much of the Near East, from the Euphrates River to Nubia.

As a result, he had also created the New Kingdom Egyptian Empire, and established himself as the nation's greatest warrior Pharaoh. The empire itself, also perhaps the first great empire in the ancient world, [4] then, consisted of cities and states held in positions of tributary allegiance, such as Nubia, but it also included those within its wider influence. This is demonstrated by the tremendous wealth that flowed into Egypt, not only from defeated enemies but also from those who feared Thutmose III's power even though they had not come into conflict with it, including the Hittites, Cypriots and Babylonians, and even the Minoans of Crete.

This ill-defined and loosely knit empire survived intact through the reigns of the next three Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaohs, its existence owed exclusively to Thutmose III. [5] It is due to his remarkable military activity record, filled with more battles over a longer period and more victories than any other general in the ancient world, [6] in addition to his short stature, that archaeologists refer to Thutmose III as "the Napoleon of Egypt". However, although Grafton Smith, an Australian anatomist, had stated the height of Thutmose III's mummy to be 1.65 metres in his examination of the mummy following its discovery in 1881, [7] he did not account for its missing feet when taking the measurements. A more recent examination revealed Thutmose III's height to be 1.71 metres, which was taller than the average

Egyptian of his day and all of the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty except Amenhotep I. [8] Interestingly, such confusion also exists in Napoleon Bonaparte's depiction as someone much smaller than average height, due to a miscalculation. According to his French doctor, Francesco Antommarchi, who performed the autopsy, Napoleon Bonaparte was 5 feet and 2 inches tall.

However, the French ponce, whilst the equivalent to the British inch, are equal to 2.71 and 2.54 cm respectively, which means he was, in fact, 5 feet and 6 inches tall. This miscalculation has seen historians now describe Napoleon Bonaparte as someone of average height of the period, and as a result, he cannot compare to Thutmose III, who is now recognised as someone taller than the average height of his time, in addition to a genius in the operational art of war, and a great military commander. [9] Napoleon I was a military and political leader of France and later Emperor of the French, between 1804 and 1814 CE, and again during the Hundred Days period in 1815 CE. During the Napoleonic Wars, which involved every major European power, he led the French Empire to a streak of victories. As a result, its power rose quickly, and Napoleon I conquered most of Europe. This sphere of influence was maintained through the formation of extensive alliances and the appointment of friends and family members to rule other European countries as French client states.

At its most extensive, the French Empire had forty-four million inhabitants, and its subject states thirty-eight million, [10] and not since Charlemagne had a politically united Europe seemed as close as it did under Napoleon I.

[11] However, it would prove to be Napoleon I's attempt to unite the continent by armed might that would lead to his fall. Unlike Thutmose III, who appears to have been a compassionate man despite his military ferocity, with no records of massacres or atrocities among his seventeen listed campaigns in the Annals, Napoleon I is considered by many historians, including Pieter Geyl and David G.

Chandler, to be a tyrant. His authorisation of the use of sulphur gas against the rebel slaves in the Haitian Revolution, as well as his decision to reinstate slavery in France's overseas territories eight years after its abolition in 1794 CE, during the French Revolution, always controversial to his reputation, [12] certainly support the suggestion that when faced with the prospect of war, and therefore, the death of thousands, Napoleon I was not significantly troubled by the idea. (In fact, historians have estimated the death toll from the Napoleonic Wars as a figure between three and seven million. This view was certainly shared between his opponents, who continually formed Coalitions in opposition to the French Empire. The administrative and legal reforms of the Revolution which Napoleon I had carried to the rest of Europe could not be separated from the ideas of Nationalism and Liberalism that had given those reforms substance, [13] and as a result, nations within the French Empire adopted these ideas, as well as many of the military and administrative reforms that had made France so powerful.

This eventually led to the formation of the Seventh Coalition, which defeated Napoleon I after his temporary revival of the French Empire in 1815 CE, which had fallen with his abdication a year earlier. Consequently France, in

which the Bourbon monarchy was restored, no longer held the role of the dominant power in Europe, as it had since the times of Louis XIV. In addition, unlike Napoleon I, Thutmose III did not inherit a strong nation or experienced army, but a defeated and insular society. 14] Whilst the 'Emperor of the French' received massed forces, weaponry and mobility (which would later be defined as the characteristics of Napoleonic warfare) due to the innovations of the French Revolution, including mass conscription, the Egyptian Pharaoh was forced to completely reform his army. He would establish a conscript base, create a professional officer corps and equip it with modern weapons, as well as integrate chariots into new tactical doctrines.

Additionally, he would also create the first combat navy in the ancient world. Perhaps it is fitting, then, that the description of Thutmose III as "the Napoleon of Egypt" should be reconsidered. Whilst Napoleon I's First French Empire would last combined ten years and result in an immediate loss of status France, Thutmose III's New Kingdom Egyptian Empire was a great nation of imperial dimensions that ruled the entire world that an Egyptian would have considered knowing for more than five hundred years. 15] In addition, Thutmose III managed to architect and establish such an Empire without inheriting the calibre of resources that Napoleon I had access to. Therefore, it is obvious that Thutmose III's military achievements were, to use the words of English military historian B. H. Liddell Hart, "greater than Napoleon". [16] Similarly, in the opinion of another military historian in the Canadian Richard A. Gabriel, Thutmose III was not "the Napoleon of Egypt"

but “ Egypt’s Alexander the Great”, [17] arguably the most successful military commander in history.

Furthermore, whilst both Thutmose III and Napoleon I were believed to be men of short stature by James Henry Breasted, which inclined him to make the comparison as opposed to one with another esteemed military commander, historians have now recognised that these assumptions are incorrect. The Egyptian Pharaoh, after a more recent examination, is now recognised as someone taller than the average height of his time, while the ‘ Emperor of the French’ is now described as someone of average height of the period, following the discovery of a miscalculation which had deprived him of four inches.

In addition, it seems that to alike the two men in character, let alone build, would be incorrect, due to their apparent differences in temperament. As a result, whilst there is a persisting description of Thutmose III as “ the Napoleon of Egypt” among archaeologists, when he is compared to the ‘ Emperor of the French’ it is obvious that such an image should be abandoned.

Although a determination to pursue to imperialist ambitions is synonymous, the extent to which each was successful in their attempt to establish and maintain their empires differ. Thutmose III’s remarkable record of military activity, in fact, overshadows that of Napoleon I, whose empire would only last a combined ten years and result in an immediate loss of status France, as opposed to the New Kingdom Egyptian Empire, which would last five hundred years.