

Informative essay on hatshepsut



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#301 Hatshepsut Hatshepsut was the fourth female pharaoh in Egyptian history, and was considered one of the greatest rulers, male or female, of her time. As Pharaoh, she encouraged trade and sent a voyage to the land of Punt, sponsored a vast building project in Egypt, added to the temple of Amon at Karnak, and commissioned her famous mortuary temple, Deir el-Bahri, decorated with her most impressive achievements. She is renowned for being strong and assertive, whilst also fair and just. The many reliefs and paintings in this temple serve as sources from which we can draw conclusions about her life and her reign.

Hatshepsut was the daughter of King Thutmose I and his wife, Queen Ahmose, and married her half-brother, King Thutmose II. When King Thutmose II died after a short rule, Hatshepsut's stepson Thutmose III inherited the throne. However, as Thutmose III was considered too young to rule, Hatshepsut served as his regent. Shortly afterwards, some sources say Hatshepsut claimed the throne for herself, whereas others say that she ruled with Thutmose III as a diarchy. The birth and coronation scenes at Deir el-Bahri show Hatshepsut's divine birth, although they have been greatly damaged, supposedly due to a vengeful Thutmose III.

According to the scenes, Amon (a prominent god in Upper Egypt) goes to a sleeping Ahmose in the form of Thutmose I and awakens her with pleasant odours. At this point Amon places the ankh, a symbol of life, to Ahmose's nose, and Hatshepsut is conceived. From this source, historians have been able to decipher that in order to justify her leadership, Hatshepsut claimed that she'd had a divine birth. In these scenes Hatshepsut is shown as a

young boy, and through her claim of divinity she won the support of the priests.

To further strengthen her position, the oracle of Amon was published on the walls of her tomb, stating, " Welcome my sweet daughter, my favorite, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Maatkare, Hatshepsut. Thou art the Pharaoh, taking possession of the Two Lands. " She also claimed that she was her father's intended heir and had the following commissioned on the walls of her temple: ' Then his majesty said to them: " This daughter of mine, Khnumetamun Hatshepsut, may she live! I have appointed as my successor upon my throne... he shall direct the people in every sphere of the palace; it is she indeed who shall lead you. Obey her words, unite yourselves at her command. " The royal nobles, the dignitaries, and the leaders of the people heard this proclamation of the promotion of his daughter, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Maatkare, may she live eternally. ' Hatshepsut is regarded as one of the most outstanding of Egypt's female rulers, and was the first to assume the Godship with the Kingship. She was often portrayed wearing the double crown, indicating sovereignty over the lands of both Upper and Lower Egypt.

In many representations she has been shown wearing masculine attire and a traditional false beard, although it is unlikely that the false beard was actually worn, as opposed to being strictly an artistic convention. Statues such as those at the Metropolitan Museum of Art depicting her seated wearing a tight-fitting dress and the nemes crown are a more accurate depiction of how she would have presented herself. Hatshepsut took great pride in the trading expedition she sent to Punt in around year nine of her

reign. We know that she regarded it as one of her major achievements as she had it carved on the middle colonnade walls at Deir el-Bahri.

Reliefs show that exotic goods such as myrrh trees, frankincense, oils, ivory, ebony and animal skins were brought back and offered to Amon-ra.

Inscriptions state, " the ships were laden with the costly products of the Land of Punt and with its many valuable woods, with very much sweet-smelling resin and frankincense, with quantities of ebony and ivory..." There is another scene in which Hatshepsut is offering these products to Amon-Ra, with inscriptions showing him praising her and promising success for future expeditions.

This evidence reinforces Hatshepsut's obedience to the Gods, as well as showing her power and confidence in her officials to plan and undertake such a voyage. During her reign, Hatshepsut built a rock temple, now known as Speos Artemidos and dedicated it to the Goddess Pakhet. On the facade above the entrance there is an inscription in which she complains about the damage done during the reign of the " Asiatics of Auaris", three generations before her reign, and reports, " I have raised up what was destroyed".

She claims full responsibility for rebuilding Egypt, and has inscribed, " My command stands firm like the mountains and the sun disk shines".

Hatshepsut also constructed four obelisks at the Temple of Karnak, one of which remains standing today at 29.6m high, weighing 320 tonnes. It is inscribed with, " O ye people who see this monument in years to come and speak of that which I have made, beware lest you say, 'I know not why it was done'. I did it because I wished to make a gift for my father Amun, and to gild

them with electrum. Author and broadcaster Joyce Tyldesley teaches Egyptology at Manchester University, and is Honorary Research Fellow at the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, Liverpool University. She states that, " By promoting the cult of Amon, she was effectively reinforcing her own position and promoting herself. " Early on with the lack of evidence or inscriptions it appeared as though Hatshepsut was a pacifist and didn't undertake any great battles. J. A Wilson in " The Culture of Ancient Egypt" states that, " She records no military campaigns".

However Redford in " History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty" states there were four to six campaigns. These included a campaign to Nubia, possibly by the Queen herself in the early period of her reign, a small battle in Palestine/Syria and two campaigns by Thutmose III shortly before her death invading Gaza and Nubia. Hatshepsut emphasises her military role by referring to upgrading the army and portraying herself as a traditional warrior-pharaoh sphinx. An inscription at Speos Artemidos reads, " My might causing the foreign countries to bow down, because the uraeus that is upon my forehead pacifies all the lands for me. " My army, which was unequipped, has become possessed of riches since I arose as king. " Hatshepsut died in 1458 BC during her twenty-second regal year; no record of her cause of death has survived. There were no bodies in Hatshepsut's tomb in the Valley of the Kings when archaeologist Howard Carter unearthed it in 1903.

However, an unidentified female mummy, found with Hatshepsut's wet nurse Sitre, and with her arms posed in the traditional burial style of pharaoh, lead to the speculation of the discovery of Hatshepsut's remains. In June 2007, a

molar was found with Hatshepsut's organs and was matched with a gap in the mummy's teeth.

DNA tests were run, which established her identity and the theory was confirmed. " We are 100 percent sure," said Zahi Hawass, secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Council on Antiquities, when asked about the mummy. Tests of her mummified tissue showed that Hatshepsut died of bone cancer around the age of 50. She also suffered from diabetes and was obese. Many primary sources related to Hatshepsut are most likely biased. For example sources from her temple Deir el-Bahri could be considered subjective as she was alive when they were made and she had herself portrayed as divine, as was common for Pharaohs.

These sources should only be relied upon to an extent, as they are open to interpretation. Individuals' interpretations may also be biased and influenced by personal opinions and views. Sources from this time are also quite heavily damaged due to the fact that after Hatshepsut died, Thutmose III supposedly had her name and representations chiselled away from temple walls, and replaced with those of Thutmose I, II and III. The statues and sphinxes she had built in her temple were broken to pieces and thrown away. However, as with most sources, there has been controversy in interpretation.

Both Gardiner and Wilson argue that as soon as the Queen died, Thutmose III, in hatred, immediately destroyed her name and monuments so as to obliterate her name and memory forever. However, recent research by historian Nims argues that the damage was not done until the year 42, when Thutmose III replaced Hatshepsut's cartouche with his own. This leaves us

speculative, if he hated her so much, why would he wait 20 years for his revenge? All new kingdom Pharaohs altered or destroyed some buildings of their predecessors, including Hatshepsut with the Temple of Karnak.

New theories suggest that by erasing the cartouche of Hatshepsut and replacing it with that of Thutmose I or II, he was merely trying to legitimise his right to the throne by emphasising his links to these previous Pharaohs. Inscriptions often refer to both Hatshepsut and Thutmose III as Pharaohs, and show that Hatshepsut gave Thutmose III important roles leading the military. These sources lead us to believe that the relationship between Hatshepsut and Thutmose III may not have been hateful, as many sources state, and they may have indeed ruled as a diarchy.

They also highlight the controversy often encountered in the interpretation of sources in general. Bibliography: J. G. , A. H. and L. K. 1998, Hatshepsut, Viewed May 1 2011, <http://www.richeast.org/htwm/Hat/hat.html> Jane Carlson, 1998, Hatshepsut, Queen of Egypt, Viewed May 1 2011, <http://www.thenagain.info/webchron/africa/Hatshepsut.html> Author unknown, 2010, The Immaculate Birth of Queen Hatshepsut, Viewed May 1 2011, <http://kemetichistoryofafrikabluelotus.blogspot.com/2010/04/immaculate-birth-of-queen-hatshepsut.html> Author unknown, Date of publication unknown, Pharaoh Maatkare Hatshepsut, Viewed May 1 2011, <http://www.rystalinks.com/egyphatshepsut.html> Patricia L O'Neill, Date of publication unknown, Her Majesty The King, Viewed May 2 2011, <http://hermajestytheking.com/faq.htm> Author unknown, date of publication unknown, Voyage to Punt, Viewed May 2 2011, <http://www.camden-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/pages/Faculties/History/ancient/Hatshepsut/Voyage> <https://assignbuster.com/informative-essay-on-hatshepsut/>

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