

Hatshepsuts reign



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Role of Hatshepsut as a female pharaoh throughout the 18th Dynasty in Egyptian society was vital for the ultimate construction of Egypt as a major imperial power and the overall greatness of Egypt. Hatshepsut's reign from 1503 BCE to 1482 BCE was one of the most prosperous periods for ancient Egyptian society, the role of Hatshepsut saw a time of great prosperity for the economy and architecture furthermore it was a time of advancement in the arts and of great peace. The great reign of Hatshepsut lasted for twenty-two years, and paved the way for Thutmose III, who was able to engage in the repossession of the throne.

The effective transition from the reign of Hatshepsut to Thutmose III enabled Thutmose III to initiate campaigns of conquest in the East of Egypt, which in turn led to the establishment of a successful Egyptian Empire. Hatshepsut contributed significantly to the construction of great monuments, temples, statues and also other architectural masterpieces, these offerings to Egyptian society again contributed to the greatness of not only ancient Egypt itself but also to the greatness of Hatshepsut and her success as a female pharaoh.

Historian David Bediz elaborates that although other female rulers both preceded and followed her, Hatshepsut's long and prosperous rule made her one of the greatest female rulers of all time; " She ruled the most powerful, advanced civilisation in the world, successfully for twenty years.... Her success stands for all eternity. " The architecture of Hatshepsut was quite unique in a sense that she left her own mark on traditional Egyptian architecture.

Historian Naville was quoted " The works of art from her reign, display the imprint of an individual novel taste, which must be none other than that of the divine being who occupied the Horus-throne" (Naville, 1906) Hatshepsut brought stability to the nation. But by far her defining achievement was her temple at Der-el Bahri known rightfully as the " sublime of sublimes" (Monet, 1968: p. 23). The construction of the temple took place between 1498 BC to 1483 BC.

The following inscription from Der-el Bahri exemplifies her achievement " When you rest in your building where your beauties are worshipped, Amun Ra, the Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, give Hatshepsut life, duration and happiness. For she has made this building fine, great, pure" (Der el Bahri inscription in [www. touregypt. net](http://www.touregypt.net) 18/5/04). Her temple would become her defining achievement that in term characterised Hatshepsut's reign. Hatshepsut's architectural achievements were the defining characteristic of her reign and therefore were her most important contribution to the greatness of Egypt.

Additionally, by Hatshepsut investing money into the beautification of her country, it allowed for a politically stable environment which in term would eventually help Thutmosis III. Although Architecture was Hatshepsut's defining achievement without a flourishing economy it would not have been possible. Hatshepsut's reign was phenomenal in the sense that her contribution to the economy by endeavours in trade and foreign relations. This contributed to Egypt becoming a wealthy nation with unrivalled economic power.

Her consolidation and injections into the economy would inevitably become the foundation that allowed Thutmose III to undertake military campaigns of large scale. Naville reiterates the proposed ideas “ her government must have been at once strong and enlightened, for when her nephew Thutmose III succeeded her, the country was sufficiently powerful and rich to allow him to venture on a succession of war of conquests” (Naville, 1906,). Under Queen Hatshepsut’s reign, trade with foreign countries was expanded, not only with the African lands to the south, but also with the Levant and the islands of the sea.

The Queen decided to strengthen the relationships with friendly nations and let hostile Asiatic nations be punished for their ignorance and arrogance. Relations with Byblos flourished again and the turquoise mines of Sinai were reopened. Furthermore Timber from the land of Negau was imported and envoys to the southern land negotiated the trade of metals and precious commodities such as panther and elephants skins with the inhabitants of the Libyan coast. As quoted by Redford upon Hatshepsut’s trade bolstering “ Hatshepsut was not blind to the need of bolstering Egypt’s economy.

Running a close second to the building program were the economic measures, taken by the Queen. Trade with foreign countries was furthered”(Redford, 1967: p. 87). Under Hatshepsut, the state owned the majority of land. The following extract quoted by Spalinger epitomises her reorganisation of Egypt “ From persons who controlled and worked parcels of property the state collected taxes in the form of cattle, grain, wine and other goods the land yielded. Adding to Egypt vast internal revenues was tribute

paid from outside. "(Spalinger, 1978) The expedition to Punt characterised Hatshepsut's reign and personified her internal glory policy.

Queen Hatshepsut sent five Phoenician styled ships on a trade expedition that would distill luxuries unparalleled upon Egypt. An inscription from Der el Bahri gives insight on the expedition " The loading of the ships heavily with marvels of the country of Punt, all godly fragrant wood's of God's Land, myrrh resin, with fresh myrrh trees, with ebony and pure ivory... with green gold of Euni, with cinnamon wood, incense, eye cosmetics, with apes, monkeys, dogs and with skins of the southern panther, with natives and their children"(Der el Bahri inscription in Williams, 1994).

Hatshepsut's contribution to the Egyptian economy was so important that it allowed the rest of the Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty unrivalled and unlimited economic power. Hatshepsut's internal development and building programs bought political stability to Egypt and thus allowed way for Thutmosis III's conquests this and unrivalled economic prowess. Although Hatshepsut prioritized internal development and economic endeavours she was proud of the state of readiness of her army

Hatshepsut's military exploits, although miniscule compared to that of former and future pharaohs who pursued an expansionistic militaristic imperialism policy, contributed to the greatness of Egypt. A naive perspective of Hatshepsut's reign would express that she undertook no military campaigns and exercised no military prowess but as quoted by Redforde " clearly that the belief that Hatshepsut undertook no foreign wars is simply untrue" (Redforde, 1967).

Although Hatshepsut didn't pursue an expansionistic militaristic imperialism policy and expand Egypt's borders there were two probable reasons for this; she was a woman and thus found it rather inconvenient to lead an army of men in the field and secondly the world situation did not call for the use of exceptional military force during her lifetime. Furthermore it could be said that military prowess was not a reflection of political ability and so being that Hatshepsut's reign brought political stability rather the extension of borders. The military had an important role in Hatshepsut's designs for rebuilding Egypt, she rigidly maintained that "my troops which were unequipped are well paid since I appeared as King" (Hatshepsut in Redford, 1967).

Hatshepsut in her reign undertook at least four campaigns and of one she led in person, although two were led by her nominal ruler Thutmose III under her name. Hatshepsut's four campaigns consisted of a campaign against Nubia, a mop-up operation in Palestine and Syria and the capture of Gaza and an additional campaign against Nubia both led by Thutmose III.

Spalinger addresses this matter "Thutmose III in the latter of Hatshepsut's reign led two campaigns under her name" (Spalinger, 1978). The Nubian campaign that Hatshepsut undertook was a success proving her military prowess and capable leadership, the following graffito depicts her campaign "I followed the good god, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Makare, may she live! I saw when she overthrew the Nubian bowmen and when their chiefs were brought to him as living captives, I saw when he razed Nubia, I being in her majesty's following" (graffito in Arkell, 1961).

At the time of Hatshepsut the Egyptian army was a well organised and highly professional force, this then allowed Thutmose III able soldiers for his campaigns. Therefore Hatshepsut's reign is perceived as peaceful, conservative and isolationist and is often criticized but her reign embodies all the elements of a successful military ruler whose main focus was upon internal development. The construction of Egypt as a major imperial power was due to Hatshepsut's contributions to the greatness of Egypt. Under her reign architecture and the economy flourished.

Which allowed for a politically stable environment and unparalleled economic strength from which Thutmose III used as his launching pad for his conquests. Her military prowess although never forcefully exerted was present. Her reign allowed the best imperialist expansion policy Egypt had under Thutmose. Therefore Hatshepsut's reign had the most important contributions to Egyptian greatness than any other of the 18th Dynasty rulers, this mostly is own to her remarkable internal development policies of trade and commerce.