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Video Production

# HATSHEPSUT

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GEOGRAPHICAL & HISTORICAL CONTEXT - New Kingdom Egypt

The Nile River is 7,000 kilometres long, running the entire length of the Egyptian landscape, with its annual flood providing a vital lifeline. The Nile was also an essential means of transport and communication for the Empire. During the Second Intermediate Period, circa 1720BCE, an Asiatic tribe called the Hyksos, moved into the Delta, with their capital at Memphis. Around 1570 BCE, the pharaohs of Thebes began a campaign to rid Egypt of the Hyksos. Seqenenre Tao II and his first son Kamose, died in battle. Eventually, his second son Ahmose I defeated the Hyksos and pursued them back to Palestine.

Egypt was again united under one pharaoh, heralding the dawn of the New Kingdom and the 'warrior - pharaoh' ideology. Pharaohs were recognized as military leaders rather than living gods. Ahmose was succeeded by his son Amenhotep I, followed by Thutmose I, circa 1524BCE. He was known as one of the most successful 'warrior-pharaohs' of the time and dedicated his victories to the cult of Amun. He expanded the Egyptian 'empire', leading campaigns south to Nubia, and north to the Euphrates in present day Turkey. But, most importantly, he was the father of Hatshepsut.

Question:

- 1 At what point do many Egyptologists regard the beginning of the New Kingdom?

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, MILITARY & RELIGIOUS CONTEXT of New Kingdom Egypt

After the expulsion of the Hyksos, a strong central government, led by the pharaoh was created. The pharaoh upheld '*maat*' (justice, divine order) by maintaining law and order, presiding over legal cases and deciding punishments. He also acted as an intermediary between the people and the gods, by making daily temple rituals and offerings. He controlled the state treasuries and trade, ensuring prosperity. In practice, most of the pharaoh's authority was delegated to a network of officials. The Chancellor oversaw the royal household. The Chief Steward managed provisions, while the Chamberlain supervised palace officials and attended directly to the Pharaoh. The Overseer of the Treasury calculated taxes and disbursed tribute, while the Overseer of the Granaries supervised the storage of food essential for trade.

The Social Structure of the Upper classes had the King at its apex. Next came nobles and chief government officials, then local government officials and prominent local families. The literate upper middle class included scribes, administrators, soldiers, minor priests and artisans. Tradesmen formed the semi-literate lower middle class. The lower class included foot soldiers, agricultural labourers, servants, animal herders and fishermen. The Pharaoh was the Commander-in-Chief of the Military. A War Council consisting of senior military officials advised him on foreign diplomacy and the deployment of troops. There were two divisions within the armed forces. The Infantry consisted of professional, voluntary and conscripted troops. Chariot forces comprised of men from the upper classes and were the main shock weapon in Egyptian war strategy, providing archers with a stable platform.

In the New Kingdom, the pharaoh had a strong relationship with the god Amun. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Amun became the most powerful god in Egypt, with his temple at Karnak the centre of a national cult. During the New Kingdom period, he was syncretised with the sun-god Re as Amun-Re. A pharaoh's relationship with Amun had important political implications. It could be used to reinforce or legitimize the pharaoh's position; to justify political decisions; to influence the pattern of succession or, to ensure continuing support for his reign. Pharaohs demonstrated their bond with Amun by constructing monuments. They also recorded divine birth and coronation scenes to suggest they were the physical sons or daughters of the god himself. Pharaohs claimed to have been personally selected by Amun to rule Egypt. Political decisions and military victories were also attributed to him.

Question:

1. Describe aspects of New Kingdom society.

HATSHEPSUT'S BACKGROUND: The Influence of Queens

Beginning in the 17th and early 18th Dynasties, queens assumed high public positions, carried out state duties and participated in court functions and some ruled as kings, called the 'Queen Regent'. Queens Ahhotep I and Ahmose-Nefertari are especially worthy of mention. Ahhotep ( the mother of Ahmose, founder of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty) not only acted as regent for her young son, but also appears to have been active in a military sense, as a Karnak stele built by Ahmose states: "She is the one who performed the rites and cared for Egypt." Such reverence reinforces this evolving role of royal women. The succeeding queen, Ahmose-Nefertari, is most notable for her assumption to 'God's Wife of Amun' status given by her husband, Ahmose, indicating his great trust and respect. Historian Joyce Tyldesley believes that *"to attempt to rule Egypt without a consort became an offence against ma'at"*, emphasizing both the political and religious importance of the 'God's Wife'. Tyldesley states that this title reflected the mythological idea that queens were impregnated by Amun, reiterating the dogma of the king being the son of this god.

This was particularly prevalent in case of Hatshepsut, who based much of her authority on being the 'God's Wife', after Ahmose-Nefertari. Hatshepsut would use the customs enacted by previous queen-consorts to assert her position as Pharaoh. Thutmose I was succeeded by Thutmose II in 1518BCE. He married his half-sister Hatshepsut, who became queen consort. They had one known child, their daughter Neferure. When Thutmose II died, the son he had with a palace concubine was recognized as his rightful successor. The boy was only nine or ten years old when he became Thutmose III. Hatshepsut was appointed as his regent. This was the traditional practice, as she was the 'King's Great Wife' to the previous pharaoh, and the most experienced member of the royal family. However, by the seventh year of her regency, her ambition led her to assume the title of king. Neferure assumed the role of queen to legitimise Hatshepsut's claim to the throne. Hatshepsut also sought to make Neferure her successor and gave her two titles, 'God's Wife of Amun' and 'Lady of the Two Lands, Mistress of Upper and Lower Egypt'. In the absence of a 'King's Great Wife' or 'King's Mother', she was required to fill that role as well. Hatshepsut was being practical in preparing Neferure for the throne if necessary. Hatshepsut was careful to acknowledge Thutmose III as joint king, but her dominance was evident on the many monuments and shrines she built. She provided an image of strength her people would believe in, and appears in many statues and drawings with a feminine face, but with the body of a man.

The co-regency shared between Hatshepsut and Thutmose III served to provide stability for the young king, ensuring his own succession to sole ruler.

Question:

1. Describe how Hatshepsut became king (pharaoh).

#### LEGITIMISING HER CLAIM AS PHARAOH

Throughout her reign, Hatshepsut continued to legitimise her claim as pharaoh. She did this by emphasizing her Divine Conception and Birth. Some historians believe that her close alliance to the god Amun was motivated by her need to justify this claim. Hatshepsut first defined her relationship with Amun as paternally based: he was her physical father and, with her mother Queen Ahmose, she was created by divine conception. Wall reliefs on the middle colonnade of her mortuary temple depict this. An inscription describes Amun's address to 12 important deities about his intention to father a daughter who will rule Egypt: *"We give her all life and good fortune on our part... She is at the head of all living Ka's together with her Ka as King of Upper and Lower Egypt on the throne of Horus, like unto Re, forever and ever."* The relief also implies that the fate of Amun's daughter was planned. To further legitimise her title as king of Egypt, Hatshepsut took a queen, her own daughter, Princess Neferure. Because divine birth is usually associated with a male, the story had to be adapted to a female ruler. Many historians believe the story of her coronation was invented. Hatshepsut's title at the time was that of Queen Consort, and the reign of Thutmose II is ignored. The date of the coronation does not correspond with inscriptions on other monuments.

The text of the *Oracle of Amun* on the outside of her Red Chapel at Karnak is dated to year 2 of an unspecified reign. It describes a religious procession at Luxor Temple where Hatshepsut received an Oracle from Amun announcing that she was to be the next king. Again, historians are sceptical about the text. It does not identify the reign of the king, and could have been interpreted by Hatshepsut to suit her own political interests. It may also have described an event associated with either Thutmose I or Thutmose III. Another inscription at Karnak describes Thutmose I calling on Amun, his wife Mut and Khonshu, their son, to bless Hatshepsut. The Karnak Obelisk inscription indicates Amun's approval of her reign.

Question:

1. How did Hatshepsut use the god Amun to legitimise her claim to kingship?

#### HATSHEPSUT'S REIGN

Early in her rule, Hatshepsut suppressed uprisings in neighbouring countries by staging quick, decisive military actions. An inscription by Ty at Sehel stated: "I saw him destroying the land of Nubia...", this reinforced the nature of the masculine Warrior-Pharaoh image. Further evidence of military conquests are found at Deir-el-Bahri: "...her arrow is among the northerners". This helped to legitimise Hatshepsut's reign by sustaining the ideals of a strong and accomplished king.

Hatshepsut's greatest achievement was the commissioning of an expedition south to the bountiful land of Punt, somewhere near present-day Ethiopia. Hatshepsut undertook this expedition for trading purposes, not conquest. In her Puntian Inscriptions, she makes it clear there were no deaths on the voyage, emphasising the creation of peaceful relations with Egypt's neighbours. Five ships and over 200 men set out on the long, arduous journey which included a 200-kilometre desert march, carrying dismantled boats. The expedition was a great success. Her envoys brought back abundant treasures. She was so pleased with the outcome that it was recorded on the Middle Colonnade at Deir El Bahri: "The loading of the ships very heavily with marvels of the land of Punt..." These inscriptions reinforce her diplomatic and trading successes.

Senenmut, her Chief Steward, was on the Punt expedition, and collected and stored the items dedicated to Amun. This included fragrant woods and incense resins, which were used in religious rituals, mummification, and as medicinal aids. Ebony was one of Egypt's most prized timbers, used in shrines and tombs, while ivory and metals like gold and antimony were fashioned into amulets. The expedition also established a regular trade route into tropical Africa, and honoured Amun. Hatshepsut claimed she was commanded by Amun to 'establish for him a Punt in his house'. Under Hatshepsut, the priesthood gained considerable power, and was richly rewarded by trade with Punt.

Question:

1. Evaluate the foreign policy of Hatshepsut.

#### HATSHEPSUT'S BUILDING PROGRAMMES Chapter Heading

To further enhance her relationship with the Amun-Re cult, and to impress upon the Egyptian people her economic prosperity, Hatshepsut embarked on a multitude of public works. Her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri has become her most enduring monument. The temple is called 'Holy of Holies'. The monument serves as a tribute to Hatshepsut's lifetime achievements, representing both divine and human aspects of her kingship, and honours many gods. At Karnak, Hatshepsut again advanced her relationship with the god Amun. She reinforced this bond on every addition she made, including the Chapelle Rouge (Red Chapel) which housed Amun's barque shrine, the 8<sup>th</sup> pylon, and the north-south processional way that connected central Karnak to the Mut precinct. Undeniably, the obelisks she erected are two of her most famous monuments.

Hatshepsut iconographical representation continued to change over time. Some images and statues depict her as quite masculine in form, with attributes of an idealized pharaoh and the New Kingdom torso and limb characteristics. In other instances, Hatshepsut experimented with a mixture of both masculine and feminine features. At her funerary chapel she is presented as a beardless king, with an essentially female appearance. Other statues depicted her as Osiris or a sphinx, kneeling before the gods. Peter Dorman observes that even with this iconographic inconsistency, she is predominantly regarded as female in inscriptions. William Hayes comments that, on a statue from Deir el-Bahri, she is represented as a woman, although she is wearing kingly insignia and is addressed as a pharaoh. Hatshepsut needed to portray herself as a 'regular' king. By having a prolific building program, honouring Amun and many divine figures as well as presenting herself as a masculine ruler, Hatshepsut continually upheld ma'at and her legitimacy.

Questions:

1. Why did Hatshepsut undertake a building programme?
2. What were the religious and political purposes of Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahri?
3. Describe the ways Hatshepsut's royal image changed over time?

#### RELIGION & RELATIONSHIP with AMUN Priesthood, Officials and Nobles

Hatshepsut did more than any of her predecessors to strengthen the position of Amun. She emphasized her filial relationship as the daughter of Amun, and credited him with her accession to the throne. Later, she transferred the title of '*God's wife of Amun*' to her daughter Neferure. Military successes, major building projects and trade expeditions were dedicated to him. This ensured that great wealth flowed into the Temple of Amun at Karnak. The priesthood played an active role in both initiating and supporting her building program, which served religious and political purposes. This helped raise awareness of the theology of Amun. And, as Hatshepsut linked this ideology to kingship and the throne, she involved the priesthood more directly in Egypt's fortunes.

Hatshepsut could not have attained power without the support of powerful male officials. One of Hatshepsut's main advisors, Hapusoneb, had many important titles including *Chief Priest of Amun* and Royal Vizier. These positions gave him jurisdiction over all phases of the Amun cult, control of the cults of other gods and a role as civil administrator. Her effort to maintain her right to the throne were centered on her relationship with Senenmut, her most senior adviser. His personal ties with Hatshepsut were based on his duties as Steward of the Estates of Amun, Hatshepsut's chief architect, and as Royal tutor to her daughter, Neferure. His appointment, and those of other new officials, ensured their inextricable link to the cult of Amun and Hatshepsut's own career. This in turn created utmost devotion and support for her kingship. However, Senenmut's reputation has often been maligned with queries of an intimate affair with Hatshepsut. His acknowledgement on many of her monuments furthered this speculation.

Historian Joyce Tyldesley considers him to be the organizational brain behind the throne. Furthermore, his disappearance during year 16 of her reign has led to much conjecture. Many of his monuments were damaged, and his name chiseled from some of his statues. The perpetrators behind the destruction of his name and iconography are unknown.

Question:

1. Describe Hatshepsut's relationship to Amun.

#### RELATIONSHIP with THUTMOSE III Chapter Heading

One of the most controversial aspects of Hatshepsut's reign is the nature of her relationship with Thutmose III. Following the death of Thutmose II, Hatshepsut assumed the role of regent for Thutmose III, who was a young child. Hatshepsut was perhaps 25 years his senior. William Hayes viewed Hatshepsut's regency as an exercise in outlandish ambition.

Dr Gay Robins infers that the regent queen was meant to hand over control to Thutmose III when he came of age, but found the prospect of giving up her power unacceptable. Robins' comments create a biased description of Hatshepsut. Alternatively, Dorman states that, even though little may be deduced about Thutmose III's role while Hatshepsut was his co-regent, he was never excluded from religious monuments. However, Hatshepsut always appears in a prominent position in all reliefs, such as found in the Chapelle Rouge at Karnak. After Year 20 of their co-regency, Thutmose III was given leadership of the army, and led a campaign into Nubia. There are no documented uprisings against Hatshepsut by Thutmose III. Some historians believe that he may have welcomed their partnership as a foundation for his solo reign, and he has been recognised as one of the greatest warrior pharaohs of ancient Egypt. Hatshepsut died in year 22, and there is no evidence that her death was unnatural or that she was deposed by Thutmose III.

Question:

1. How would you evaluate the relationship between Hatshepsut and Thutmose III?

#### EVALUATION Chapter Heading

Hatshepsut has been the focus of much scholarly interest since the revelation of her controversial reign during the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the New Kingdom. The mere idea of female kingship originally prompted negative views of both her personality and her time on the throne. This was substantiated by the lack of primary evidence, as well as with the erasure of her kingly titles and images. Many of her statues were destroyed, and, in some instances, her name was substituted with Thutmose I, II or III. Her Red Chapel at Karnak was dismantled and her obelisks there were covered up. Finally and most significantly, her name was omitted from the official Kings Lists.

Some historians believe that Thutmose III was responsible for these actions, but they are divided over the timing or extent of the attacks. A different point of view suggests that Thutmose III was trying to demonstrate his legitimate right to the throne by his relationship to Thutmose I and II. Also, he may have felt that Hatshepsut's achievements would overshadow his own. And finally, he was trying to restore ma'at by removing all traces of a female king. It is also believed that some of the damage to Hatshepsut's monuments took place much later in either the Amarna or Ramesside periods.

The claim of Hatshepsut being a 'merciless, evil usurper' is perhaps not as valid as previously thought, given that more information and analysis continues to develop on this subject. Historians are now able to see her in a more positive light. Hatshepsut had a seemingly successful rule as pharaoh of Egypt, and we are yet to uncover all the facets of her unique kingship.

Questions:

1. Assess the achievements of Hatshepsut.
2. To what extent was Hatshepsut a successful ruler?