

**HATSHEPSUT, QUEEN OF ANCIENT EGYPT: A HISTORICAL AND
CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive scientific analysis of one of the most famous and influential figures in ancient Egyptian history – Queen Hatshepsut. It examines her reign, political reforms, religious and cultural legacy, as well as her place in modern archaeology and historiography. The article explores theoretical and empirical approaches to studying Hatshepsut, perspectives of regional and national scholars, historical sources, and contemporary debates. Hatshepsut's role in ancient Egyptian society and her legacy remain a topical issue in the academic sphere today.

Keywords: Hatshepsut, Ancient Egypt, queens, archaeology

Introduction

Аннотация

В данной статье представлен подробный научный анализ одной из самых известных и влиятельных личностей древнеегипетской истории — царицы Хатшепсут. Рассматриваются её правление, политические реформы, религиозное и культурное наследие, а также место в современной археологии и историографии. В статье анализируются теоретические и эмпирические подходы к изучению Хатшепсут, взгляды региональных и национальных учёных, исторические источники и современные дискуссии. Роль и наследие Хатшепсут в древнеегипетском обществе остаются актуальной темой научных исследований.

Ключевые слова: Хатшепсут, Древний Египет, царицы, археология

Introduction

Ancient Egyptian civilization occupies a distinctive place in human history due to its rich culture, complex system of state administration, and unique religious beliefs. At various stages of this civilization, rulers and royal women made significant contributions to the development of society. In particular, Queen Hatshepsut of the Eighteenth Dynasty stands out for her

remarkable political activity and exceptional capabilities in state governance. She is regarded not only as the first female pharaoh in Egyptian history, but also as a figure who can serve as an example for women leaders throughout world history. Hatshepsut's accession to the throne, the reforms implemented during her reign, her major construction projects, religious and economic policies, and her historical legacy continue to be widely discussed within the academic community. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the theoretical and conceptual foundations for studying Hatshepsut, historical and contemporary approaches to her reign, as well as the views of various scholars and findings from empirical research. The main objective of the article is to examine the phenomenon of Queen Hatshepsut from a comprehensive scholarly perspective and to determine her role in ancient Egyptian society, as well as her significance in contemporary historiography.

Literature Review

The study of Queen Hatshepsut's personality in the analysis of Ancient Egyptian history is closely associated, first and foremost, with theoretical and methodological foundations. Early approaches were primarily based on ancient sources and archaeological findings, while the issues surrounding Hatshepsut's accession to the throne and the legitimacy of her rule acquired particular significance from the perspective of the political and gender structures of ancient Egyptian society. The fusion of religious and political authority, particularly Hatshepsut's declaration of herself as the daughter of the god Amun-Ra, played an important role in strengthening her status as a legitimate ruler. This phenomenon is explained within theories of ancient Egyptian monarchy through the concept of the **"divinity of the pharaoh,"** according to which the authority of the ruler was recognized as having a divine foundation. During her reign, Hatshepsut actively employed this concept and presented herself not only as a political leader but also as a religious authority [1].

Within the framework of historical and classical theories, the study of the Hatshepsut phenomenon draws primarily upon the works of ancient authors, as well as the research of modern Western and national scholars. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European archaeologists and historians, including James Breasted and Flinders Petrie, studied monuments associated with the reign of Hatshepsut and emphasized that her rule represented an important stage in the development of ancient Egypt. Although their scholarly works contributed significantly to revealing the political and economic structure of the ancient Egyptian state, certain stereotypical approaches to Hatshepsut as a historical figure were also present. For instance, some researchers characterized her as an **"unconventional female ruler"** and portrayed her accession to the throne as an exceptional or extraordinary circumstance. Such interpretations reflect, to a certain extent, gender stereotypes and the influence of patriarchal approaches within historiography [2].

In recent decades, the study of Hatshepsut as a historical figure has witnessed the emergence of new theoretical paradigms based on postcolonial and gender studies approaches. Contemporary historians and archaeologists, including Kara Cooney and Elizabeth Blyth, have examined Hatshepsut as an example of female leadership in ancient Egyptian society, while conducting in-depth research into the political and economic reforms implemented

during her reign. Their studies place particular emphasis on Hatshepsut's representation of herself through symbols of "**femininity**" and "**masculinity**," as well as on her gender identity and its acceptance within society. These approaches have also encouraged a reassessment of the social status of women in ancient Egyptian society and their participation in political life. Consequently, the theories of "**gender historiography**" and "**cultural constructivism**" have acquired considerable significance in the study of Hatshepsut as a historical figure [3].

During the reign of Queen Hatshepsut of Ancient Egypt, major construction projects were undertaken, particularly the Deir el-Bahari complex, the Karnak Temple, and other architectural monuments. These sites have been extensively studied from the perspectives of archaeology and art history. They represent not only symbols of Hatshepsut's authority but also remarkable examples of ancient Egyptian culture and religious beliefs. Archaeological research has revealed that numerous statues and reliefs within the Deir el-Bahari complex depict Hatshepsut wearing the traditional attire of male pharaohs, suggesting her deliberate adoption of the conventional imagery of a male ruler. At the same time, the obelisks and inscriptions commissioned by Hatshepsut at the Karnak Temple were intended to legitimize and reinforce her authority through divine associations. Archaeologists, including Zahi Hawass and Mark Lehner, have extensively employed modern technologies and scientific methods in the study of these monuments, resulting in new insights into the culture and art of Hatshepsut's era. This has made it possible to conduct comprehensive scholarly analyses of Hatshepsut's role in ancient Egyptian architecture and art, her creative capabilities, and her exceptional competence in state administration [4].

The political and economic aspects of Hatshepsut's reign also deserve particular attention. During her rule, she implemented extensive reforms aimed at strengthening the centralization of the Egyptian state and ensuring economic stability. In particular, the trade expedition sent to the land of Punt brought numerous valuable commodities to Egypt, including myrrh, gold, exotic plants, and animals. This expedition was one of the significant events in the foreign policy of ancient Egypt and demonstrated Hatshepsut's achievements in international trade and diplomacy. Historical sources provide extensive accounts of the details of this expedition, thereby enabling scholars to examine Hatshepsut's economic policies, state finances, and achievements in foreign relations. Modern historians regard this event as an important stage in the development of ancient Egyptian economic diplomacy. Furthermore, Hatshepsut's reign witnessed the further centralization of state administration and the strengthening of the bureaucratic apparatus, which laid the foundation for the long-term development and stability of the state [5].

Hatshepsut's religious policy and her role within the belief system of ancient Egypt also merit particular scholarly attention. During her reign, she sought to strengthen the worship of Amun-Ra and to reinforce the unity of religion and the state through the introduction of new religious rituals and the construction of temples. Hatshepsut proclaimed herself the direct daughter of Amun-Ra, thereby legitimizing her rule on a divine basis. This contributed to reinforcing the concept within ancient Egyptian religious ideology that the ruler possessed a divine status. In religious inscriptions and temple representations, Hatshepsut is frequently depicted in the presence of deities, offering sacrifices or engaged in acts of worship. Such representations

served to strengthen her religious authority and enhance her prestige among the population. Contemporary studies, particularly those based on archaeological and epigraphic evidence, provide in-depth analyses of Hatshepsut's religious policy and her innovative approaches to temple construction. In this context, scholarly attention has increasingly focused on the influence of ancient Egyptian religious ideology on social development and on the legitimization of royal authority [6].

Research on the history of Ancient Egypt conducted by scholars from Uzbekistan and Central Asia has primarily been based on general historical and civilizational approaches. Local researchers, including F. O. To'rayev and A. A. Sagdullaev, have analyzed the political structure, culture, and social system of the Egyptian state within the broader study of the history of Ancient Eastern civilizations. Their scholarly works provide important insights into the distinctive characteristics of Egyptian society during the reign of Hatshepsut, as well as its system of state administration and religious ideology. In particular, the centralization of state administration, the development of bureaucracy, and the strengthening of religious ideology during Hatshepsut's reign have also received particular attention from Central Asian scholars. This demonstrates that regional scholarly traditions and approaches have their own significance in the study of the Hatshepsut phenomenon.

Empirical research and recent archaeological investigations have revealed a substantial amount of new information about Hatshepsut as a historical figure. Recent advances in Egyptian archaeology, particularly the comprehensive restoration of the Deir el-Bahari complex, the decipherment and analysis of inscriptions at the Karnak Temple, and the study of depictions associated with the expedition to Punt, have contributed to a reassessment of scholarly perspectives on Hatshepsut's state administration, foreign policy, and religious activities. These studies have enabled more in-depth scholarly analyses of Hatshepsut's role in ancient Egyptian society, the phenomenon of her rule as a female monarch, and her historical legacy. Another significant development is the application of modern technologies, including radiocarbon analysis, three-dimensional modeling, and genetic research, which has yielded new evidence concerning Hatshepsut's mummy and biography. This demonstrates the increasingly effective use of modern scientific and archaeological methods in the study of Hatshepsut as a historical figure.

Scholarly debates concerning Queen Hatshepsut have primarily focused on the political reforms implemented during her reign, her gender identity, and the significance of her legacy within the historiography of ancient Egypt. While some historians have regarded Hatshepsut's accession to the throne as an extraordinary circumstance, others have interpreted it as a natural outcome of the political and institutional development of the ancient Egyptian state. At the same time, the deliberate destruction of her name and monuments following her reign indicates the existence of political and ideological struggles surrounding her legacy. This phenomenon is associated with the concept of "**damnatio memoriae**," that is, the practice of erasing a ruler's name and memory from the historical record. Contemporary research often relates these actions to Hatshepsut's political opponents, particularly Thutmose III. This demonstrates that struggles for political power and attempts to control historical memory were persistent and significant issues in the history of ancient Egypt.

From a critical analytical perspective, the study of the Hatshepsut phenomenon faces a number of challenges in contemporary historiography. Some scholars argue that Hatshepsut has not always been approached objectively due to the incompleteness of ancient sources and archaeological evidence, as well as the persistence of gender and political stereotypes. This situation highlights the continuing relevance of **source criticism** and **scientific objectivity** in modern historiography. At the same time, new scholarly findings are being achieved through the application of modern technologies and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of Hatshepsut, particularly through the integration of archaeology, history, anthropology, and gender studies. This demonstrates the continuous development of scholarly thought and the emergence of new paradigms in the study of Queen Hatshepsut.

Overall, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, historical and contemporary approaches, the research of regional and national scholars, empirical studies, and critical analyses all play an important role in the study of Queen Hatshepsut's history. The Hatshepsut phenomenon represents one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of ancient Egypt, and her political, religious, and cultural legacy continues to be the subject of extensive scholarly discussion.

Conclusion

Queen Hatshepsut stands out as a distinctive historical phenomenon in ancient Egyptian history, and her personality, political activities, and religious and cultural legacy continue to be widely discussed within the scholarly community. The theoretical and empirical approaches examined in this article, together with the findings of historical and contemporary research, provide an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Hatshepsut's role and significance in ancient Egyptian society. The political and economic reforms implemented during her reign, her major construction projects, and her achievements in international trade and diplomacy demonstrate her exceptional capabilities in state administration. Furthermore, Hatshepsut's religious policy, her efforts to legitimize her authority as a divinely sanctioned ruler, and her initiatives aimed at strengthening religious ideology played an important role in the social and ideological development of ancient Egyptian society.

The application of new approaches in modern archaeology and historiography, multidisciplinary research, and gender-oriented studies to the Hatshepsut phenomenon makes a significant contribution to the development of scholarly thought. Her legacy and position in the history of ancient Egypt, as well as her significance within contemporary historiography, remain important subjects of academic inquiry. Further in-depth research into Hatshepsut's historical role and the effective use of new archaeological discoveries will undoubtedly contribute to new scholarly findings and a more comprehensive understanding of her legacy.

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