



No person is your friend who demands your silence, or denies your right to grow."

- Alice Walker

HISTORY

QUEENS IN ANCIENT EGYPT



Queen Hatshepsut
(1505-1485 B.C.)

Women in the Kemet (Ancient Egypt) played significant roles. As wives of pharaohs, as reigning queens, or as women of authority, they were respected. The wives or mothers of pharaohs held special places of honor.

First Woman Pharaoh QUEEN HATHEPSUT

The first known woman pharaoh was Queen Hatshepsut (1505-1485 B.C.). She came to the throne in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Historian John Henrik Clarke writes about her. Trained by her father, Thothmes I, she was a great ruler. She learned from him to defend her country. She knew the ways of war.

A Peaceful Warrior

Queen Hatshepsut reigned for twenty-one years. Considered a Warrior Queen, she made peace with the Kush people. This powerful pharaoh sent commercial expeditions to the countries along the coast of East Africa. One of her greatest accomplishments was a trip to an Asian kingdom (now India). This was an act of bravery and helped to resolve differences.

Even before the reign of Queen Hatshepsut, women in Africa had influence. They balanced the role of pharaohs in many ways.

Hyksos Conquer Kemet

During the Middle Kingdom, Pharaoh Amenemhet IV ascended to the throne through his father. The 12th Dynasty ended with him, as he died without an heir. Civil war broke out between upper and lower Egypt. As the civil war raged, lower Egypt was invaded by the Hyksos (Asians). Thus, the Asians became the first non-Africans to rule Egypt. They remained in power for almost one hundred years.

QUEEN NEFERTARI

Over that century, there were many efforts to reclaim Egypt by Africans. However, it was not until the 18th Dynasty that the Kemet was brought back under African rule. Pharaoh Ahmose succeeded in driving out the Hyksos. It was a great period in this rule. His wife, Queen Ahmose Nefertari, was extremely helpful in restoring the country of Kemet (ancient Egypt). So powerful was her influence, her husband, the pharaoh, bestowed upon her the office of "Second Prophet of Amen." In this position, Queen Nefertari was responsible for religious and civil functions. Known as "Divine Wife," an exalted title, she had authority over workers in the vast fields, a group of priestesses, scribes and many other groups. Like other women during that period, Queen Nefertari was considered a partner to her husband and a major contributor to the nation.

QUEEN TIYE, BRILLIANT AND BEAUTIFUL

The 18th Dynasty was marked by great rulers and great women. Queen Tiye was one of the most powerful queens. This royal wife to Pharaoh Amenhotep III reigned as co-monarch. A Nubian woman of exceptional ability, she reigned with the pharaoh for fifty years. Her influence was felt in many aspects of the nation, but especially in the political area.

MOTHER OF KING TUT

It is said that theirs was a beautiful marriage. Queen Tiye and Pharaoh Amenhotep III were the parents of three sons and four daughters. The queen bore her last son, the famous Tutankhamen (King Tut) when she was near fifty years of age. While all three of her sons were pharaohs, King Tut became the best known, years after his death at age 13.

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