

Hatshepsut's Divine Birth

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Source: James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*, Volume II: *The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), sections 187-212, pages 75-86.

Subject: The divine-birth reliefs and inscriptions of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari.

Editorial note: This is a clean source extract prepared from Breasted's public-domain English edition. It is not a new translation. Obvious OCR errors have been corrected, line breaks regularised, and damaged or uncertain passages are identified as fragmentary. Breasted's historical spellings such as Amon, Heket and Makere are retained inside source quotations.

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1. The Council of the Gods (Breasted §§192)

Breasted describes Amon enthroned before twelve gods. Much of the inscription was already damaged, but part of Amon's promise for the future Hatshepsut remained legible.

“I will unite for her the Two Lands in peace. I will give to her all lands, all countries.”

2. Amon and Thoth (Breasted §§193-194)

Amon consults Thoth. The surviving text identifies Queen Ahmose as the wife of Thutmose I and directs Amon toward her. The inscription is fragmentary.

3. Amon with Queen Ahmose (Breasted §§195-198)

Breasted records that Amon takes the form of Thutmose I and comes to Queen Ahmose. The scene presents the divine conception of Hatshepsut.

“He made his form like the majesty of this husband, the King Okheperkere (Thutmose I). He found her as she slept in the beauty of her palace. She waked at the fragrance of the god, which she smelled in the presence of his majesty. He went to her immediately, coivit cum ea, he imposed his desire upon her, he caused that she should see him in his form of a god. When he came before her, she rejoiced at the sight of his beauty, his love passed into her limbs, which the fragrance of the god flooded; all his odors were from Punt.”

“How great is thy fame! It is splendid to see thy front; thou hast united my majesty with thy favors, thy dew is in all my limbs.”

“Khnemmet-Amon-Hatshepsut shall be the name of this my daughter, whom I have placed in thy body. She shall exercise the excellent kingship in this whole land.”

“My soul is hers, my bounty is hers, my crown is hers, that she may rule the Two Lands, that she may lead all the living.”

4. Amon and Khnum (Breasted §§199-201)

Amon orders Khnum to fashion Hatshepsut and her ka. Khnum promises to form the child for kingship.

“Go, to make her, together with her ka, from these limbs which are in me; go, to fashion her better than all gods; shape for me this my daughter, whom I have begotten. I have given to her all life and satisfaction, all stability, all joy of heart from me, all offerings, and all bread, like Re, forever.”

“I will form this thy daughter Makere (Hatshepsut), for life, prosperity and health; for offerings - for love of the beautiful mistress. Her form shall be more exalted than the gods, in her great dignity of King of Upper and Lower Egypt.”

5. Khnum Fashions the Child (Breasted §§202-203)

Khnum fashions Hatshepsut and her ka upon the potter's wheel, while the frog-headed goddess Heket extends the sign of life.

“I have formed thee of these limbs of Amon, presider over Karnak. I have come to thee, to fashion thee better than all gods. I have given to thee all life and satisfaction, all stability, all joy of heart with me; I have given to thee all health, all lands; I have given to thee all countries, all people; I have given to thee all offerings, all food; I have given to thee to appear upon the throne of Horus

like Re, forever; I have given to thee to be before the ka's of all the living, while thou shinest as King of Upper and Lower Egypt, of South and North, according as thy father who loves thee has commanded."

6. Thoth and Queen Ahmose (Breasted §204)

Thoth salutes Queen Ahmose. Breasted notes that the surviving inscriptions contain titles and epithets of praise rather than a clear account of the conversation.

7. Queen Ahmose Is Led to the Birth Chamber (Breasted §205)

Khnum and Heket lead Queen Ahmose by the hands. Nine other divinities appear before them, led by Amon. Much of the accompanying inscription is lost.

"Thou didst conceive immediately after this ... a child ..."

8. The Birth (Breasted §§206-207)

Queen Ahmose is shown holding the child while divine midwives and goddesses attend the birth. Breasted identifies Isis, Nephthys and Meskenet among the divine figures, with Bes and Taweret also present in the lower register. The surviving speeches are mostly conventional promises.

9. Presentation of the Child to Amon (Breasted §208)

Hathor presents the newborn Hatshepsut to Amon. His surviving words identify her as his daughter and as future ruler.

"Glorious part which has come forth from me; king, taking the Two Lands, upon the Horus-throne forever."

10. Council of Amon and Hathor (Breasted §209)

Amon holds the child before Hathor. The inscriptions are heavily damaged and preserve little beyond conventional divine promises.

11. The Nursing of the Child (Breasted §210)

Queen Ahmose sits nearby while Hatshepsut and her ka are nursed by two cow-headed Hathors. Below, Hathor cows also suckle the child and her ka.

"Nursing her majesty together with all her ka's."

12. Second Interview of Amon and Thoth (Breasted §211)

Amon and Thoth stand facing one another and hold the child and her ka between them. Breasted notes that only conventional promises survive.

13. Final Scene (Breasted §212)

Khnum and Anubis advance while female divinities present the child and her ka before other gods. Sefkhet records the scene. The inscriptions are too damaged for Breasted to determine the exact purpose.

Source and Use Note

Breasted based this section on the Deir el-Bahari birth reliefs published by Edouard Naville, supplementing damaged passages with the parallel birth scenes of Amenhotep III at Luxor where necessary. The sequence reproduced here ends with the divine-birth cycle. Breasted's following section, beginning at section 215, treats Hatshepsut's coronation separately.

Recommended citation: James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), §§187-212, pp. 75-86.

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