Notes on Quiz #7: Female Pharaohs of Egypt

1. All of the following are true of Hatshepsut before becoming queen EXCEPT:
   a. The only records we have of her childhood and time as a princess are those she left herself
   b. She denied all rumors she was descended from the god Amun-Re, claiming to be utterly human
   c. When her brother became king, she gained the titles of King's Wife and God's Wife of Amun
   d. Though she was married to her brother, Thutmose II, his son Thutmose III was not hers

Hatshepsut, who had three brothers, does not figure in the records of her father's reign; it's after Thutmose II accession and premature death that she becomes prominent. Once she asserted her preeminence a mythology of predestination was developed, citing a miraculous birth and a descent from Amun-Re. Emphasis was placed on her royal blood deriving from Thutmose I and Ahmose (deemphasizing Thutmose II and his son, Thutmose III, whose royal blood was not pure).

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2. By the seventh regnal year of Thutmose III, Hatshepsut was
   a. representing herself as a male pharaoh on monuments
   b. hosting wild parties in the temple of Karnak
   c. dead, killed by a crocodile
   d. building pyramids like the old days

In her regency, Hatshepsut commissioned images of herself in the traditional garb of queens and with the insignia of the God's Wife of Amun. She adopted the additional name Maatkare, signifying the pharaoh's responsibilities of *ma'at* (harmony and justice), and some images showed both kingly and queenly attributes, including one with a woman's dress and a man's long stride. During the co-reign with Thutmose III, the two were presented on some monuments as twin male rulers, with Hatshepsut shown first as the eldest, while other statues showed her in female form. In general she increased the "male" iconography over time while never hiding her female essence.

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3. All of the following are true of Hatshepsut and her young co-ruler Thutmose III EXCEPT:
   a. They sponsored an expedition to Punt to obtain exotic materials
   b. They ruled jointly together for about 15 years
   c. On some monuments they are depicted as twin male rulers
   d. They were half-siblings

Thutmose III was Hatshepsut's nephew (and stepson), the son of Thutmose II and a minor wife called Isis.

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4. All of the following are true of Thutmose III's destruction of Hatshepsut's memory after her death EXCEPT:
    a. Her name was removed from monuments and her statues thrown in a pit
    b. Scholars now say the erasure occurred 20 years or more after her death, casting doubt on the theory that Thutmose was motivated by revenge
    c. Some of her images were defaced by carving false mustaches on them, ironically
    d. Her representations as queen were left untouched; only her kingship was erased

Some time after Hatshepsut died and Thutmose III had been ruling alone, he attempted to remove her reign from history in a process called *damnatio memoriae*. Her sculptures and monuments were removed, most of them deposited in a pit, and her wall inscriptions were walled up or chiseled off. — An older theory has long held that Thutmose III did this out of personal resentment, desiring to assert his independent rule after years of being in Hatshepsut's shadow. But the reading argues against this theory, noting that many years elapsed after Hatshepsut's death before this took place; for most of Thutmose III's reign, he was content to have the people and nobles remember the peace and prosperity of Hatshepsut's rule. The timing therefore suggests that the concern was over Thutmose III's imminent succession: inherently conservative, the Egyptians were uncomfortable with the innovation of female succession after thousands of years of male rule, and wanted to remove the precedent of Hatshepsut's rule in order to prevent a recurrence of succession by a strong, well-blooded princess or queen.

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5. The epitaph of Kheredankh, daughter of Shepmin, included
    a. a claim that she ate only imported oranges in the form of smoothies
    b. a description of her work as a designer of snakeskin handbags made from asps
    c. a request for a libation of water from the visitor, because she was one who "loved to drink"
    d. a rumor that she was the bastard daughter of Nefertiti

The epitaph describes a young woman who loved to drink, enjoyed parties with her friends, volunteered to wet-nurse for friends, and was loved and trusted by family and community alike.

Optional Extra Credit

EC. Why do you think Hatshepsut was accepted as a "female king" and was able to rule for so long?

There are several possible reasons for this. The most important one may be that Hatshepsut was royal on both sides, and Thutmose II and Thutmose III were not. Also, Thutmose II's death left an infant on the throne; Hatshepsut's time as a princess and her royal blood made her the obvious candidate for regency, and during her regency she showed herself to be strong and capable as a leader, preparing the way for her to claim full kingship alongside her nephew. — Other factors include the fact that in some ways Egypt was more gender-egalitarian than other ancient societies, and in the New Kingdom women in the imperial family were more active and visible than ever; so visible involvement in royal affairs by a princess. Finally, like any pharaoh, Hatshepsut showed her suitability through just rule, manifesting the nurturing of the gods through the ensuring of ma'at, peace, and prosperity.